

SUMMARY

Grants in this cycle will provide **multi-year flexible funding** for current and emerging **collaborative systems change initiatives/projects** that are working to get at the root of why complex issues continue to exist. We will fund efforts that align with one or more of the following grant priorities:

- Early Care and Education (ages birth to 5)
- Housing Access
- Mental Health
- Substance Use

Multi-year Award Amount: Up to \$100,000 each year

Grant Duration: 3 years

To Apply: Submit a Letter of Intent (1-2 pages) by April 26, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

A strong proposal will:

- Focus on an initiative/project aiming to impact at least one of the four grant priorities
- Describe a problem your project is trying to solve and how you will address the root cause of the problem
- Share how you're working alongside community partners to create lasting, equitable change

ELIGIBILITY

We invite proposals from organizations that meet the following criteria:

- You are an organization with a 501(c)(3) status, governmental body such as a school or municipality, or you have a fiscal sponsor that is an eligible organization.
- Your initiative is focused within one or more of these geographic areas: Brown, Calumet, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, and Winnebago counties and the Oneida Nation.
- Your initiative focuses on at least one of the grant priorities: Early Care and Education (ages birth to 5), Housing Access, Mental Health, and Substance Use.
- Your initiative focuses on systems change (aims to address the root cause(s) of why a problem continues to exist) and is working in collaboration with the community to affect this change.

GRANT PRIORITIES

The Basic Needs Giving Partnership has three focus areas, **Foundations to Thrive, Belonging and Connection, and Economic Prosperity**. Grants for this cycle will support initiatives focusing on at least one of these **Foundations to Thrive** priorities:

Early Care and Education (ages birth to 5): All families have access to timely, affordable, and quality child care. Communities are supported by child care options that meet the needs of families, quality care that supports the early learning and development of infants and young children, and funding models that provide sustainable support for birth to 5 systems of care.

Housing Access: All households have access to timely, safe, affordable, and supportive housing. Communities are supported with the housing options needed for all life stages and circumstances, a Housing First approach to permanent housing (housing needs come before anything less urgent like getting a job), and affordable housing units that meet the needs of all household sizes and incomes.

Mental Health: All individuals and families have access to timely, affordable, and quality mental health services that honor the needs, goals, and supports of each person seeking care. Communities have a system of care that provides peer, community, and clinical mental health support to infants, youth, and adults and funding models, including insurance coverage, that provide sustainable compensation for mental health services.

Substance Use: All individuals and families have access to timely, affordable, and quality substance use services that honor the needs, goals, and supports of each person seeking care. Communities have a system of care that provides peer, community, and clinical substance use support and funding models, including insurance coverage, that provide sustainable compensation for treatment and recovery services.

To see what advancing these goals could look like, please see these [Grant Priority Examples](#).

SYSTEMS CHANGE & COLLABORATION

Multi-year grants will support collaborative systems change initiatives.

Why focus on systems change? Many systems simply aren't working for households in our communities. Bureaucracy, barriers to service, and policy decisions (and indecision) are holding poverty in place, leading to overwhelmed service providers and leaving too many families without access, choices, or opportunities. Nonprofits and people who are directly impacted continue to call for support to get at the root of these problems.

What do we mean by systems change? Systems change is about addressing what's holding a problem in place. This type of work addresses the root causes of the most pressing needs in our community by actively working to create change in the policies, practices, and systems that allow the problem to exist. These efforts ask us to challenge our assumptions about a problem, call us to reimagine how the work is done, and direct our focus toward long-lasting, equitable solutions. Often, systems change efforts take the shape of policy advocacy initiatives and community-led solutions.

Example of a policy advocacy initiative: Caleb, a housing counselor, was meeting with Julie, a mother with two children, who received notice that her rent was going to increase from \$900/month to \$1,200/month. There weren't many apartments available and none that were more affordable. Caleb helped Julie with housing support and shared a flier about a community meeting on housing that he was helping organize. Julie attended the meeting and realized she wasn't alone! She became involved in the initiative, which included nonprofit organizations, agencies, and families with similar experiences as hers working together to support zoning changes and increase funding to build several affordable housing developments in the city.

Example of a community-led solution initiative: Kayla, a social worker, and her colleagues saw a troubling pattern among families who tried to receive mental health support. To access a program, each parent had to go through a 10-step process for verification and assessment, followed by a 4-month wait to receive services. Additionally, each child needed to be verified and assessed through a separate system on the other side of town, which involved a long intake process. Kayla and her colleagues knew this problem couldn't be solved by any one organization. They formed an effort to address these issues, bringing together service organizations, agencies, providers, and families to map out the needs and services and significantly shift how families accessed mental health services with a focus on supporting the whole family. This effort led to a cross-agency 3-step intake process that supports youth and adults and reduced the wait time for service to one month.

How can you tell if your initiative is systems-change focused? *

- Is your proposed initiative primarily working directly with people to meet an immediate need (for example, shelter, child care, counseling)? If so, it's likely direct service work and not systems change.
- Are you aiming to solve the issue permanently? If so, you might be doing systems change work.
- Are you listening to diverse perspectives, questioning long-held assumptions and practices, and asking what ability and responsibility your organization has to affect change? If so, you might be doing systems change work.
- Does your initiative center and engage people directly impacted by the issue you are working to address? If so, you might be doing systems change work.
- Are you working to impact policies, changing how the work is being done within and across organizations/sectors, and shifting resources and decision-making power in community? If so, you are probably doing systems change work.

**Inspired by Social Justice Partners LA*

For additional examples and a description of how we are looking at systems change in this grant cycle, check out the [About Systems Change Overview](#).

What's the connection between advancing equity and addressing root causes? Efforts that address systems are about disrupting the things that are holding the problem in place. This also applies to how we approach community change work itself. People who are held at the margins of community and who are experiencing the greatest barriers to opportunity are often left out of the conversations and decisions that impact their lives. Centering equity in this work means that we are challenging our assumptions about why a problem exists, assessing our own role in the system—the barriers we may be holding in place and our ability to affect change—and shifting power to include people who are directly impacted.

The Basic Needs Giving Partnership envisions thriving, equitable communities across Northeast Wisconsin. Priority will be given to efforts that are applying an equity lens to their work, by:

- Deepening their understanding of who is experiencing the greatest barriers to the issue at hand
- Building relationships with and authentically engaging people who have lived experience with the issues the effort is addressing
- Shifting resources and decision-making power to historically underinvested and underrepresented communities

What are we looking for in collaboration? Complex community issues can't be solved by one organization alone. Systems change initiatives invest in building relationships, listening to learn and better understand, and aligning toward a shared purpose to solve the problem at hand. These partnerships work at multiple levels across organizations and sectors to create deep and lasting change.

We recognize that nonprofits already work together in many ways, and we want to support collaboration that feels authentic and meaningful. We are open to flexible approaches to how initiatives engage partners and people with lived experience. Below are some examples of what collaboration could look like—other forms of working together can also apply.

- An organization whose primary purpose is to coordinate and align many partners to advance the work (such as backbone support, a collective impact initiative, etc.)
- A single organization that is actively listening to and partnering with organizations and people with lived experience toward the success of the work
- Multiple organizations that are working together to address an issue, working across sectors and with community to find a solution to the problem

GRANT AWARDS

The Basic Needs Giving Partnership will be investing \$1,000,000 into new multi-year grants this cycle. Depending on the range of requests, we anticipate awarding 15-20 grants across our 10-county region.

Award Amounts: To support existing and emerging initiatives led by large and small organizations and serving urban and rural communities, we are providing nonprofits with a range of grant award options:

- \$30,000 total (\$10,000/year)
- \$75,000 total (\$25,000/year)
- \$150,000 total (\$50,000/year)
- \$225,000 total (\$75,000/year)
- \$300,000 total (\$100,000/year)

Grant Duration: 3 years

Funding can be used to support a wide range of needs, including (but not limited to): subgrants, stipends, staffing, overhead costs, project costs, technical assistance, training, and events. We encourage organizations to include the full and real costs to support and implement their proposed initiative.

Grants will be made to advance the work of existing efforts and to cultivate initiatives that are new or emerging. We are sharing examples of existing and emerging initiatives and types of support to help you consider ways that funding could support your work. Please don't be limited to these examples.

- **Existing initiatives:** These efforts may have years of effort behind them. They have established trust and deepened relationships with partners, created shared goals, developed strategies and a plan for action, and may have started to take action to address the problem. You may be looking for support to enhance the initiative's capacity, expand relationships, engage new sectors and/or people with lived experience, broaden your reach, revamp strategies based on what you're learning, and/or begin to implement your plans.

- **Emerging initiatives:** These efforts may be new or in their early stages. Organizations involved may have a general sense of the problem, initial relationships may be established, and you may have begun to identify possible solutions to the problem. You may be looking for support to engage more partners, deepen your community’s collective understanding of the problem, establish shared goals, and build alignment and ownership as you develop strategies and create a plan for action.

As you consider your award amount, it may be helpful to reflect on the following questions:

- Is your initiative in an early development phase, working to build relationships, create goals, and begin planning? Or is your initiative further along in its development, working to expand its partnerships, and ready to take action?
- What is the scale of the change effort? Is your effort focused within a specific community or across the region? How much and what type of support is needed to move the work forward?
- What resources are needed to ensure and deepen the capacity for partners and people with lived experience to be involved in the effort? Will you be sub-granting to support engagement and leadership?

The Basic Needs Giving Partnership’s grantmaking is made possible by funds raised through the U.S. Venture Open. The distribution of grants across the region reflects a combination of funds that have been directed by donors to specific geographic areas and an allocation based on the number of households experiencing or at the edge of poverty within each area. For 2024, we anticipate granting 35% of available funds to the greater Green Bay area, 40% to the greater Fox Valley area, and 25% to the greater Oshkosh area.

APPLICATION & TIMELINE



Our multi-year grant cycle has a two-step application process that begins with eligible organizations submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI). A LOI provides us with a short summary of your request and lets us see if your project is a good fit. Grant committee members and staff will review LOIs to determine who will move forward in the process. Invited organizations will receive details and direction to support their submission of a full proposal.

Important Dates:

April 26:	Letter of Intent is due by 5:00 p.m. (CST)
May 16:	Invitations to complete full grant applications will be sent
June 21:	Full applications are due by 5:00 p.m. (CST)
Late July:	Awards will be announced

To Apply: Visit the [grants page on our website](#) before April 26 and click the "Submit Letter of Intent" button. You will be taken to a simple form where you will be asked a few questions and can submit your LOI.

Your Letter of Intent (1-2 pages) should include:

- A summary of your systems change initiative:
 - Which priority area(s) you're focusing on, a description of the specific problem you aim to solve, and how you define the root cause of the problem
 - How you'll address the root cause of the problem, the type of policy change and/or community led solution you'll be working toward
 - Who would be impacted by the proposed initiative (a description of people and communities) and how they'll be engaged in the work
- The role that collaboration will play in your initiative; your organization's role and how you'll work alongside community partners to create lasting, equitable change
- How you would define success, or, in other words, what change you are hoping to achieve.
- How funding would support your work (see description of emerging and existing initiatives)

While submitting your LOI, you will be asked for basic information about your organization (name, EIN, contact information), which geographic areas your initiative will reach (percent by county), an estimated total project budget amount, your organization's current annual budget (total expenses), and the grant award amount you are requesting.

If invited to apply, here's what you can expect in the full application:

- Narrative questions allowing you to expand on points in your LOI
 - Or you can upload a previously drafted proposal for the same initiative
- A project budget (sample template provided)
- Organizational financials

Reach out to Stephanie Gyldenvand at stephanie@bngpwi.org if you have grant-related questions.

DECISION MAKING

Letters of Intent and full applications will be reviewed by grant committee members and staff. The grant committee is made up of community members from the Basic Needs Giving Partnership's Board of Directors, additional community members, and representation from area community foundations. Final grant decisions will be affirmed by the board.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does my initiative have to be working on one of the grant priorities (early care and education, housing access, mental health, and substance use)? Why are grants limited to these four priorities?

Yes, in 2024, our grant cycles will only fund initiatives whose work impacts one or more of the four grant priorities. The Basic Needs Giving Partnership (BNGP) is directing our grantmaking to address some of the most pressing conditions that were made worse during (and since) the pandemic. To deepen support for communities to address these complex problems, we are concentrating our grants to initiatives working within these four priorities.

My organization has been considering applying for a multi-year grant, but now it looks like we don't fit with the systems change focus under these guidelines. What should we do?

We recognize that directing our multi-year grants to support systems change initiatives reflects a shift from previous years. In the past, multi-year grants have supported both direct services and projects addressing the root causes of poverty. BNGP will continue to support organizations providing direct services to meet the critical needs within our communities. Our single-year grant cycle, launching in late summer, will include grants to organizations providing direct services.

My initiative only focuses on a small portion of the BNGP region. Am I eligible? What if my organization serves a large region or the whole state?

To be eligible for this grant opportunity, an organization must work within at least one geographic area of our region. Organizations that work in a very local or a small portion of the region are welcome to apply! Likewise, we will also support initiatives that work at a regional level. If your initiative serves a large area with significant portions of work outside the BNGP's service area (for example, your service area is predominantly outside of BNGP's and/or includes the whole state), we will be looking to see that the initiative is doing place-based work (for example, dedicated staff within BNGP's region, locally established relationships, and work being done locally).

I'm part of an initiative along with several other organizations. Can each of us apply for a grant to support this same initiative?

No. Each initiative is eligible to submit one application to the BNGP in this current funding cycle. Grants are permitted to be shared with or sub-granted to more than one organization. When applying, consider the resources needed to support your initiative, including sub-granting to support the engagement and leadership of partnering organizations in the work.

Can my organization apply for a grant if we are named as a collaborator on a different initiative that is applying for a grant in this cycle?

Yes. Nonprofits that are collaborating on an initiative that is seeking funding from BNGP in this grant cycle may submit their own proposal. The two proposals must be for different initiatives.

My organization currently has a BNGP grant. Can we apply for a grant in this cycle?

Yes, organizations that meet the eligibility requirements may apply for a grant in this cycle even those that have an active grant with us. Most current grants with the BNGP will be concluding when multi-year grants are announced for this cycle.

Can my organization apply for and receive a multi-year and single-year grant this year?

To support a greater number of nonprofits and communities across the 10-county region, we are limiting grant awards from the BNGP to one grant per organization in 2024. An organization applying for a multi-year grant will learn if their proposal will be awarded before the single-year grant cycle opens. Eligible organizations that are not awarded a multi-year grant may apply for a grant in our summer cycle.

My 501(c)(3) nonprofit serves as a fiscal sponsor to another organization. Can my organization submit a grant application and also serve as a fiscal sponsor to another organization that applies for a grant in this funding cycle?

Yes. Nonprofit organizations who serve as fiscal sponsors may also apply for a grant in this funding cycle. Appearing on a separate proposal as a fiscal sponsor would not affect an organization's likelihood of receiving a grant. A nonprofit may serve as the fiscal sponsor for multiple organizations—this would not affect the proposal review process for any of the individual organizations. Please keep in mind that only one proposal will be accepted for each initiative/project (see the response to the question above).

What do you mean by emerging initiatives? Does emerging mean that the problem is new to our community or that the work being done to address an ongoing problem is new?

By emerging initiatives, we mean that the initiative is new. If a problem has existed in a community for a while, which is often the case in systems change work, initiatives that are working to address this problem, existing or new, are able to apply for a grant in this cycle.

Systems change takes time. Is my initiative expected to completely solve a systemic problem within three years?

Addressing complex problems at their root takes time, and we do not expect that projects will arrive at long-term solutions within three years. This work is often incremental, meaning there isn't one policy or one shift in how the work is done that will result in long-lasting change.

What we are looking for is how your work has led to shifts in policies and/or practices, how the problem is understood, and/or who is involved in decision-making because of your work. We are also interested in understanding what's been attempted, what you are learning, how learnings have changed your approach, which new relationships have been developed, and how these new partnerships have impacted how you're able to affect change.

Is there a chance that our proposal could be partially funded by BNGP? What if our expenses are greater than \$100K each year?

There is a possibility that proposals could receive partial funding. While we attempt to fund proposals at the full request level, some considerations may lead to partial funding such as the number and range of requests that come in, the scope of work and funding needs of each initiative, and our aim to support organizations and initiatives across our 10-county region. If partial funding is being proposed, we will be in communication with you to discuss the impact and types of adjustments that may need to be made.