



Empowering NYC's Black Communities

Request for Letters of Interest

April 21, 2021

Black Americans make up 24 percent of New York City's population (about 3 million people), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Black New Yorkers have experienced inequities and systems of oppression throughout the history of our country. A [2019 report](#) by the New York City Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity found that as a group, they continue to be at or near the bottom of economic (wages, income, wealth), social (educational attainment), and other key indicators of progress and wellbeing (quality of life, life expectancy).

And yet, Black New Yorkers are an indelible part of the City's cultural, economic and political heritage, and make our city work. Black New Yorkers are artists and attorneys, youth counselors and police officers, bike messengers and small business owners, doctors and nurses, dancers and developers, CEOs and construction workers. Black New Yorkers lead movements for food access, environmental justice, digital equity, LGBTQ rights, disability rights, and police reform. While at the forefront of multi-racial Black Lives Matter protests, Black New Yorkers are also helping mobilize multi-racial responses to anti-Asian violence.

To expand The New York Community Trust's outreach and support to Black-led organizations working to achieve social and systemic change in the City, we are issuing this *invitation-only* request for letters of interest, which is made possible by a contribution from Facebook with matching dollars from The Trust. We expect to make approximately 20 two-year grants ranging from \$40,000 to \$100,000 per year for projects that are designed to benefit and empower a predominantly Black constituency or community. *Priority will be given to organizations that are not frequent or current Trust grantees* that meet at least two of these criteria: (1) the Executive Director or CEO is Black (in the case of co-directors, at least one of the co-directors must be Black); (2) the Board has a majority or plurality of Black members; and/or (3) the senior management is majority Black.

Grants will be awarded for projects that address the needs and concerns of Black New Yorkers in the fields of arts and culture, education, community development, technical assistance, and civil rights. At least two-thirds of the people engaged by and/or served by the project must be Black (including Latinx individuals who identify as Afro-Latinx). Priority will be given to efforts that advance social and/or systems change, including:

- civic engagement;
- policy advocacy;
- community organizing to further advocacy for a specific policy change;
- building wealth;
- leadership development; and
- narrative change.

Grants will be awarded to New York City 501(c)(3) organizations with a track record of robust programming and services for Black residents and communities. (Groups that do not yet have 501(c)(3) status may apply using a funds administrator/fiscal sponsor.) ***This request for letters of interest is by invitation only and is not transferable.*** (The Trust's ongoing competitive proposal process remains open and does not require an invitation; more information on applying to the open process is available [here](#).)

Content of Letters of Interest

The deadline to submit letters of interest is Tuesday, May 18, 2021. Letters must be submitted electronically no later than 6:00pm on May 18, 2021 through The New York Community Trust's Grants Portal. The letter should contain:

1. A Narrative that responds to the following questions in no more than 3 pages (single-spaced, 12-point font):

- a. What are your organization's mission, values, and history?
- b. In what ways is your organization Black-led?
- c. What programs or services do you provide to improve the lives and wellbeing of Black residents and communities in New York City?
- d. What is the proposed project, and what activities are involved?
- e. Who will benefit from this project? How will the proposed project serve and empower Black New Yorkers and communities? Does the project have a specific geographic or demographic focus, and if so what is the focus?
- f. In what ways does the proposed project advance social justice and/or systems change? What does success look like after a two-year period?
- g. What are the longer-term goals for the project? How do you anticipate sustaining the project in the years to come?

2. A Project Budget that includes itemized personnel, non-personnel, and administrative costs as well as the total cost of the project and the amount requested. If the project budget is larger than the amount requested, please include other sources of possible or confirmed funding.

Submission Instructions

Step One: Prepare your letter of inquiry and budget (as listed above) and combine them into a single PDF saved with the filename format "Organization Name.pdf".

Step Two: Go to The Trust's Grant Portal (<https://proposals.nycommunitytrust.org/>). Click on the "Apply Here" button at the bottom of the page, then find the "**(Invitation Only) Empowering NYC Black Communities LOI**" and click on the "Apply" button.

Step Three: Complete the LOI profile and upload your single PDF file.

Finalists will be notified by email if the project described in the LOI is of interest to The Trust, and then may be asked to submit additional information. The Trust's program staff may also follow-up by phone or request a virtual meeting.

Grants awards will be announced in October.

If you have questions about this request for letters of intent, please reach out to Barbara Taveras at bat@nyct-cfi.org.