



## 2021 E-Town Innovation Grant Guidelines

At the Evanston Community Foundation, we invest in great ideas and the people bringing them to life through our *E-Town Innovation Grants*. These grants are focused on supporting new or expanded innovative programs that:

- Prioritize **equitable opportunities and outcomes for Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC)**
- Support **organizations working together** to solve community challenges and change systems
- Embrace **creative solutions** that address community needs in ways that are more effective, equitable, or sustainable than standard approaches

We want to support organizations to be bold and innovative in solving today's challenges, particularly as we all work to reimagine a more equitable Evanston in a post-COVID world.

### Our Funding Priorities

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We want Evanston to thrive as a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable community. We fund projects that:

- Focus on advancing equity, in particular racial equity and intersectionality
- Meaningfully engage key stakeholders to identify problems and include those directly affected by those problems
- Are collaborative in nature

We fund projects that develop new ideas, expand or improve on existing work, or contribute to disrupting systems that exclude community members. A committee made up of Evanston residents decides the projects we fund.

### Who Can Apply

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Any group or organization providing services to Evanston residents can apply for a grant. All proposals must address issues, concerns, or opportunities in the Evanston community. Additionally, applicants must fit in one of the following categories:

- 501(c)(3) organization
- Local school districts or a government entity
- A project that has a fiscal sponsor that qualifies as a 501(c)(3) organization
- A for-profit organization, 501(c)(6) organization, or faith-based organization doing charitable work benefitting the general Evanston community

New applicants, current grantees, former grantees, or previous applicants to any ECF grants program are eligible to apply. While your organization is only eligible for one *E-Town Innovation* grant per 12 month period, your organization may apply for other ECF grants during the same year.

## Proposal and Project Timeline

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Grants are for a 12-month cycle.

**Application Due:** June 7, 2021 **Grantees Notified:** By August 13, 2021

**Application Due:** December 6, 2021 **Grantees Notified:** By February 6, 2022

## Funding

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Grant amounts range from \$2,500 – \$20,000. Proposals should have a project budget appropriate to the scope of the project.

**Please note:** We do not fund endowments, fundraising events or sponsorship of events, appeals for religious purposes (though faith-based organizations may apply for projects benefitting the general community), or individuals.

## How To Apply

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You can find all application questions and materials through our [online grants system](#). For all narrative questions, tell us briefly and directly about your idea, those you will serve, and why your group is the best fit to make the project happen. Do not worry about phrasing things just right.

Submit an application through ECF's online grant system, which you can access through [www.evanstonforever.org](http://www.evanstonforever.org). If you need access to a computer or help submitting your application online, please contact us [grants@evanstonforever.org](mailto:grants@evanstonforever.org) or 847-492-0990. The grants committee will announce grantees by Friday, August 13.

## Attachments You Will Need to Submit

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Here are the documents you will need to gather:

- Total operating budget for current and prior fiscal years including revenue sources (if you have it)
- A project budget using the provided form, including the total cost of project and sources of other funding received to date
- Page 1 of two most recent 990s (for your organization or fiscal sponsor, unless your organization is brand new)
- A brief budget narrative to address any significant variances in the annual operating budget or actuals (*if needed only*)
- Letters of support from any partners you are collaborating with on this project
- Overview of Board and staff demographics

## What the Committee Considers

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Below are the main areas the committee of community members considers when deciding funding:

### **Evanston Service**

- Project focus, serving Evanston
- # of people served and intensiveness of services
- Organization awareness and understanding of similar local projects

### **Plan and Impact**

- Project plan
- Project impact on systems that have historically excluded community members

### **Equity:**

- Advancement of racial equity
- Systems change that creates more opportunities and equitable outcomes for Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color

### **Community voice:**

- Role of community voices
- Key stakeholders + their involvement
- Project's inclusiveness and collaboration

### **Collaboration:**

- Strength of collaborations, if applicable
- Roles of collaborative partners

### **Clarity of proposal:**

- Clarity of proposal
- Intended outcomes and plan to reach them

### **Financials:**

- Appropriateness of project budget and use of resources
- Organizational capacity

*Helping Evanston thrive now and forever as a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable community, the Evanston Community Foundation builds, connects, and distributes resources and knowledge through local organizations for the common good.*

**Questions?** Our staff is here to help. Contact Karli Butler, Program Officer at [grants@evanstonforever.org](mailto:grants@evanstonforever.org) or visit our website at [www.evanstonforever.org](http://www.evanstonforever.org).

## Reference: Narrative Grant Questions

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All applications—and their respective questions and materials—are accessible through our online grants system.

1. What is your organization's mission and scope of work?
2. What is the need or challenge your organization is designed to meet?
3. What assets outside of your organization, if any, exist in Evanston to meet this need or challenge?
4. What population are you serving? What percentage are Evanston residents? What are the demographics of the Evanston residents you plan to serve through this project? If you don't collect that information, please make your best estimate.
5. What is your idea and what problem does it solve?
6. Please tell us how the voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color are an integral part of your organization's overall decision-making processes. How do you engage program participants in determining your current and future programming? How will you strive to ensure access and break down barriers of participation?
7. How will your idea be transformative? How will it advance equity in Evanston? What will indicate a successful outcome?
8. What is your plan? How will you bring it to life? What is your anticipated timetable?
9. Will you be collaborating with community groups to achieve your plan? Tell us about the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
10. We are committed to advancing racial equity. Tell us about the makeup of your board, staff leadership, and overall staff.