Communities First Fund
Guidelines & Application

About the Fund

The Communities First Fund is a rapid response fund that prioritizes supporting organizations led by and for Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC). Community-based organizations that were awarded grants from Headwaters between January 2018 to March 2020 through the Giving Project, the Fund of the Sacred Circle, and the Community Innovation Grant programs will be invited to apply.

The fund will support organizations that respond to the immediate, coronavirus-related needs of their communities. Eligible applicants will continue ongoing and important advocacy and organizing to ensure that BIPOC communities are included in critical decisions regarding housing, health, employment, and the economy.

Invited applicants may request between $1,000 to $15,000 in general operating support. The Communities First Fund has limited funds available, so final grant sizes may be different than what is requested. The grant period is for six months, and a brief final report will be due 30 days after the grant period ends.

Criteria

The Communities First Fund prioritizes applicants that:

- Are constituent-led.
- Organize constituencies that are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including heightened health, social, political, and economic disparities.
- Received a grant from one of Headwaters’ core programs (Giving Project, Fund of the Sacred Circle, and Community Innovation) between January 2018 and March 2020.
- Have limited access to mainstream funding.

Headwaters prioritizes strategies that:

- Promote healing, solidarity, and mutual aid.
- Support people to build power and organize for systems change.
- Strengthen the capacity of organizations and communities to be resilient and creative.

Eligible Organizations

To be eligible for a grant from Headwaters’ Communities First Fund, an application must:

- Be a legally incorporated entity with 501(c)(3), or 501(c)(4) status, or have a fiscal sponsor.
- Be based in and carry out their work in Minnesota.
Ineligible Organizations & Activities

The following entities and activities are ineligible for this grant:

- Organizations that primarily provide direct services.
- Projects sponsored by a government agency.
- Endowed funds or capital campaigns.
- Individuals; these grants are for organizations.
- Partisan efforts.
- Incomplete applications.

Application Process

Eligible applicants will receive an email invitation to apply via Headwaters’ grant portal. We will begin accepting applications on a rolling basis in early April.

Questions

For general questions about Headwaters’ Communities First Fund contact:

Maria De La Cruz, Executive Director
maria@headwatersfoundation.org
612-400-6265

For questions about accessing and navigating the grant portal contact:

Noelle Martinez, Grants and Program Associate
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612-400-6262

Application

All questions have a 400-word limit.

1) How has your organization and/or constituency been impacted by COVID-19?

2) How do you plan to address the impact of COVID-19 in your community?

3) Are you partnering with other organizations in your effort? If yes, who and what is the nature of your partnership?

4) Are you seeking or receiving rapid response dollars from other sources? If yes, please list the status (received, pending, declined) and sources of funding. (optional)

5) Is there anything else you want Headwaters to know as we work on immediate and long-term coronavirus response efforts? (optional)