

Call for Ideas 2020

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. The resulting challenges have created significant gaps in the way news and information is gathered, trusted, shared and consumed both in southeast Michigan and nationally.

Since 2017, the Detroit Journalism Engagement Fund has granted to 15 projects, involving collaborations between 27 southeast Michigan organizations. These cohorts represent 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 we 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
- Build innovative collaborations that increase the resources and reach of local reporting.

Ford Foundation, Knight Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan are partnering on this open call for ideas to test, refine and/or build out a project. It is anticipated that \$200,000 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 newsrooms and stories reflect the perspectives of women and diverse ethnic and socioeconomic communities – particularly 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.

With these priorities in mind, we want to support ideas, new models and experiments that advance the field of journalism locally in tangible ways. We are looking for projects that will yield lessons and best-practices, encourage journalists to think differently about engagement, and amplify the voices of audiences across the region, particularly underserved audiences. These grants will not solve overall capacity or sustainability issues at Detroit's media organizations, but this type of strategizing should be a part of the projects design. 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 that will serve as the applicant.
- Media-specific organizations or community organizations that are proposing to collaborate with a media-specific organization
- Organizations located in and/or serve southeast Michigan, with a preference toward a focus on Detroit
- Current DJEF grantees are eligible to apply, if it is for the next phase of their current projects. Applications must outline how the proposed plan ties in with the larger sustainability strategy for the organization, such as growth in earned revenue, requesting a matching fund requirement, or other strategy.

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.
- We recognize that COVID has impacted the way organizations are operating. We are particularly interested to support organizations that are finding ways to continue innovating during this time.

TIMELINE

From **November 2 to December 11**, you are invited to submit your idea. Awards will be made in February 2021. Visit CFSEM.org/Journalism to start the online application process.

- **November 2, 2020: Application opens!**
- [Register](#) for a CFSEM Fluxx grant portal profile if you have not already. You must register in order to access the application. Allow five days for registration requests to be processed. Register early for maximum time to review and complete the application.
- **November 27, 2020: Registration deadline!**
- **December 11, 2020: Application Deadline!**
- **December and January:** During this time, the foundation partners will review all entries received. Project staff may contact the applicant to request additional information.
- **February 2021:** Grant decisions and award information will be shared with applicants through the Fluxx grant portal. The first payment will be made in February 2021, conditional upon receiving signed terms of grant agreement.
- **March 2021:** 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 an interim and a final 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.

Grant Application Check List

New applicants must register to request a profile. Click [here](#) to register to access the Fluxx grant portal. After you start an application, you can save and revisit it prior to submission. **Submissions must be received online by 5:00pm December 11, 2020.**

Once inside the online grant portal, you will be asked to submit the following items:

1. Organizational information:

- Legal name, Tax ID, address, phone number and website of the applicant organization and main contact person for the proposal
- Mission and brief background of the applicant organization
- Information about the organization's programs and the number of people served
- Primary contacts for the specific application and the organization, including the applicant contact, signatory, CEO/President/Executive Director, and key organization contact

2. A cover letter noting:

- Legal name of the organization (and the legal name of the fiscal sponsor if applicable)
- Dollar amount requested
- Purpose of the proposed project
- CEO/executive director signature and some evidence of board approval

3. Project Information:

- Project Title
- Dollar amount of grant support requested
- Proposed grant start and end dates
- Short, one-sentence project summary
- Answers to the following questions:
 - What type(s) of media do you use?
 - What topics does your organization's journalistic reports focus on?
 - What is your organizations geographic and audience reach?
 - What are the objectives of your project?
 - Provide a workplan with a timeframe for accomplishing the project's objectives.
 - Who are your partners and what are their roles?
 - What would success look like?

- How will you measure progress toward reaching your intended audience?
- How would you sustain the project both capacity-wise and financially? This question is particularly important for current grantees.
- 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.
- How does your organization's staff and board reflect the diversity of the community you are reaching?

4. Required Financial information:

- Total Project Revenue/Expenses – You will be invited to upload, in your own format, an outline of all anticipated funding for your entire project, as well as all costs of your project inclusive of items outside of this specific request
- Expenses for Requested Funds – You will be asked to complete an online form which outlines how funding from the proposed grant will be utilized, if a grant is awarded. If a grant is approved, we will use this budget when it comes time to report on the project to ensure funds were used as intended.

5. Required Organizational Attachments Include:

- Most recent financial audit/review or IRS Form 990*
- Current list of Board of Trustees
- The organization's operating budget for the current fiscal year should be updated on the organization profile in Fluxx*

6. Supporting materials:

- Letters of support or memoranda of understanding from project partners, if applicable
- Resumes of staff for proposed project and job descriptions for any new hires, if applicable

*If using a fiscal sponsor, these documents should come from your fiscal sponsor.

Questions? Contact Harmony Rhodes at hrhodes@cfsem.org