

Northwestern University

Racial Equity and Community Partnership Grants

Hosted by:

Northwestern | NEIGHBORHOOD AND
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Racial Equity and Community Partnership Grant Program Overview

- \$500,000 grant program to advance racial equity in our home communities and support partnerships between community-based organizations the University.
- The purpose of grant program is two-fold:
 - Advance racial equity and social justice in Evanston and Chicago
 - Build co-created and co-managed partnerships between community-based organizations and Northwestern
- 2021 is the pilot year. The experiences during this grant cycle will help to inform and improve the application process for future grants.

Letter of Interest Review Process

- A five-member sub-committee was tasked with reviewing Letters of Interest (LOI) and advancing applications for consideration to the twelve-member advisory committee.
- Response to this initial opportunity was robust, making for a very competitive grant application cycle.
- **113 Letters of Intent** were submitted. Of those applications,
 - **32% of Partnership proposals** were advanced for full committee review
 - **59% of Incubator proposals** were advanced for full committee review

Rating Criteria for Letters of Intent

- **Racial equity:** Does the proposed project support or advance racial equity in one of the three topical focus areas – health equity, economic and social empowerment, and children and youth learning?
- **Systemic change:** Will the project lead to systemic change? Does the proposal address the root causes of inequities and systemic racism?
- **Clarity:** Is the proposal clear in its description of what the project seeks to accomplish?
- **Co-created-partnership** (*partnership grants*): Is this a co-created partnership between a community-based partner (Evanston/Chicago) and Northwestern partner? Are there clear shared goals and responsibilities?
- **Partnership potential** (*incubator grants*): Does this proposal have the potential to attract a Northwestern or community partner (Evanston/Chicago) going forward?

Additional Considerations During Review:

- Maintaining geographic balance with grants directed to both Evanston and Chicago
- Balancing applications across the three focus areas of the grant
- Creating equity between larger established organizations and smaller grassroots organizations.

Characteristics of Successful Letters of Intent

The Partnership and Incubator grant proposals which advanced to the next stage of the grant application process shared the following strengths:

- **Focus:** Addressed one of three areas of focus (health equity, social and economic empowerment, children and youth learning)
- **Clarity:** Clearly expressed goals and projected outcomes
- **Geographic:** Clearly communicated an Evanston and/or Chicago reach of service

Characteristics of Successful Letters of Intent, cont.

Additional features of applications that advanced for further review:

- Proposals had a systems change focus, rather than program or project focus
- Proposals sought funding for new initiatives, rather than ongoing projects
- Proposals were developed past the idea stage. *Some of the declined partnership proposals would have been stronger as incubator proposals.*
- Proposals had a strong and clearly defined University partnership or had a strong likelihood of ultimately attracting a Northwestern partner.

What is not considered a “strong Northwestern partnership”?

- Previously existing Northwestern partnerships that were not specific to this proposal.
- Proposals with weak or soft partnership, such as pursuing ongoing University relationships or utilizing NU student volunteers.
- Proposals which incorporated Northwestern staff or faculty engagement as individuals (such as board members, volunteers, etc.), but not as a University member utilizing Northwestern assets.
- Some proposals did not specify any partnership with Northwestern.

Thank you for your time!

We look forward to future collaborations