Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Fund

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Spring 2021

About the Grant Program

Q: What is the purpose of the program?

The Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Fund supports Oakland-based, civically-engaged, BIPOC (Black/Indigenous/People of Color) artists/cultural practitioners to work with the communities they are rooted in to co-create a project driven by their vision of a just society.

Put simply, the Fund believes that BIPOC artists and cultural practitioners are essential to imagining and co-creating a racially just world.

Q: What kinds of projects will the grant support?

The Fund believes in artists'/cultural practitioners' ingenuity to imagine and bring to life, together with their community, a collective vision for a racially just city. The Fund will support projects that are bold in their challenge of policies, practices and systems that stand in the way of racial justice and belonging. Though grounded in critiques of oppressive racialized systems, projects should go beyond critiques to imaginings of a just city. Please see the guidelines for examples of projects that speak to the goals of *Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Fund*.

Q: What is the award amount?

Up to eight grants will be awarded for a period of **two years.** These 2-year grants will range from a total of $60,000 to $100,000, that is, from $30,000 to $50,000 per year.

In addition to the grant award, all awardees will receive up to an additional $3,600 to $6,000 **per year** (12% of the grant award) for "life sustaining" expenses (such as, student debt, healthcare, childcare, restorative activities/practices).

Q: When will announcement of grant awards be made?

Up to 20 Letters of Inquiry (LOI) applications will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal by mid-July 2021.

Up to eight two-year awards will be announced September 2021.

Q: If I receive a grant, what are the reporting requirements?

After the first year of the grant period, the main reporting requirement will be to have a conversation with a Fund representative about what has taken place, what you are learning, and what you have planned.

Each project must include at least one activity that shares the project vision with a broader community by the end of the 2-year grant period.

A simple accounting of how the grant funds and special stipends were spent will also be requested.

Q: Can I, as an artist/cultural practitioner, be included in multiple applications?

Yes, you can be named as an artist/cultural practitioner or group in multiple applications. However, the likelihood of receiving more than one award is slim. We encourage you to move forward with the project you believe is the strongest and most aligned with the program goals.

Q: Are matching funds required?

No, matching funds are not required. A project doesn't need to be large in scale or budget to be considered competitive. However, if the project budget significantly exceeds the requested grant amount, having additional secured or pending resources will strengthen the feasibility of the project. A detailed budget will not be required for the Letter of Inquiry (LOI) application.

Eligibility & Fiscal Sponsors: Who can apply?

Q: Am I eligible to apply?

- **Individual BIPOC artists**

  To be eligible to apply, an artist/cultural practitioner must identify as BIPOC (Black/Indigenous/People of Color), be based in Oakland, and have 501(c)(3) status to apply - either through having your own Oakland-based nonprofit organization or a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

- **BIPOC-led cultural groups and/or organizations**

  A group of artists/cultural practitioners must be BIPOC-led (though there may be non-BIPOC artists/cultural practitioners in the group), be principally-based in Oakland (though not all in the group need be based in Oakland), and have 501(c)(3) status to apply - either through having its own Oakland-based nonprofit organization or a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

Q: What if I am applying as an individual artist or collective and don't have a fiscal sponsor?

Eligible applicants must have a fiscal sponsor. We encourage you to find a fiscal sponsor whose mission aligns with and can best support *your project*.

At the LOI stage, you will not need to have identified a fiscal sponsor.

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal in the second stage, will need to provide information on their fiscal sponsor. To receive a grant award, a signed MOU with a fiscal sponsor must be submitted.

Q: Does my fiscal sponsor need to be in Oakland?

No. The Fund seeks to support Oakland's historically marginalized communities of color and the artists/cultural practitioners within them. While the Fund can only grant to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, we are aware that nonprofit infrastructure is challenged in communities of color

in Oakland. For that reason, fiscal sponsoring organizations **need not** be located in Oakland nor BIPOC-led.

Q: What is a fiscal sponsor?

A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that is willing and able to assume the legal responsibility to receive and administer grant funds in compliance with requirements. If you or your cultural group have never had a fiscal sponsor, you can find resources about fiscal sponsorship, including a list of arts-centered fiscal sponsors, here.

Use of Grant Funds: How can I use the money?

Q: Can my organization apply to receive general operating funds?

This is a project-based funding program. You or your group/organization may use a portion of grant funds towards overhead or general operating needs. However, the grant is not intended to be used 100% on general operations.

Q: How can the "special stipend" be used?

A special stipend equal to 12% of the grant amount will be added to each award. This stipend is meant to be used by the project artist(s)/cultural practitioner(s) for life sustaining expenses such as healthcare, childcare, student or other debt, restorative time or activities, or other such expenses. This stipend serves as a modest recognition of the hidden costs of maintaining cultural practices in Oakland's communities of color.

Application Process & Letters of Inquiry (LOI)

Q: What is the eligibility quiz?

In order to submit an application, you will be asked a series of questions that ensures you are eligible to apply to the grant program.

The eligibility quiz saves prospective applicants from going through the process of submitting a full application if they are not eligible to receive the grant. Eligible applicants will be given

access to submit Letters of Inquiry and work samples after meeting basic eligibility requirements.

Q: The guidelines mention a two-step application process. What does this mean?

This year's application process is slightly different from last year's in that there are two steps to applying for the grant.

The first step is to complete a brief online Letter of Inquiry (LOI) application.

This includes:

- a brief (300 word) description of the project
- some basic information about your project
- some demographic information
- a work sample

LOIs will be reviewed and ranked by peer readers and the Fund's leadership team. Up to 20 LOI applications will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal. The rest will receive notification that their application has been declined. For those declined, the process will end there.

In the last round, the Fund received over 100 applications for a small number of grants. The grantmaking process is very competitive and many worthy projects were not able to be funded.

The second step will be for those who have been invited to submit a full proposal.

Full proposals will need to include a project budget, short artist/cultural practitioner bios, and more project details. Proposals will be due within three weeks after receiving the invitation and will be reviewed by peer panelists. Those who submit a full proposal will receive an honorarium of $300 for the effort required to submit a full proposal.

Up to eight two-year grant awards will be announced September 2021.

Q: What will help me write a competitive Letter of Inquiry (LOI)?

We encourage applicants to directly address the questions asked in the application and to try to convey your project vision as faithfully as possible. Your LOI will be ranked using the Review Criteria listed in the guidelines. It will be helpful to have the Review Criteria in front of you as you write your LOI.

The Review Criteria:

- *Quality of radical imagination and action for a just Oakland*
- *Depth of cultural/aesthetic practices*
- *Quality of relationship and engagement between the artists/cultural practitioners and the community(ies) centered in the project*

Q: Do I have to submit an artistic/cultural work sample?

Yes, it is a requirement to submit one work sample.This can be a link to your website or social media, a video, photographs, or a sample of written work.

Q: Why do you need to collect demographic information?

We are looking to serve a variety of BIPOC communities in Oakland. This information helps us to see what communities you belong to and want to work with.

Application Support & Technical Assistance

Application Webinars:
- Wednesday, May 12, 2021 10:00am-11:30am Register to attend the webinar.
- Monday, May 24, 2021, 5:30pm – 7:00pm: Register to attend the webinar.

Recording of the webinar will be posted on the grant website for those unable to attend.

Q: Can I contact someone if I have questions or need technical support with my application?

Yes. We are hosting **two** application webinars with time for questions about the program and/or application process.

For quick questions, you can email Michelle Mush Lee, Program Manager, at justcityfund@eastbaycf.org.

You can also schedule 20-minute phone appointments with Mush Monday - Wednesday 10am - 5pm at: https://bookwholestory.as.me/jccf.

If you are having technical difficulties with the online application, please submit a SMA Help Desk ticket, they typically reply within an hour: https://eastbaycf.smapply.io/helpdesk/

About the Online Application Portal (SurveyMonkey Apply)

We've put together a list of tips on how to navigate SurveyMonkey here.