



HEADWATERS[™]

FOUNDATION *for* JUSTICE

Wellspring Fund

2023 Guidelines & Application

www.headwatersfoundation.org

About the Wellspring Fund

At Headwaters, we believe that a community's collective power is a source of abundance and of transformative change. In the natural world, wellsprings are sources of abundance that start deep in the earth, slowly breaking through rocks and creating new pathways toward growth. **The Wellspring Fund is dedicated to nourishing organizations that have deep roots and long horizons.**

Wellspring grants build meaningful capacity for BIPOC-led organizations to do long-term power building and organizing for systems change. **Grants will provide \$90,000 of project-based support per year over four years, for a total of \$360,000.** These grants support projects that are developing innovative and impactful approaches to building community power and advocating for social change in Minnesota.

Innovation can show up in many approaches to building power to advance justice. It might be found in organizing models, narrative approaches, lifeways reclamation, coalition structures, campaign strategies, healing practices, and more. We also believe that innovation does not need to be "new" to be transformative; practices that have been part of our communities for generations are powerful sources of change.

At Headwaters, we know that long-term organizing work needs to be supported by long-term funding partners that organizations can count on. The Wellspring Fund's 4-year grant terms allow us to be in long-term relationship with grantee partners and commit to supporting the long-term visions and strategies of Minnesota's movements for justice.

The Wellspring Fund is Headwaters' newest fund, in partnership with [the Bush Foundation](#). It reflects both Headwaters' core values and the Bush Foundation's purpose to develop, test and spread innovative ideas that make the region better for everyone and to inspire, equip and connect leaders to more effectively lead equitable change. As one of Bush's four [community partners](#), Headwaters is helping Bush live into its [goal](#) to "share more power in our grantmaking and to work in deeper partnership with community."

Core Criteria: Characteristics of a Wellspring Fund Recipient

Wellspring Fund grants are for multi-year projects or campaigns that have been developed by established organizations or coalitions that are substantively led by BIPOC leaders. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria.

Wellspring Fund is seeking proposals from **organizations or coalitions** that:

- Have leadership (including staff, key volunteers, board) that is reflective of and being developed from the organization's base;
- Are in relationship with other organizations and actively working to strengthen the larger movement for social change;

- Have an intersectional, cross-issue, collective liberation approach that makes connections between race, class, indigeneity and gender; and
- Embody organizational practices of experimentation, reflection, and evolution.

Because this is multi-year project funding, an applicant organization will apply for a **project or campaign** that:

- Has a multi-year horizon and a clearly articulated strategic and innovative plan;
- Is actively working to advance equity and justice by addressing root causes of injustice, including white supremacy, colonialism, and patriarchy; and
- Has been developed by, and is accountable to, the people most directly impacted by the campaign or project's efforts.

A note on language: An organization's "base" are the people building power together, who are driving an agenda forward together, and who are actively engaged in the organization's work. You may call this your community, your membership, your people. We are leaning into the word "base" for the purposes of this grant.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must:

- Be legally incorporated entity with 501(c)(3), **or** have a fiscal sponsor
- Be based in and carry out its work in Minnesota
- Be substantively led by and for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) most directly affected by the issues the organization is working on
- Use community organizing as a core strategy to engage and build power in their communities in order to change systems and advance equity and justice.

Eligible coalitions must:

- Be able to provide evidence of their commitment to continued cross-organization collaboration through at least the end of the grant term.

Eligible applicants can:

- Be current or past Headwaters grantees
- Be new to Headwaters

Ineligible Organizations & Activities

The following entities and activities are ineligible for this fund:

- Requests from organizations that primarily provide direct services
- Projects of a government agency
- Endowment funds
- Individuals
- Partisan efforts
- Late or incomplete applications

Application Timeline & Decision-making Process

Applications will open on Monday, June 5, 2023. You must submit your organization's application by **5 p.m. Central on Tuesday, July 18, 2023** via our Grant Portal. We will not consider late or incomplete applications.

A committee of community members will make collective decisions about which applications will be selected for funding. Committee members will share Headwaters' values, have a demonstrated commitment to community, and/or be connected to local movement-building and organizing. Applicant organizations may receive a site visit from members of the community grant-making committee. Applicants will be notified of final decisions in December 2023.

Special Requirements for Coalitions

Headwaters sees coalition efforts as an important approach to social change work. In addition to supporting individual organizations, Wellspring Fund is open to coalitions of three or more organizations. Coalitions may apply using the Coalition Application. To apply, you will need one of your members to assume the role of Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant must be a 501(c)(3). Coalitions who apply should already be in active partnership, and should not form for the exclusive purpose of applying for this funding opportunity.

Lead Applicants may also apply as their own organization. Funding decisions are independent of one another.

Important Application Information:

- Only one application can be submitted on behalf of a coalition.
- Plan to collaborate on grant writing OUTSIDE of our grant portal (Google Docs, for example), as information can be easily lost when multiple browsers try to access the same form at the same time.

The Lead Applicant must:

- Be a legally incorporated entity with 501(c)(3).
- Meet the criteria, eligibility, and requirements outlined in this packet.
- Be an active core member of the coalition.
- Take on specific responsibilities on behalf of the coalition (detailed below).

The Lead Applicant will:

- If selected for funding, sign the grant agreement on behalf of the coalition.
- Receive grant payments for all 4 years of the grant term.
- Be responsible for completing any required interim and final reports. Overdue reports can impact future funding eligibility of the lead applicant organization individually.

Because this is multi-year funding, coalitions need to provide evidence of their commitment to continued cross-organization collaboration through at least the end of the grant term. We recognize that coalitions have varying practices around formalizing coalition relationships.

At a minimum, the documentation must include:

- A statement affirming each member's active participation in the coalition, with staff time dedicated to participating in the coalition's work; and
- A signature from each coalition organization.

Please reach out with your questions about coalition applications.

Application Questions

A complete application will contain answers to all the following questions. If you want to work collaboratively on the narrative questions, plan to do so outside of the grant portal (i.e. Google Docs) because the application will not save if open in multiple browsers at the same time. *If you are applying as a coalition, please answer all questions about the coalition, not the Lead Applicant organization.*

Questions about your organization or coalition

1. Overview & Base

Briefly describe the history and mission of your organization or coalition. In your response, please describe the base of your organization or coalition. Your “base” are the people building power together, who are driving an agenda forward together, and who are actively engaged in your organization’s work. You may call this your community, your membership, your people. We are leaning into the word “base” for the purposes of this grant. *Note: if you are a coalition application, please name your coalition partners and describe how your member’s bases are working together as part of your answer. (300-word limit)*

2. BIPOC Leadership

Wellspring grantees will be substantively led by and for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) most directly affected by the issues the organization or coalition is working on. Do you consider your organization or coalition BIPOC-led? What does that mean to you? *(100-word limit)*

3. Decision-Making Power and Accountability

Explain how your leadership teams (e.g. senior leadership, staff, board, executive committee, etc) are representative of and accountable to the base of your organization or coalition. Please include a discussion of how you develop leadership from within your community or base. *(200-word limit)*

4. Collective Liberation Approach

We prioritize organizations that use an intersectional and cross-issue approach to collective liberation work. Tell us how your organization or coalition draws connections across lines of race, class, indigeneity, and gender. *(200-word limit)*

5. Adaptive Strategy

Headwaters believes that innovative organizations and coalitions embody a practice of reflection, evolution, and experimentation. How do you make space for adaptation in your work? Tell us about a recent experiment and what you learned from it. *(200-word limit)*

Questions about your project or campaign

6. Multi-year work plan

Please describe your project or campaign's work plan for the next four years, including goals and strategies. What will success feel like? What is innovative about your project or campaign? *(300-word limit)*

7. Project/Campaign Accountability

How did you develop this project or campaign? How will you know if your campaign is rigorously accountable to your base in the future? *(200-word limit)*

8. Advancing Equity & Justice

How does your project or campaign address root causes of injustice (such as white supremacy, colonialism, and patriarchy)? What will be different because of your project or campaign? *(200-word limit)*

Financial Questions

Please note: Applicants are not required to submit any form of budget. Instead, we ask a series of finance related questions that help us understand what resources you are working with and how you plan to sustain the work. To align this funding with our value of putting trust in community, we encourage you to take an expansive view of what a project or campaign can be. You will not see any guidance or limits on overhead or administrative costs, and that is intentional. Coalitions should supply their answers to questions 2 and 3 as they pertain to their coalitions' collective work, not as the organization submitting the application.

- 1. Please provide a short description of the types of things your organization or coalition would spend these funds on over the grant period. *(100-word limit)***
- 2. Revenue and expenses**
 - a. What was your actual revenue for the most recently completed fiscal year?
 - b. What was your actual expense for the most recently completed fiscal year?
- 3. Please indicate which of the following you are projecting for the current fiscal year**
 - a. Revenue: Increased revenue, Decreased revenue, Stable revenue
 - b. Expenses: Increased expense, Decreased expense, Stable expense
- 4. Is there any additional context about your financial position or relationships with institutional funders that you would like us to know (optional)? *(100-word limit)***

Required Attachments

- 501(c)(3) organizations must provide:
 - Your most recently completed 990. If your organization does not file a 990, please attach your most recent 990-EZ or 990-N.
- Fiscally-Sponsored organizations must provide:
 - A letter, dated within the last year, from the fiscal sponsor's Executive Director verifying the fiscal relationship;
 - The fiscal sponsor's most recent audited financials (if your fiscal sponsor does not have audited financials, submit their most recent 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N)
- Coalitions must provide:
 - The most recent 990 of the Lead Applicant
 - A letter, signed by all coalition members, affirming your commitment to continued cross-organization collaboration through at least the end of the grant term.

FAQ

Why is Wellspring Fund focused on larger grants for more years?

Headwaters has long had a goal to offer longer grant terms and larger grant sizes so that we can more fully live into our values of deeply resourcing movement organizations and lessen the burden of applying for funds. Our community of grantee partners has been asking for this, and we are excited to be able to meet this need with this funding. We know that long-term organizing work needs to be supported by long-term funding partners that organizations can rely on, even as strategies iterate and evolve. The tradeoff, of course, is that we can make fewer grants per cycle. Wellspring Fund will have an application period annually, and we will be able to deeply resource new organizations every year.

Why is Wellspring Fund project funding?

Funding for the Wellspring Fund comes from the Bush Foundation, which has required this to be project-based funding. To align this funding with our value of putting trust in community, however, we encourage you to take an expansive view of what a project or campaign can be. You will not see any guidance or limits on overhead or administrative costs, and that is intentional. We know that projects and campaigns are adaptive, emergent, and iterative and often involve the full muscle of an organization.

What do we mean by “base” and “base building”?

Your “base” are the people building power together, who are driving an agenda forward together, and who are actively engaged in your organization’s work. You may call this your community, your membership, your people. We are leaning into the word “base” for the purposes of this grant. “Base building” is your work to grow the breadth and depth of people who share a vision and who develop the strategies and work to make that vision a reality.

What special considerations should coalitions consider?

Because this is multi-year funding, only coalitions in long-term partnerships should apply. As you are completing your application, consider how the leadership structures and decision-making processes are fully accountable to your base. We are curious about how you share power, make decisions, align tactics, and think about money together. We will ask for documentation of the coalition’s structure and shared leadership commitments as part of the due diligence phase of Headwater’s review process. If you have any questions about applying on behalf of a coalition, we encourage you to reach out to have a conversation.

Can I apply for multiple projects or campaigns?

We know that your work is complex, and you are likely running many simultaneous campaigns and projects. **We ask that you apply for only one project or campaign.**

If we are awarded a Wellspring grant, will we be eligible for other Headwaters funding?

Wellspring grantee partners **will not be** eligible for Giving Project grants for the duration of their Wellspring grant term, nor will they be eligible to receive an additional Wellspring award. Wellspring grantees **will be** eligible for Fund of the Sacred Circle and/or Black Movement Ecosystem funding during their Wellspring grant term. Organizations can be awarded both Wellspring and Bush Prize in the same year.

Info Sessions

There are two Wellspring Fund information sessions for interested organizations to learn more about the grant and application process. The information shared at both information sessions will be the same.

- [Wednesday, June 7, 12-1 p.m.](#)
- [Wednesday, June 21, 6-7 p.m.](#)

Please follow the links above to RSVP for the information sessions. The information sessions are hosted virtually on Zoom.

For interested organizations who are unable to attend the information session, the first information session will be recorded and be available for viewing on our website.

Have more questions?

For general questions about the grant, criteria, and eligibility, contact:

- Kate Vickery, kate@headwatersfoundation.org or 612-400-6264

For questions about accessing and navigating the Grant Portal, contact:

- Toni Geurts, toni@headwatersfoundation.org or 612-400-6261



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