

Detroit Journalism
Engagement Fund
OF THE
Community Foundation

FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN
CALL FOR IDEAS
SEPTEMBER 2018

THE CALL

The disruption of the traditional business model for journalism and the impact of technology on media has dramatically reduced resources for local reporting and changed the way people interact with and consume news and information in southeast Michigan and around the country. Resources have decreased for local beat and investigative reporting. Fewer journalists represent the region's diverse populations, widening the disconnect between media outlets and communities. These challenges have created significant gaps in the way news and information is gathered, trusted, shared and consumed.

In 2017, the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund [granted to six projects](#), involving collaborations between 13 southeast Michigan organizations. This cohort represents a diverse array of news media, audiences, and topic areas all working to increase quality journalism and help better inform communities. We have learned a lot from these projects and are excited to find other projects that accomplish this goal. This is an open call for more ideas that will:

- Reinforce robust, investigative journalism and beat reporting in the region with a focus on equity for people across the city and region,
- Explore the role of ethnic media and small-scale media partners,
- Encourage media outlets to explore the region's current strengths and resources,
- Evaluate the quality and community value of news, and/or
- Support new and innovative collaborations that increase resources for reporting and expand its reach.

Knight Foundation, Ford Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan are partnering to launch this open call for ideas to test, refine and/or build out a project. It is anticipated that at least \$270,000 will be granted in total through this round of grants.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The funding priorities of the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund project are to:

- **Promote diversity in journalism**, so that both newsrooms and stories in the region reflect the perspectives of women and diverse ethnic and socioeconomic communities. There is a particular interest in seeing an increase in journalists and coverage of the region's large African-American population, which has been woefully underrepresented.
- **Strengthen community engagement** to facilitate solid relationships of trust and communication between news media outlets and their audiences.
- **Promote equitable journalism** to address existing gaps to give voice to those whose stories are not being told and ensure an equitable coverage of the regrowth of Detroit.

While these are our priorities, we are not prescriptive in what your project should be. All kinds of ideas are welcomed. For this open call, we want to support the ideas and experiments that advance the field of journalism locally in tangible, concrete ways — ways that encourage media and community organizations to collaborate to spark innovation, experimentation and field-wide learning. We are primarily looking for projects that will yield lessons and best-practices for the field of journalism and encourage reporters and editors to think differently.

To be clear, grants will not be seen as a solution to overall capacity or sustainability issues at Detroit's media organizations. This is about supporting new models and methods to strengthen local journalism by more deeply engaging with and amplifying the voices of audiences across the region, particularly underserved audiences. While proposals may emphasize a theme or topic for exploration, we are equally interested in finding new strategies and tools to deliver content and engage diverse audiences.

WHO MAY APPLY?

- Applicants must either be 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations or have a strong nonprofit fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) tax exemption status.
- Media-specific organizations or community organizations that are proposing to collaborate with a media-specific organization are eligible to apply.
- Detroit Journalism Cooperative members are eligible to apply if it is for a project not already receiving Knight or Ford Foundation support, and if the project is being done in collaboration with a community partner that is not a member of the Detroit Journalism Cooperative.
- Current Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund grantees are eligible to apply, if it is for the next phase of their current projects.
- Applicants must be located in and/or serve southeast Michigan, with a preference toward a focus on the city of Detroit.

Special Notes:

- Applicants should base the amount requested on the scope of the project. While all applications need to be strong to be competitive, the larger the amount requested, the more competitive the application will need to be.
- Proposing to utilize grants as matching funds to leverage other sources is encouraged.
- Projects must be completed within 12 months of receiving this grant award.

HOW TO APPLY

From **September 12 to October 22**, you are invited to submit your idea to receive a share of \$270,000. Awards will be made in December 2018.

Visit CFSEM.org/Journalism to start the online application process.

Submissions must include:

- A cover letter with the legal name of the applicant organization (and, when applicable, the legal name of the fiscal agent or sponsor), dollar amount requested, a brief project description and the signature of the executive director/CEO
- A narrative that describes the project in detail. It should include what you intend to do, who your partners are, what success would look like, and future plans for the project. Please limit the narrative to four pages.
 - For current DJEF grantees, please include what the next phase of your project would look like, and how a final grant would help the project expand and become sustainable.
- Estimated project budget
- Current board of trustees list
- A brief bio of the project director(s) and an explanation of why the organization is uniquely positioned to achieve the goals of the project.
- Copy of 501(c)(3) tax exempt status of your organization or your fiscal sponsor
- Organization's operating budget for the current fiscal year
- An IRS Form 990 (indicating tax-exempt status) or certified financial audit/review

TIMELINE

September 21, 2018: We are hosting a Q&A opportunity for applicants to learn more about the program and ask questions in person. This session will be held at TechTown, located at 440 Burroughs St., Detroit. Attendance at this session is not required for applying. Please RSVP if you plan to attend at the link found at CFSEM.org/journalism.

October 22, 2018: Application deadline! Completed proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm.

November: During this time, the foundation partners will review all entries received. Project staff may contact the applicant to request additional information if necessary.

December 6, 2018: Grant decisions and award information will be shared with applicants. If a grant is approved, the award letter will be sent by the end of the year. The first payment will be made in January 2019, conditional upon receiving signed terms of grant agreement.

December 13, 2018: Awards will be publicly announced.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

If a grant is awarded, the grantee organization will be required to participate in programming activities, including shared learning opportunities and data/evaluation processes. Additionally, all grantee organizations will be required to submit a report at the end of the grant period to share the results of the project and to demonstrate that all funds were spent as intended.

Visit CFSEM.org/Journalism to learn more about the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund.