

Q&A SESSION

(Questions by topic)

Please note – some answers have been updated from the sessions to reflect the most recent information as of Sept. 21, 2021.

Application Process:

Process:

- How will the application review process be different from coordinated funding?
 - Mini-grants will have a very simple application process
 - For the safety net grants, we'll be asking for specific providers to deliver specific services
 - For the high impact grants, the application process will be fairly robust, but the first year of the grant funding will also be for developing a strategic plan – so the application will be looking for your ideas and ability to scale in order to address poverty, racism and trauma
- For a program that has its non-profit status through UM but is not funded by UM, can we apply? We were told not to last round.
 - Our goal is to allow all interested organizations to apply. In some cases, you may need to partner with a non-profit or other organization to serve as a fiduciary. We will make sure this is clear prior to the grant process.
- Are collaborations encouraged?
 - Absolutely. We would love to see collaborations, in particular for the high-impact grants

Track record:

- Please elaborate on "proven track record."
 - A "proven track record" will be determined by following three ways:
 - Ability to maintain good standing with state and federal grants as shown by monitoring/reporting feedback from existing funders and/or program assessments
 - Have met local service standards and expectations as decided by the leadership committee, and
 - Can provide positive community feedback from those served
- Who decides who is "proven?"
 - State/ federal Monitoring/ reporting entities and/or documented program assessments
 - Leadership committee
 - Those you serve
- What if you are "proven" through community and peers but never been given a chance?
 - An organization that has a positive track record with community but has not had access to the resources to obtain a traditional assessment/monitoring is primed for the mini grant category of funding.

Timeline:

- Will the Request for Qualification be available for preview online prior to the go-live Request for Qualifications date?
 - We will try to meet this request if possible.
- What do you anticipate the timeline being for the process, when will applications be accepted, and would funding start Jan. 1st? If not, will there be additional transition funding to support current programs?
 - The Mini-grants and Safety Net grant making process will occur this fall, with the intent to start contracts January 1
 - High impact grants applications would be available early 2021, with the goal of contracts starting July 1 (possibly sooner for microgrants).

- What is your time frame for release the RFPs?
 - We hope to release the RFP for Safety Net programs and mini-grants in early October
 - We hope to release the RFP for the High Impact round in February
- How many weeks between the issuance of the RFP and the deadline?
 - The mini-grants will have a shorter period, as it's a simpler application – likely 4 weeks
 - We'd like to provide 2 months for the high-impact and safety net grants.
 - Due to our goal of making funding available by January 1 – there may be less time for the safety net grants, but we will provide at least 4 weeks
- How much lead time will be provided between releasing the grant application and the application deadline and will the application be available to orgs to review and prepare before it is open?
 - See notes above

Proposal Review & Approval:

- Who reviews proposals? Will they all be reviewed by staff from the funders? Will that rotate?
 - The goal is to have a broader range of reviewers, which would include staff, content experts, community members, and those with lived experience
- Who will be making funding decisions?
 - Recommendations will be made by reviewers, and for public funding, the final approval will be made by the County Board of Commissioners and Ann Arbor City Council

Racism, Poverty, & Trauma:

- Should we think of the focus as “Poverty and Racism and Trauma?” Or “Poverty or Racism or Trauma?”
 - We do acknowledge that some programmatic activities and system initiatives focus on one of the root causes. However, we would like the work of addressing Poverty and Racism and Trauma to be thought of as intersected and linked. With racism comes trauma. With poverty comes trauma and in many cases racism. It is our hope that through this thought process the resources dispersed will address the intersections of all three issues intentionally.
 - When thinking about the work you are doing in the community and/or work you aspire to do in the community, thinking about root causes and asking the “whys” will help get a sense of whether or not it's one or more than one of those factors. As to the focus, we are looking for these investments to impact poverty, racism and trauma in our community. For some applicants that might be a focus on one area, for others two or all three.
- I can clearly see how the various programs could be used to address poverty or racism, but I am unclear on how trauma fits into these. Could you clarify?
 - Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event. Trauma is often experienced by those who have experienced racism and poverty. Trauma is also often discussed in relation to Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs, but not exclusively. The following link has more information as to the role trauma plays in childhood, youth and adolescent development, for example: [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) | Vital Signs | CDC](#).
- I really appreciate that "trauma" is identified as a Root Cause. How is this trauma defined? In most cases of trauma, it is extremely complex. What are some of the expectations of gaining solutions?
 - In particular, for the high-impact grants, we are trying to balance providing clear expectations to applicants, with the ability for applicants to explain and describe how your current work and expertise could be further resourced and scaled to get at a real change in conditions in our community. We understand the complexity of many of the causes of poverty, racism and trauma, and want to make sure there is space within the process to learn, adapt and improve how we serve and support our residents.
- Some root causes are lodged in political bodies. Is the partnership willing to fund efforts to remedy these? For example, assume someone believes volunteer funding from school-based PTOS is an important cause of inequality. Is work to resolve such a practice the partnership would consider?

- Funding could be utilized for advocacy, although as there are public dollars, there may be limitations on funding political bodies.
- You mentioned that you wanted to address root causes and not necessarily symptoms. Would the safety net contracts need to address these root causes as well?
 - Yes. All funding would be intended to address the root causes of poverty, racism and trauma. Many of the areas specified for safety net contracts, like emergency food system, housing and homelessness, childcare and medical support, already support those living in or just above the poverty line, and often also intersect with racism and trauma
- For safety net applicants, if the work we do is a response to poverty, racism, and trauma, how will our funding be judged based on our services?
 - The safety net contracts will be for those with a proven track record of working in response the poverty, racism and trauma, and in support of the safety net. For this we're looking for experienced partners to continue this work.
- How are you planning to measure outcomes for reductions in racism, poverty, and trauma? Poverty reduction seems more measurable than the others.
 - We are looking to bring out an outside evaluation team to also assist in the development of metrics. We would be including grantees in this process as well.

DEI:

- Have you considered the implication of placing an emphasis on DEI rather than truly seeking anti-racism within our community?
 - That's a great point. Our current leadership team is currently focused on DEI as a starting point.

Funding Questions:

- Will the Living Wage Ordinance be in effect if you receive a grant from one of these funds?
 - Yes – the Living Wage Ordinance is a County ordinance. There are some exemptions based on the size of the organization and/or program. Waivers are also available in some cases.
- How will the Opportunity Index intersect with funding decisions?
 - We will be looking for applicants to utilize the Opportunity Index as part of the application, to indicate priority populations to be served, and the geography of areas to be served. Over time, the Opportunity Index will provide the possibility of measuring increased opportunity as a result of these funds, in a given area.

Clarifying funding eligibility:

- Since this is a City of Ann Arbor & Washtenaw County partnership, is there a portion of the funding that's restricted just to Ann Arbor entities?
 - The City of Ann Arbor leadership is discussing whether or not they will be limiting their funding to their jurisdiction. There is interest in potentially expanding their investments, although this has not been finalized.
- Looking at the elements for 5-year grants, what about innovative programs that have been running without funding? Are they considered new?
- One of the goals for the high impact funding is to scale the program in the best way to impact poverty, racism and trauma sustainably and over time. The high impact funding is not to sustain current programs. If there is an innovative program running without funding, how could this program scale - would an investment help stabilize the program and allow it to work more deeply with participants? Would it allow it to also support parents or others? Could it reach more people?
- Is there funding for systems change work or is it for direct service delivery only?
 - The High impact funding grants could very well be directed to systems change work

- Would this funding only be open to non-profit organizations? Would community members/organizations be able to apply for the human services mini-grants?
 - Yes. this funding will be available to community organizations, though there might be a requirement to work with another non-profit to serve as a fiduciary.
- Is this funding opportunity a good opportunity for religious organizations who provide community programs? Do we have to have a 501c3 status?
 - Yes, this funding is a good opportunity for all community organizations. As noted above, a relationship with another non-profit to serve as fiduciary may be required.
- Will the funding encourage inter-agency collaborations?
 - This funding will encourages the best innovation that provides scalability and sustainable high impacts over time. In many cases that could mean collaboration. In some cases it does not.

Funding for each category:

- There were a number of questions regarding the amount of funding, the duration of funding, and the range of funding amounts. Many of these elements are still under discussion with the potential funding partners. As soon as that info is available, we will post on the webpage.
- What is the total amount of dollars and how will the funds be split between categories?
 - To be determined. funding partners are in conversation currently.
- Did you say how much money is available for these various funding buckets?
 - To be determined. funding partners are in conversation currently.
- What are the approximate funding ranges for each category? How much funding is in each category?
 - To be determined. funding partners are in conversation currently.
- Do you have any idea about the approximate amount of funding available in each of the categories and average award amount for each category?
 - To be determined. funding partners are in conversation currently.
- For the categories, aside from the 5-year grants, are these 1- or 2-year grants?
 - The intent is for 5 year grants for both safety net and high-impacts funds. The mini-grants are being considered as 1 year grants currently.
- Can we apply for more than one bucket? Can organizations apply for more than 1 of the funding programs for different programs in their organization?
 - There is still some ongoing conversation about. We will make sure this question is addressed prior to opening a funding round as we know it might impact your decision to apply.

Categories of Funding:

Safety Net (5-year awards):

- Is the Safety Net funding also for 5 years as indicated in the poll, but not on the slide?
 - The safety net grants are being considered as 5 year grants. Apologies for not noting it on the slide.
- Are the Safety Net contracts pretty much going to be going to the previously funded COFU orgs?
 - In some cases, previously funded COFU grantees will receive safety net contracts, but it is not guaranteed.
- Is the safety net option by invitation only? What is meant by “non-competitive”?
 - Our goal is to specifically define the services to be provided. There would need to be a process per county policy similar to a request for qualifications or perhaps a request for proposals. It's not intended to be invitation only, any RFQ or RFP would be public.

- What exactly does it mean to be non-competitive? You have to be invited?
 - See notes above
- With the before and after school crisis for AAPS families (most under-resourced youth of any district) and I'm sure other districts are struggling as well, will the safety net category potentially cover this growing service gap?
 - Recently the County Board of Commissioners has dedicated some American Rescue Plan funding for Childcare services (ARPA). We are carefully monitoring ARPA fund usage to more clearly understand what services need funding in this category.
- How are the human services safety net contracts determined? Where would you anticipate funding streams like PSH services to reside? Safety net contracts? 5-year grants?
 - The areas recommended for safety net contracts are the emergency food system, housing and homelessness, child care (depending on ARPA funds), health care, etc.
- Would there be a limit to how many safety net grants an organization could apply for?
 - This has not been determined yet.
- Does Safety Net cover mental health services?
 - It could potentially, but similar to use of ARPA funds above, we want to be aware of where the County Mental Health Millage funds are able to cover services and programming.

Mini-grants (1-year awards):

- What would be the mini-grant funding amounts?
 - These haven't been determined, but likely less than \$50,000 each.
- For the mini grant, is it necessary for the idea or org to be BIPOC/minority-led or is it sufficient to have BIPOC/Minority in the leadership?
 - In the case of non-profit services providers, most in Washtenaw County are led by white women. Black, Indigenous, People of Color and Minority led speak to the desire to have those in leadership and management reflect some of the diversity of our community, and in particular the populations we serve. This prioritization for funding would include organizations or agencies led by Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) as well as other minorities which could also include or intersect with disabled, immigrant, LGBTQ, or other statuses or identifications
- One-year mini-grants for innovative/new programming seems too short of a timeframe for non-profits to ramp up, implement, and collect data / show impact.
 - Thank you for your feedback. We will keep this in mind.
- Please explain BIPOC.
 - BIPOC=Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
- In the Aging sector we see access barriers for older individuals in the remote areas of the county, so I would advocate that service delivery in the rural areas be a preference with BIPOC.
 - Thank you for your feedback. We will keep this in mind.

High Impact Human Services Grants – 5-year awards:

- Could you elaborate on what "competitive throughout" means regarding the 5-year grants? Do you mean like a pay-for-performance/outcomes model?
 - The 5 year high impact grants allow for the first year of funding to be dedicated towards strategic planning and goal setting to provide the foundation to sustainable high impact outcomes. Grantees will be working closely with an evaluator to capture outcomes, progress, and learnings. Should the initiative continue to meet the goals and outcomes established through the strategic planning/ goal setting phase funding will continue.

Technical Assistance & Strategic Planning:

- Does OCED offer technical assistance to organizations as they attempt to secure federal or national foundation funds? This is a difficult yet constant chasm in sustaining innovative programs.
 - No, OCED does not have the capacity to assist with fund development. However, this is a capacity we hope to grow internally.
- Would/could the 5-year human services grant include funding for strategic planning as a part of its requirement?
 - Yes. The 5 year high impact grants will include funding for the strategic planning year. The 5 year safety net grants would not.

Evaluation & Reporting:

- How will “DEI integration” be evaluated? I think sometimes organizations recognize this as a priority for funders so do something simple that ends up being costly for them but not as impactful as it could be.
 - We are still working on the details.
- You mentioned simplifying the application, but what about the reporting?
 - Reporting requirements will reflect the application process.
- Can you share more about the role of the evaluator?
 - OCED staff are meeting with multiple evaluation teams to determine the role and approach. More information will be shared as we have it.

Would there be additional funding to support evaluation?

- Support for evaluation will be included in the grant program.
- Will there be an opportunity for the evaluators to work directly with providers (in addition to working with the partnership as a whole)?
 - Evaluators will be working directly with and form relationships with grantees throughout the evaluation process.

Miscellaneous:

- Will there be another round of transition funds to cover the gap?
 - No
- Can you tell us who the partners are as of now?
 - Conversation with potential partners are on going. Those partners will be identified to community once the partnerships have been solidified.
- Is there the hope or possibility that this new structure might attract new/more funding to the partnership?
 - Yes. we do hope the new structure will support and attract new and more funding to the partnership.