



INVESTING IN SOCIAL WORK'S FUTURE: COLLABORATION, INNOVATION, IMPACT

Request for Proposals – December 2021

The New York Community Trust (The Trust), established in 1924, is one of the largest and oldest community foundations in the United States. With assets of more than \$3 billion, it makes close to \$50 million in competitive grants across three areas—Healthy Lives, Promising Futures and Thriving Communities—for a range of research, advocacy, and service delivery projects.

For almost 50 years, The New York Community Trust has supported social work education and research, professional development for social workers, and initiatives to elevate the profession and amplify social work voices in public policy discussions. This support has been made possible by several funds left to The Trust to strengthen the ability of the social work profession to address social causes, increase the quality and effectiveness of social services through the education and training of professional social work personnel, and providing scholarship assistance to individuals in the field of social work.

Social workers are integral to the nation's ability to address its most profound challenges, including recovery from the harms resulting from racism and income inequality as well as recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The interconnections of income inequality with gender, race, and culture are a reality, as is the fact that systems—be it government, nonprofit, academic, or community—interact and contribute to inequities.

Social work professionals are uniquely situated to repair these harms and lead systemic recovery efforts; in fact, it is essential that they do so. However, to successfully mobilize the hundreds of thousands of professional social workers and their institutions, investments are needed in the capacity and infrastructure of the profession in places where social workers are trained and where they practice their trade.

The Trust's *Investing in Social Work's Future: Collaboration, Innovation, Impact* initiative seeks to address the contemporary challenges and opportunities facing the field and profession of social work and to recognize the racial and social justice issues that will increasingly define social work in the 21st century. This grantmaking strategy is informed by experts in the field and builds on The Trust's earlier successes advancing the practice of social work. This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks funding requests for innovative projects that will help realize a transformative future for social work.

Grantmaking Strategy

This RFP seeks proposals in three categories—all with an explicit goal to address racial, economic, and social inequities and injustices. The categories are:

- I. Community agency collaborations with academic institutions to address pressing social needs in a particular community.
- II. Efforts to expand the pipeline of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds into academic social work programs.
- III. Building the capacity and stature of the social work profession through policy, advocacy, and/or research.

Category I: Community agency collaborations with academic institutions to address pressing social needs in a particular community.

Selected projects will help community social service and health agencies join with schools of social work to develop sustainable solutions to identified and compelling community needs. The lead applicant must be a nonprofit human service and/or health care organization or an association or federation of such organizations. The academic institution (co-primary investigator) must be a college or university that is a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program.

If focused on direct service, the proposed project should be designed to help a specific group, population, or community achieve greater access to information or assistance that will enable them to make informed decisions and improve their lives and the lives of others. If the project's focus is less on providing direct service and more on resolving a systemic issue for the community, i.e., lack of access to educational opportunities or barriers to financial independence, the project should be designed to help community residents exert influence in collaboration with the community agency and academic institution partners.

Proposals should:

- define the community(ies) that is the focus of the proposed project;
- identify the specific community needs addressed through the collaboration, defined either geographically or by population group;
- explain how community members participated in identifying the needs;
- identify the specific roles, responsibility, and decision-making authority of each partner as well as the level of in-kind support provided by the academic institution (whether the specific school or college of social work or the larger academic institution); and
- describe how the project will respond to injustice and inequities and/or reduce income disparities in the identified community.

To be considered for funding, projects must be new (as opposed to ongoing efforts); focused in New York City, Nassau, Suffolk and/or Westchester counties; include leadership roles for and participation of community members; provide internship opportunities for MSW students; and have the potential for expansion or adaptation in other communities using similar strategies and similar partnerships.

The Trust expects to award up to five, two-year grants of up to \$500,000 (\$250,000 each year) in Category 1.

Category II: Expanding the pipeline of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds into academic social work programs.

Selected projects will be designed to increase the percentage of social work students and graduates who are people of color or are from low-income backgrounds as well as to ensure a pipeline of diverse social work faculty for the future. The lead applicant must be a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited nonprofit university, school, or department of social work. Proposals may be submitted individually or by a consortium of higher education institutions. Lead applicants are encouraged to partner with nonprofit organizations, colleges, labor unions, faith communities, government entities and other community-based organizations to identify potential and non-traditional recruits. Proposed projects may be entirely new or build on existing efforts to engage, recruit, and retain BSW, MSW, or PhD/DSW students. (Projects may, but need not, include all three student groups.)

Proposals should:

- include the institution's current demographics;
- delineate how the project will address both the recruitment and retention of students; and
- explain how the proposed strategy is different from the institution's current practices.

To be considered for funding, the applicant institution(s) is expected to provide a match equaling 15 percent (or more) of the proposed project budget. The match may be provided through in-kind commitments (letters of commitment required).

Applicants must be based in New York City, Nassau, Suffolk, and/or Westchester counties, but the proposed strategies should have potential for use beyond the New York City metropolitan area. Proposals that include **only** a scholarship assistance strategy will not be considered.

The Trust expects to award up to 10, two-year grants of up to \$200,000 (\$100,000 each year) in Category 2.

Category III: Building capacity and stature of the social work profession through policy, advocacy, and/or research.

Selected projects will strengthen the social work profession's voice, capacity, and stature through policy, advocacy and/or research. They also will advance innovation in the field. This category is open to local, state, and national nonprofit organizations; associations and federations of nonprofit organizations; public policy institutes and think-tanks; and institutions of higher education. Institutions where the majority of both staff and board are people of color are encouraged to apply. Issues to be addressed are not limited to the New York City metropolitan region.

Proposals should:

- identify the area or social work field of practice that the project aims to change;
- identify how the proposed project will increase the access of individuals from underrepresented communities to leadership roles; and
- explain how the stature and positioning of social workers and the social work profession will be enhanced.

Policy and advocacy proposals should include strategies for engaging more social workers in these activities, particularly those practicing on the community level. Policy and advocacy proposals also should explain how the role and voice of social workers in multidisciplinary settings will be enhanced.

Research projects should address the infrastructure that supports researchers' interactions with stakeholders. Projects or surveys must include plans for disseminating results to practitioners, social service and health care agencies, and the communities in which they work as well to the general public. Support for individual academic research projects will **not** be considered.

The Trust expects to award up to five, two-year grants of \$100,000 (\$50,000 each year) in Category 3.

Submission Materials

In addition to any specific requirements detailed in the three RFP areas above, all submissions must include the following:

1. A **Proposal Cover Sheet** for *Investing in Social Work's Future: Collaboration, Innovation, Impact RFP*. Please make sure the top of the Proposal Cover Sheet you fill out says it is for this specific RFP, **not** The Trust's regular competitive grants program or another RFP. Details on how to complete this form are provided in the Submission Process section of this RFP.
2. A **cover letter** on the applicant institution's letterhead signed by the president of the nonprofit or academic institution (or if it is a school of social work as the lead applicant, the dean of the school) committing to the project (including any in-kind requirements) and serving as the institutional official authorized to request and receive grant funds.
3. An **executive summary** (up to one page) which outlines:
 - Which of the three categories the project will address;
 - The systemic issue(s) that the project seeks to address;
 - The qualifications of the applicant organizations(s) to address the issue(s);
 - Specific activities that the grant funds would support; and
 - Expected measurable outcomes from the project.

4. **A proposal narrative detailing the project.** The narrative should be between 10 to 15 single-spaced, typewritten pages, exclusive of the executive summary, bibliography, reference tables, figures, budgets, letters, and other attachments detailed below. Please use a 12-point type font, at least 1-inch margins, and number all proposal narrative pages. The narrative should include:
 - A description of the applicant institution’s background (mission, major activities, credentials for carrying out the project) and similar summaries for any partner institutions;
 - A brief statement of the problem you seek to address;
 - A description of your plans to address the problem, including the project’s:
 - goals and objectives;
 - planned activities, including who will be served; and
 - expected outcomes and plan for measuring results;
 - A plan for disseminating the findings and outcomes of the project to social work stakeholders, allied disciplines, and the general public; and
 - A plan to sustain the effort beyond the two-year grant period.
5. **Letters of support/partnership** that reflect specific roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority of each partner and levels of in-kind or other financial support.
6. **An itemized project budget.** This budget should include expenses and confirmed or pending revenue sources for the project, rounding all budget figures to the nearest thousand. Please identify any in-kind time provided by the institution or partner institutions to support the project. For applicants from outside of the New York City area, please ensure the budget includes cost of attending an annual grantee convening in New York (should the convening occur in person).
7. **Current year board-approved annual operating budget for the applicant organization and any partner organizations that will receive grant funds.**
8. **Applicant institution’s audited financial statements or signed IRS Form 990.** Statements or 990 may not be older than fiscal year 2020, with a preference for fiscal year 2021.
9. **A list of the applicant institution’s board of directors.** Note any paid directors or those related to each other.

Submission Directions

1. Assemble and merge items **2 to 9** from the Submission Materials section into a single PDF file no more than 25 MB in size, name it in the following format: “*Applicant Organization Name.pdf*”.
2. Complete an *Investing in Social Work’s Future: Collaboration, Innovation, Impact RFP* [Proposal Cover Sheet](#).
 - a. For purposes of the staff and board ethnicity breakdown, please provide information for the entire institution, not just the department where the work may occur. These fields cannot be left blank. Applications without this information will not be considered.
 - b. If you are applying from an academic institution or research university, your department administrator can provide the EIN, staff composition, and/or other information requested on the Proposal Cover Sheet. Some applicants prefer to have the grant go to a funds administrator (e.g., a research foundation for the institution). The proposal coversheet allows this option. You will need to (i) check the box noting that is your preference, and (ii) enter the funds administrator’s EIN on the form in the appropriate location.
 - c. Applicant institutions should note The Trust’s policy for overhead costs for grant administration for projects at universities, hospitals, academic medical centers, and affiliated nonprofit fiscal sponsors (e.g. foundations that receive private funds on behalf of the institution). **Overhead costs may not exceed five percent of the total project budget. Administrative costs related to carrying out the proposed grant activities,**

including space, supplies, and technology for project staff, are not subject to the five percent limit, and should be identified separately in the proposed budget.

3. Because you will need to submit the proposal and the Proposal Cover Sheet together, we recommend making sure your proposal (items 2 to 9 in the Submission Materials section) are in a single PDF prior to starting the Proposal Cover Sheet. You will know you have been successful in submitting both when after uploading the document you see “You have successfully uploaded your PDF” on your screen.
4. Once uploaded, check the certification box at the end and click submit. You will get an email confirming the proposal has been received. This email will include—as a PDF attachment—the Proposal Cover Sheet you just completed. The email will be sent to the email address entered in the “Information about Person Completing this Form” field on the Proposal Cover Sheet.
5. Please note The Trust's communications about the result of your submission will be by email, whether notification of a decline or grant. Please add noreply@nycommunitytrust.org to your address book so important communications do not get caught in spam filters.

Information Sessions on RFP

The Trust will convene two virtual informational sessions to answer applicant questions regarding this RFP: **Tuesday, December 14, 2021 from 3:30pm to 5pm (Eastern)** and **Wednesday, January 12, 2022 from 3:30pm to 5:00pm**. The same information will be covered at each session. Registration is required to attend these sessions. To register, please click on your preferred date, December 14 or January 12.

1/13/22 update: If you were unable to join a session, a recording of the January 12, 2022 session can be found [here](#).

Timeline for Proposal Submission and Funding Decisions

- Proposals are due by **5pm (Eastern) on Monday, February 14, 2022.**
(Submitted electronically via The New York Community Trust's portal through its website)
- Grant approvals and declines issued by **Friday, June 17, 2022.**
- Grant period will be from **Friday, July 1, 2022 through Sunday, June 30, 2024.**

Grantees will be expected to attend at least one group convening each year, hosted by The Trust, to share experiences and learning. Convenings will be virtual or in-person depending on the pandemic health and safety protocols at the point of the convening.

Questions about this RFP?

Direct RFP content questions to Irfan Hasan, Deputy Vice President for Grants, at iha@nyct-cfi.org.

For assistance completing the proposal coversheet, uploading the proposal, or navigating The Trust's portal, contact Melanie DeLorenzo, Grants Manager, at mdl@nyct-cfi.org.