

THE COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP CATALYST FUND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Open Society Foundations and The Shapiro Foundation, in partnership with other private philanthropists, are excited to announce a second round of funding to support the development and implementation, and/or meaningful enhancement of community sponsorship (CS)¹ programs across the country. The Community Sponsorship Catalyst Fund (hereafter “Catalyst Fund”) is animated by the belief that when neighbors engage vigorously in welcoming refugees, the entire community benefits. Community sponsorship pairs refugees and other forcibly displaced populations with groups (e.g. faith communities, businesses, civil society organizations, clubs) who provide clearly defined financial and/or in-kind contributions and volunteer services to support their welcome and integration. A critical form of community sponsorship is co-sponsorship, which is regulated by the US Department of State through their Reception and Placement Program Cooperative Agreement with resettlement agencies. In co-sponsorship, groups commit in a non-legally binding written commitment with the resettlement agency, to provide or ensure the provision of reception and placement core services to newly arrived refugees. While community sponsorship may vary in its forms, it is an extremely rewarding experience. Not only does community sponsorship build powerful bonds between sponsors and refugees, it strengthens the core of the host community by sparking new connections and enhancing those already existing. It can also help to foster positive attitudes towards refugees and resettlement.

Through the Catalyst Fund, local resettlement agencies or other local-level organizations can apply to receive up to \$100,000 over a two-year period (with up to a \$50,000 annual limit), to support the development and implementation, and/or meaningful enhancement of CS programs, inclusive of co-sponsorship. While the focus of this initiative is on supporting local community sponsorship programming, the Catalyst Fund will also offer one-time grants ranging from \$50,000 - \$250,000, to national resettlement agencies seeking to pilot and/or scale co-sponsorship programming. This funding opportunity includes a requirement that applicants demonstrate organizational, community, and/or other funding commitments to invest in the proposed programs, enhancing the sustainability of the fund and broadening engagement of communities around refugee sponsorship.

The final number of awards to be given is dependent on the total amount available in the Fund at the time of selection.

¹For additional information on community sponsorship, please visit <https://communitysponsorshipfund.org> or email communitysponsorshipfund@gmail.com.

Catalyst Fund Request for Proposals at a Glance	
Project Cycle Local-level applicants: September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2023 National resettlement agency applicants: September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022	
Eligibility Local resettlement agencies, other local-level organizations supporting the resettlement and/or integration of refugees or other forcibly displaced populations, and national resettlement agencies are eligible to apply. Must be a 501(c)(3) or fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3).	
Grant Award Local-level organizations: Grant of up to \$100,000 over two years (maximum of \$50,000 per year). National resettlement agencies: Grant in the range of \$50,000 - \$250,000 over one year.	
Application Process	Applicants interested in applying for this grant award must submit: grant proposal application form (template available on website), proposal narrative, proposal budget (templates available on website), budget narrative with required staffing detail (see below), annual expenditures, and tax determination letter. Full instructions included below.
Application Deadline	Complete applications must be received by midnight EST, June 4, 2021. Grant recipients will be notified no later than July 30, 2021.
Submission/Contact Details	Send complete applications and any questions to: communitysponsorshipfund@gmail.com .

Community Sponsorship Catalyst Fund Purpose
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Purpose of the Catalyst Fund:

- Build awareness of and support for refugees and other forcibly displaced populations in communities across the United States
- Help seed the landscape of CS and encourage local-level organizations to:
 - develop and implement sustainable, high-impact community sponsorship programs that will engage local communities in welcoming forcibly displaced populations and facilitating their integration
 - meaningfully enhance such programming in their local communities
 - and innovate around community sponsorship approaches, such as by extending programs to asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced populations or by better engaging communities of color in

community sponsorship

- Encourage national resettlement agencies to reimagine how they might support the piloting and/or scaling of co-sponsorship programming throughout their networks
- Create a space for awardees to share with and learn from one another

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be:

- a local resettlement agency or other local-level organization supporting the resettlement and integration of refugees and other forcibly displaced populations (such as asylees, asylum-seekers, SIVs) **or** be a national resettlement agency with current Reception and Placement Cooperative Agreement with the US Department of State
- registered as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Tax determination letter(s) must be provided as proof of status.

Funding Overview

Local-level Applicants:

Through the Catalyst Fund, local resettlement agencies or other local-level organizations can apply to receive up to \$100,000 over a two-year period (with up to a \$50,000 annual limit), to support the development and implementation, and/or meaningful enhancement of CS programs. The amount requested can fall anywhere under this amount, and should be commensurate with the scope and ambition of the proposed project.

The funds received can support a variety of activities, including but not limited to:

- Awareness-building about community sponsorship
- Scoping, researching, or piloting of new CS programs, or ambitious and/or innovative enhancements or expansion of already established CS programs
- Recruitment of community sponsors and other public and private partners willing to support community sponsorship, particularly those inclusive of diverse and emerging actors (e.g. communities of color, indigenous communities, previously resettled refugees and other immigrants)
- Staff time to design, pilot, and/or manage community sponsorship programs. Such activities might include hosting focus groups, developing manuals, conducting trainings, offering ongoing support to sponsor groups, and monitoring and evaluation.

National Resettlement Agency Applicants:

A national-level grantee can receive a one-time grant of \$50,000 - \$250,000 to cover costs associated with piloting and/or scaling co-sponsorship programming, for a one-year period.

The funds received can support a variety of activities, including, but not limited to:

- Staff time to design, implement, and manage national organizational strategies to support the piloting and/or scaling of co-sponsorship programming
- Direct support to local resettlement agencies to enable activities that will support piloting and/or scaling of co-sponsorship programs
- National, regional, or local-level support to build awareness and co-sponsor recruitment
- National, regional, or local-level support to scope, research, and/or pilot co-sponsorship programming

Proposal Requirements:

Successful proposals will:

- demonstrate a detailed and promising plan to implement the proposed programming, as well as to sustain programming beyond the funding period.
- demonstrate organizational, community, and/or other funding commitments to the proposed programming, including but not limited to investment of the applicant's own staff time or other resources in the project, pre-identification of groups that are willing to serve as sponsors, and/or additional fundraising. Applicants who prioritize fundraising will be looked upon more favorably. The greater the commitment demonstrated by the applicant, the more favorably the application will be viewed.
- credibly demonstrate that progress is being made toward marshalling the proposed organizational, community, and/or other funding commitments prior to final approval and the first distribution of funds from the Catalyst Fund. As expertise and resources for fundraising vary by organization, each applicant will be considered in their individual circumstances, size, and capacity to the extent possible.
- include clear program objectives and indicators to measure outcomes. At minimum, applicants will be asked to track the number and type of partnerships created, the ways in which information about their program model is shared out during the funding period, number of new and repeat sponsor groups, impact on sponsored refugees and other forcibly displaced populations, and impact on sponsor groups. These should facilitate learning and add to the enhancement of future programming.
- describe plans to capture impact, such as through the collection of qualitative data – including storytelling – from both refugee participants and community sponsors, or other relevant actors.
- incorporate contingency planning for the proposed programming, should external factors (such as the number of refugee arrivals) preclude execution of the planned programming.
- (For national resettlement agencies) demonstrate how support at the national level is critical to increasing local capacity to pilot and scale co-sponsorship programs.
- (For national RAs) distinguish between local, regional and/or nationally focused costs.
- (For national RAs) confirm their intention to seek funding for community sponsorship activities in response to the current Reception and Placement (R&P) Program Notice of Funding Opportunity issued by the US Department of State
- (For RAs) detail commitment to scale co-sponsorship programming throughout agency network

Purpose of Requiring Organizational, Community, and/or Other Funding Commitments:

- Enhances sustainability: By bringing more funders across the country into CS activities, it ensures greater sustainability of CS programs.
- Enables innovation: It eases the burden on agencies, and supports them as they pursue more creative, localized initiatives that capitalize on assets in the community.
- Encourages broader community ownership: Creates community ownership in and commitment to community sponsorship by requiring communities to “put skin in the game”.

Proposal Format

Proposals should include both the proposal narrative and financial information.

Project Narrative:

The project narrative should be **limited to 10 pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font**, and describe the request for **project-level funding**. The purpose of project-level funding is to support specific activities with a commitment to fulfilling very specific objectives, outcomes, timelines and predetermined costs. Applications for direct client support will not be considered.

Successful proposal narratives will include the requested detail under each of the following headings.

1. Statement of Purpose

A brief (1-2 sentence) summary of the aim(s) of the project.

2. Rationale

The problems and opportunities, and the reasons for addressing them.

3. Context

For Local-Level Applicants:

A brief description including background information on how the proposed work fits within or complements other work being carried out on issues affecting refugees, asylees, asylum-seekers, and other forcibly displaced populations, as well as your organization’s unique contribution to these issues and the resettlement and integration landscape in the United States. If community sponsorship programming currently exists in your community, including if it is carried out by another organization, please note that here and how your proposed work complements or enhances that programming. Please also include any other local context and information you believe is important to convey about your organization and the local community in which this work will take place.

For National Resettlement Agency Applicants:

A brief description including background information on how the proposed work fits within or complements other work being carried out on issues affecting refugees, asylees, asylum-seekers, and

other forcibly displaced populations, as well as your organization's unique contribution to these issues and the resettlement and integration landscape in the United States. If co-sponsorship is already carried out in your network, please note that here and how your proposed work complements or enhances that programming. If piloting co-sponsorship with local resettlement agencies in your network, please include a rationale for why those sites were selected.

4. Project Goals & Expected Impact

Include the project's overall vision, specific goals, and related objectives. Clearly state the starting point for the project and articulate the progress anticipated over the grant period. Be certain to include a description of the new or enhanced CS program structure (e.g. service commitment, financial and/or in-kind commitment) and a description of how success will be measured. For local-level applicants, this should include how progress will be measured at the one-year mark. For national resettlement agencies, please include a description of the organization's overarching commitment to implement or scale co-sponsorship programming throughout the agency network.

5. Activities and Timeline

Please describe the work you will do to achieve your goals, and related objectives with whom you will collaborate, and when the various elements of this work will take place. This section should include a detailed list of activities (corresponding to goals and objectives listed in the previous section), as well as inputs/outputs by year.

6. Demonstration of Commitment

Describe your organizational, community, and/or other funding commitments to the proposed program. This may include, but is not limited to local-level fundraising, investment of the applicant's own staff time or other resources in the program, and/or pre-identification of groups that are willing to serve as sponsors. Be certain to credibly demonstrate that progress is being made toward marshalling the proposed local commitments. (Note that the greater the commitment demonstrated by the applicant, the more competitive the application will be.)

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe how you will monitor and evaluate the program. Include objectives from above and indicators to measure objectives. (Note that at minimum, applicants will be asked to track the number and type of partnerships created, the ways in which information about their program model is shared out during the funding period, number of new and repeat sponsor groups, impact on sponsored refugees and other forcibly displaced populations, and impact on sponsor groups.) These should facilitate learning and add to the enhancement of future programming. Proposals should describe plans to capture impact, such as through the collection of quantitative and/or qualitative data, including storytelling. If selected, grantees will receive guidance on reporting requirements.

8. Challenges and Risks

Describe the internal and external challenges that could affect the project implementation and prevent you from reaching your goals. Include mitigation or contingency strategies you will implement to

overcome these challenges and risks.

9. Sustainability

Share how this work will be supported, both financially and programmatically, after the Catalyst Fund support has concluded. Proposals that emphasize at least some fundraising and/or demonstrate strong potential for future financial sustainability will be prioritized for support. (Note that for local and national resettlement agencies, community sponsorship is an acceptable, associated Reception and Placement Program expense.) National resettlement agencies should incorporate how they will continue to support the growth of co-sponsorship throughout their networks after the grant period. This should include a short description of how and/or to what degree the agency will apply for and leverage funding for community sponsorship through the Reception and Placement Notice of Funding Opportunity offered by the US Department of State. For all applicants, please also describe how community outreach and/or communications strategies will support the near- to long-term sustainability of this new and/or enhanced programming.

Financial Information:

Financial information provided must include the following:

1. Project Budget

Please submit the project budget for years one and two in the Excel sheet provided. (Note that national resettlement agencies may use the same Excel sheet, but need only to include information for year one.) This document should provide a list of all relevant project expenses. These expenses may include equipment and other capital purchases, administrative costs (telephone, internet, etc.), organizational costs (meetings, travel, etc.), personnel costs, and overhead administrative costs. The project budget should outline the total cost of each item and the amount of funding requested from the Catalyst Fund for each item. If the overall project budget exceeds the amount requested from the Catalyst Fund, please also outline the amount of funding you expect to receive from other sources.

2. Project Budget Narrative

Please describe in narrative form how the funds in the budget will be spent. If personnel costs are included, provide position title, name of staff person occupying that position if known, responsibilities as related to the project, and the percentage of the person's time that will be spent on the project in years one and two. (If the amount anticipated to be charged to the grant is different than the anticipated time spent, please note this and explain the difference.) For each staff person listed, attach brief professional bio-sketches or CVs (less than two pages each). If the staff person has not yet been hired, attach a sample vacancy announcement.

3. Annual Expenditures

Please provide the total annual expenditures from your organizations' most recently available past fiscal year, preferably in the form of an audited financial statement. If an audited financial statement is not available, please provide a budget prepared by your organization showing past year expenditures.

4. Tax Determination Letter

Please include a copy of your organization's US tax determination letter or if fiscally sponsored, a copy of your fiscal sponsor's US tax determination letter.

5. Additional Information

While not required, applicants are welcome to include letters of support or commitment.

Grant Review

Submission Timeline:

The deadline for all submissions to be received is **midnight EST, June 4, 2021**.

Other Review Criteria and Priorities:

- Successful proposals will be well-conceived and written, addressing guidelines articulated above.
- Proposals that articulate a high level of ambition will be viewed most favorably. Ambition may be reflected in, for example, the anticipated number of sponsor groups formed or individuals benefiting from CS, the level of commitment required of sponsors (e.g. "full co-sponsorship" where all but the responsibility for development of the resettlement plan is delegated to co-sponsors), or the kinds of activities proposed. For some locations where no community sponsorship programming currently exists, ambition will be reflected simply in the initiation of new programming. For locations that have some form of community sponsorship programming, ambition will appear in the scope of its expansion or innovative changes to existing programs.
- The greater the organizational, community, and other funding commitment demonstrated by the applicant, the more favorably the application will be viewed.
- Due consideration will be given towards the particular organizational and local context in which the proposed project would be implemented. Local costs will also be taken into account, as each application and its corresponding budget is individually reviewed.
- As part of the initial submission process, the review committee will be looking for applicants to describe how they plan to capture impact in communities throughout the grant period. The proposed monitoring and evaluation will also serve as an opportunity to incorporate more qualitative data – including storytelling – from both refugee participants and community sponsors, or other relevant actors. All applicants should include evaluation components in their proposals so they can learn from and further develop their programming.
- Joint applications are strongly encouraged. This could include either two or more local-level organizations or a combination of one national resettlement agency and two or more local resettlement agencies from multiple locations. If a local non-resettlement agency is planning CS programming that matches newly arrived refugees with sponsors, a written commitment to partner is required from the local resettlement agency.

- Beyond satisfying the core requirements, the final selection of proposals will be based on a number of factors, including but not limited to: geographic diversity of program locations; the diversity of community sponsors to be secured; the diversity of local-level applicants; already established; representation across resettlement agency networks, and strategic assessment of where and how best to scale CS across the country.

Grant Application Selection and Payment:

Each grant application will undergo extensive review. The review process will be led by the coalition of funders and may involve some communication between staff supporting the administration of the Catalyst Fund and the prospective grantee to clarify any questions about the grant proposal.

If an organization's application is approved, the organization will receive a confirmation email from the Catalyst Fund. Following this, the organization will receive further information about the grant approval process, including that regarding a formal grant letter, payment information, and grant reporting requirements. Please note that processing a finalized grant will require approximately one month at a minimum. Do not plan to begin your project unless you have received notice from the Catalyst Fund that your application has been approved. Processing delays may occur if logistical information provided is incomplete or inaccurate.

Available Support

Applicants will have access to Catalyst Fund-sponsored trainings and technical assistance (details to be announced through the Community Sponsorship Catalyst Fund website), as well as resources publicly available through [Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services](#) (IRIS) and the Refugee Council USA CS clearinghouse at: <https://rcusa.org/cs-resources>. Examples of these resources include: sample forms, CS manuals, and short guides on topics like sponsorship development, organizing for community sponsorship, fundraising for community sponsorship, and community sponsorship and active allyship.

Questions:

Please visit <https://communitysponsorshipfund.org> for additional information. General inquiries or questions regarding any aspect of the timeline for this project, grant application and eligibility criteria should be directed to communitysponsorshipfund@gmail.com.