



## **Roosevelt Island Public Purpose Fund Request for Proposals January 2026**

The Roosevelt Island Public Purpose Fund (The Fund) in The New York Community Trust is now accepting proposals from Roosevelt Island nonprofits that provide direct services or benefits to Roosevelt Island residents.

### **Background**

The New York Community Trust (The Trust) is a public charity founded in 1924. As New York's community foundation, The Trust engages in enduring and innovative philanthropy to promote equitable and thriving communities in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester.

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) was created in 1984 by the State of New York as a public benefit corporation with a mission to plan, design, develop, operate, and maintain Roosevelt Island. After the construction of Manhattan Park, a public purpose fund was established in lieu of the developers paying sales tax on construction materials. In 1989, RIOC began providing public purpose funding to local nonprofits to benefit Roosevelt Island residents and enhance their quality of life. In January 2022, RIOC asked The Trust to administer the public purpose grants and created the Roosevelt Island Public Purpose Fund (The Fund) at The New York Community Trust to administer public purpose funding (PPF).

### **The Opportunity**

The Fund expects to award **\$260,000** through **one-year grants of up to \$30,000** to nonprofits currently operating regular, ongoing programming on Roosevelt Island. Grant funds will support programs or projects that provide important services—including, but not limited to, educational opportunity, artistic and cultural enrichment, improved health, or a better environment—for the Roosevelt Island community. Priority will be given to projects that reach underresourced communities on the Island, and that have plans for long-term engagement with project beneficiaries.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible, nonprofits must:

- Be a public charity incorporated or registered to do business in the State of New York that is tax-exempt under IRS section 501(c)3, or a fiscally administered program of such an agency;
- Demonstrate adherence to good financial practices (e.g., no negative net assets, balanced budgets); and
- Have a board of directors with at least four unrelated members, with no more than one paid staff person as a voting member of the board. (A specific exemption to this rule applies to hospitals and medical associations.)

Ineligible for funding are:

- Requests from government-related entities;
- Requests for general operating support (note that administrative costs associated with your proposed project are allowable and encouraged);
- Capital project support requests;
- Efforts that solely benefit one individual or family;
- Sponsored fundraising events.

## Proposal Materials

A complete proposal will include a proposal narrative, project budget, annual operating budgets and financials, and a board list. All materials should be combined and saved as **a single PDF less than 25 MB in size**.

### ☐ **Proposal narrative**

Prepare a narrative of **up to six pages**, responding to the following questions:

1. What is your agency's background (history, mission, major activities, and credentials for carrying out the project for which you are requesting funding)?
2. What is the challenge or service gap you are trying to solve through your project?
3. What is your proposed project? Include:
  - a. **Goals and objectives**—what do you aim to accomplish?
  - b. **Planned activities**—what activities will you undertake to accomplish your goals? Be specific, describe concrete actions, and describe the timeline for your project.
  - c. **Population served**—what communities will you serve through this project? Be specific and include any demographic information or other characteristics.
  - d. **Expected results**—what change do you expect to see as a result of your project? How will you track your success?
  - e. **Plans for long-term engagement**—do you plan to sustain programming over time, and how?
4. If you received a grant from the Roosevelt Island Public Purpose Fund in 2025, please provide up to one additional page describing the project for which you received the grant, and your accomplishments so far. (If you were not a grantee in 2025, disregard this question.)

### ☐ **Project budget (not included in the page limit)**

Your itemized project budget should reflect the full expenses for carrying out the project you have described in your proposal narrative. It should include:

- Itemized expenses for the project
- Income and funding sources for the project (received and anticipated)

You may include in-kind income and expenses.

Generally, your project budget should be less than your annual budget. The review committee may choose to adjust grant allocations from the proposed request.

□ **Annual operating budgets and financials (not included in the page limit)**

Provide your organizational operating budget for the last year and the current year. Include income, expenses, and net assets.

If net assets are negative, please provide an explanation for how your organization plans to address this challenge. Fiscally sponsored organizations should provide the operating budgets for both their own organization and the fiscal administrator.

□ **List of board of directors, including affiliations (not included in the page limit)**

Provide a list of your board of directors with their affiliations. The Trust generally requires that a board should have at least 4 members; all board members should be unrelated; and no more than one board member should be a paid staff member. Fiscally sponsored organizations should provide the board list for only the fiscal administrator.

□ ***OPTIONAL: Electronic work samples or videos (not included in the page limit)***

You may include up to 3 electronic links or URLs to work samples and/or video material. Videos must not be longer than 3 minutes. Links must be included in your PDF submission; any electronic work samples or videos sent outside your PDF submission will not be passed along to the review committee.

## **How to Submit**

Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than **Friday, March 6, 2026, 5:00 pm ET** on The New York Community Trust's online [Grantseeker Portal](https://grantseeker.thenytrust.org/).

Please gather all proposal materials and save them as a single PDF. Have your information ready before submission, as the application should be completed in one session to avoid errors.

1. Go to The Trust's Grantseeker Portal: <https://grantseeker.thenytrust.org/>
2. Click on the "Apply Here" button at the bottom of the page.
3. Under "Available LOIs," find "**Roosevelt Island Public Purpose Fund**," and click on the "Apply" button.
4. Complete the cover sheet questions and upload your proposal materials as **a single PDF**. Click "Upload" to submit your application materials.

## **Review Criteria & Process**

Proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis by an independent review committee of Roosevelt Island community members who live, work, or volunteer on the Island. Review committee members will remain anonymous until after the awards are announced. Priority will be given to organizations that:

- Currently operate on Roosevelt Island
- Have been in existence for at least two years
- Have an annual operating budget that is under \$10 million
- Demonstrate a history of commitment to and proven track record of serving Roosevelt Island residents

- Fill a critical gap in services to underresourced communities—including low-income families, people with disabilities, and communities of color—on the Island
- Clearly articulate activities, timeline, and expected results
- Aim for long-term engagement with project beneficiaries on Roosevelt Island
- If a previous recipient of public purpose funds, satisfactorily accomplished or are on track to accomplish the goals of their last project

Applicants are not guaranteed an award and may not receive the full amount requested in their proposal. Grant recipients may be asked to provide a revised project budget reflecting a significant reduction in awarded funds from the initial request.

Trust staff may request follow-up meetings with nonprofit applicants after all proposals have been received to learn more about the organization and the proposed project.

### **Award Notification**

Notification of award status will be made in May 2026. Grant recipients will provide ACH (electronic banking) information and sign a grant letter via a secure DocuSign process.

Grant payment will be made once a signed grant letter and ACH information are received. A final report narrative and financial report will be due at the end of the grant period.

Note that if a grantee received an award from the Fund in 2025, they also must submit a satisfactory final report for their 2025 grant before payment in 2026 is made.

Please add [noreply@thenytrust.org](mailto:noreply@thenytrust.org) to your address book so that our communications do not get caught in your spam filters.

### **Questions**

All prospective applicants should direct all inquiries about grants to The New York Community Trust. Please do not contact staff at RIOC about this opportunity.

Julia Chang, Associate Director, Philanthropic Strategy at The New York Community Trust, is your primary contact and will be happy to answer any questions. She also can address any technical issues that may arise during your submission process on the grantseeker portal. You can contact her at [jchang@thenytrust.org](mailto:jchang@thenytrust.org).

### **Schedule**

January 23, 2026	<a href="#">Grantseeker portal</a> is open for applications.
January 26, 2026, 12:00 pm ET	An informational webinar will be held via Zoom for interested applicants.  To RSVP, please email <a href="mailto:jchang@thenytrust.org">jchang@thenytrust.org</a> with your name and the name of your organization, letting us know that you would like

	to attend. Your participant link will be sent to you.
March 6, 2026, 5:00 pm ET	Proposals are due in The Trust's grantseeker portal.
March 2026	Trust staff may contact applicants for clarifying information and to schedule site visits.
April 2026	Review committee conducts review and evaluation, and makes grant recommendations.
By May 29, 2026	Grant awards and decline notices sent to all applicants.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What materials do I need in my application?**

The application should include:

- Proposal narrative (up to 6 pages); if you received a PPF grant in 2025, this proposal narrative must also include a one-page response (for a total of up to 7 pages) to question #4.
- Project budget.
- Annual operating budgets and financials for both the last year and the current year (if you are fiscally sponsored, provide these for both your own organization and your fiscal administrator).
- List of board of directors, with their affiliations (if you are fiscally sponsored, provide this for only your funds administrator).
- OPTIONAL: Up to 3 links to electronic work samples or video material that cannot exceed 3 minutes.

### **Do my financials and board list count toward the page limit?**

No, they do not. The page limit applies only to your proposal narrative.

### **What period should my project budget cover?**

Your project budget should cover one year, beginning in May 2026 and ending in April 2027.

### **How will grant payment work if I am awarded a grant?**

If you are awarded a grant, you will sign a grant letter and provide ACH information for your organization via a secure DocuSign process. Payment will be made via ACH.

### **Can I include administrative costs in my project budget?**

Yes. We expect and encourage every project budget to include staff time and overhead costs. Overhead costs in your project budget can be included at a percentage commensurate with your project's relationship to your total organizational budget.

If your staff is unpaid, it is good practice to include in-kind expense and income for the value of their donated time.

### **What are capital project costs? Can equipment purchases be included in my project budget?**

Brick and mortar capital projects will not be funded. However, equipment purchases are an allowable project expense.

### **Can I apply for funding for an existing program?**

Yes. This program will make project grants to both existing and new programs. Nonprofits can submit applications for existing programs that they have run in prior years.

**What is the board requirement? What if I don't meet the board requirement?**

The New York Community Trust's institutional policy requires that grantee nonprofits must have at minimum four independent board members, only one of whom should be a paid staff member. We use the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) standards to guide this policy but are more flexible than their recommendation of five, to accommodate smaller and newer organizations. If your organization does not meet this board requirement, you are welcome to apply using a funds administrator who does meet our eligibility requirements.

**What if I'm not yet a 501(c)3, but my organization serves Roosevelt Island? Can I still apply?**

Organizations that provide direct services or benefits to Roosevelt Island but are not yet incorporated as a 501(c)3 can apply, if they so choose, under a funds administrator (e.g., fiscal sponsor) who meets eligibility requirements.

**What is the grant period? What is the period in which my grant funds should be spent?**

The grant period for this cycle will be from May 2026 to late April 2027. Your grant funds should be used within this period. For example, the grant should not support expenses that occur before the grant period starts (i.e., activities and related expenses that take place in April 2026 are ineligible).

**When will I receive notification about grant award decisions?**

The Trust plans to send notification about grant award decisions in May 2026.