Investing in Collaborative Implementation

The Wells Fargo Regional Foundation has learned from its grantees, its philanthropic peers, and many others in the field of community revitalization, the importance of supporting collaborative neighborhood revitalization efforts. As such, the Foundation has committed to providing increased grant funds to revitalization initiatives, which are implemented by a collaborative group of cross-sector partners.

Implementation Grant Funding for Collaboratives

A larger dollar Implementation Grant is open to collaboratives, which consist of one lead grantee and at least two sub-grantee partners. Sub-grantees partners should be formal organizations working in the neighborhood that can bring significant, complimentary expertise, services, capacity or assets to the revitalization effort. These sub-grantees would be in addition to the informal resident groups that are critical to the work.

A collaborative of cross-sector partners may apply for an Implementation Grant of up to $1.25MM over five years and renewal funding of up to $825,000 over five years. Dollar amount is subject to the number of partners and scope of the proposed implementation efforts.

Each collaborative must select a lead organization to represent the entire collaborative and serve as the grant’s fiscal agent. The lead organization is responsible for coordinating the collaborative’s planning and overall implementation of activities, as well as receiving and managing grant funds. Building and sustaining a strong relationship between the lead organization and collaborative members (sub-grantees) is paramount. As such, the Foundation requires that the lead organization (with the sub-grantees) develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines roles and responsibilities prior to applying for a collaborative Implementation Grant. The MOU should be approved by the lead organization and the sub-grantees (in accordance to the policies and procedures of each organization).

It is the responsibility of the lead organization to determine, at the onset of the grant application, the appropriate grant amounts to be requested for each sub-grantee based upon each sub-grantee’s demonstrated capacity to implement the requested programming as well as the proposed scope of services. Sub-grantees are members of the funding collaborative who will be receiving grant funds through the fiscal agent (lead organization) to perform specific activities agreed upon at the outset of the grant, or as amended by mutual agreement by the Foundation and the lead organization.

Eligibility Requirements

The lead organization must demonstrate the following to be considered for funding:

- Sufficient organizational capacity and depth of leadership to represent the entire collaborative and serve as the grant’s fiscal agent (e.g., financial capacity, political capacity, communication capacity, evaluation capacity).
- Incorporation as 501(c)(3) and ability to provide 3 years of audited financial statements.
- Support of a strong and engaged Board of Directors who are fully aware of the goals of the collaborative and the lead organization’s roles and responsibilities within the collaborative.
- Strong information management systems (e.g., databases, technical capacity) and experienced administrative staff equipped to oversee, manage and support collaborative partners (i.e., sub-grantees).
- Past experience managing collaborative members (i.e. sub-grantees) and working in collaborative.
- Past experience working with consultants.
- Credibility and strong reputation within the communities engaged in the revitalization project.
- Commitment to and equipped with the mechanisms for communicating regularly (and transparently) with the members of the collaborative, other stakeholders, and residents about the revitalization process.
- Commitment to and equipped with a range of mechanisms for capturing feedback from collaborative members, other stakeholders, and residents about the revitalization process.
- Willing and able to establish and implement a participatory evaluation framework for the overall initiative, holding collaborative members accountable for continuous learning and refinement.
- Willing and able to ensure that each collaborative member develops and tracks measureable goals and makes refinement for these goals as needed to ensure maximum impact.
- Willing and able to manage political issues, bring people together from different factions, manage conflict, and cooperate with elected officials and various government agencies.

The fiscal agent responsibilities of the lead organization include, at minimum, the following:
- Determination of the amounts provided to each sub-grantee (collaborative member) based upon each sub-grantee’s demonstrated capacity to implement the requested programming as well as the proposed scope of services. This budget should be determined prior to application.
- Maintenance of separate records of disbursements related to this grant.
- Keeping acknowledgements from sub-grantees of the receipt of funds for at least 3 years following the receipt of the grant.
- Making financial records (use of grant funds, 990’s, financial audits etc.) available upon request.
- Disbursing funds amongst collaborative partners in accordance with the purpose of the grant application and based upon performance against pre-determined milestones and activities.
- Communicates financial or performance issues with the Foundation as they arise.

The sub-grantees must meet the following financial and operational requirements, at minimum to be considered for funding as part of the collaborative:
- Incorporation as 501(c)(3) and ability to provide a minimum of 3 years of 990s, but preferably 3 years of audited financial statements.
- Performs roles and responsibilities as stipulated in the collaborative’s MOU.
- Understands and communicates its complementary role in the revitalization project, contributing to the breadth of the collaborative’s expertise and sphere of influence.
- Participate in the participatory evaluation framework for the overall initiative, developing and tracking measureable goals, and sharing this information with the collaborative as relevant and supportive of the revitalization milestone.
- Provides the lead organization with quarterly performance reports against agreed upon milestones and activities in agreed upon timeframes.
- Regularly attends meetings of the collaborative and contributes to communal problem solving.
- Maintains records of grant fund expenditures for at least 3 years following the end of the grant period.
- Provides financial records requested by the lead organization (receipts, 990s, audits, etc.) within agreed upon timeframes.
- Spends funds in accordance with the purpose of the grant.