|  | **Website**: <https://villagefundla.org/>**Email**: VillageFundLA@investinkidsla.org**Grant Application**: <https://form.jotform.com/252684796003160>  |
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***African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Prevention Initiative***

**The Village Fund**

 **Request for Proposals (October 2025)**

### Background

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) in collaboration with the Department of Health Services and First 5 LA launched the African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Prevention Initiative in 2018 to address persistent disparities in birth outcomes between Black and white babies, as outlined in the report: [A Pathway to Equity,](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/CenterForHealthEquity/PDF/AAIM-ActionPlan.pdf) which showed that Black/African American babies are two to three times more likely to die before their first birthday than babies of other races, and Black/African American women are four times more likely to die as a result of pregnancy complications than women of other races in LA County. More recent studies have shown these disparities continue to exist (for more details, see [AAIMM Vital Statistics Data Summary](https://www.blackinfantsandfamilies.org/fact_vs_misperception), [CA Dept. of Public Health Pregnancy-Related Mortality Data](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/surveillance/Pages/Pregnancy-Related-Mortality.aspx), and [others](https://www.blackinfantsandfamilies.org/research)). The AAIMM Prevention Initiative uses a racial justice framework to strengthen systems of support for Black moms and babies by centering Black/African American communities and leaders. The goal is to transform public health systems and build critical community infrastructure in places and spaces that Black families trust. Several interventions have been proven to support Black families during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, including prenatal services, doula/midwifery support, lactation & breast/chestfeeding education and resources, mental and physical health services, and support for fathers and other caregivers. When supported by an ecosystem of service providers and community advocates, these interventions save lives and ensure Black/African American families thrive.

While the initiative is countywide, AAIMM prioritizes four communities where disparities are highest: South LA/South Bay, Antelope Valley, San Fernando Valley/Santa Clarita, and the San Gabriel Valley. In addition to allocating its initial resources to launch a doula pilot for Black expecting mothers and expand access to home visitation, since 2019, DPH has also allocated a portion of its state [Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/PEI/Pages/default.aspx) grant to implement locally-driven interventions, such as AAIMM’s Policy & Advocacy workgroup, MotherBoard, and The Village Fund.

### The AAIMM Village Fund — Purpose

The Village Fund seeks to support community-led efforts that reinforce the broad goals of the AAIMM Initiative. In the spirit of “it takes a village to raise a child,” The Village Fund will partner with nonprofit organizations, small businesses, social enterprises, networks, and other service providers that provide valuable support and services to Black-birthing mothers and their families. We seek applications from those interested and capable of supporting the journey to a joyous and healthy birth for Black families, but are unlikely to receive or administer a county contract directly.

The Village Fund also serves as a pathway for community leaders and service providers to get connected to the broader LA County initiative and become Black infant and maternal health community ambassadors, sharing resources and informing stakeholders on community needs and how best to serve Black families, save lives, and promote joyous births. Read more about this in the AAIMM Ambassadors Learning Community section.

The Village Fund is administered by the [LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment](https://investinkidsla.org/) and capitalized by a combination of public and private philanthropic dollars. The LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment is a project of the [California Community Foundation](https://www.calfund.org/) Community Initiatives Fund (CCF-CIF), a US-based 501(c)(3) public charity.

### Grantmaking Strategies & Funding Timeline

The Village Fund supports efforts centered on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of Black women/birthing persons, fathers, partners, and families before, during, and after birth, including:

1. Providing respite care (short-term relief, support, services) before, during, or after birth. Respite care includes services that relieve and/or mitigate stress on mom, baby, and family.
2. Foster a positive sense of self.
3. Increase access to a healthy and joyous birth.
4. Test new ideas and/or contribute new discoveries to the body of knowledge around Black infant and maternal health.
5. Promote community education and/or engagement through program services.

Past funded projects include pre-natal yoga, lactation education and support, baby supply drives, support for parents with babies in the NICU, nutrition education, support for teen parents, wellness circles, special needs screening and education, parent support groups and resources, commissioned art, community education and outreach, hairstyling services for pregnant mothers, doula/midwifery support, pelvic physical therapy services, multi-media educational resource development, and more.

The Village Fund seeks to fund a wide range of projects that contribute to healthy and joyous births. It is an opportunity to identify leaders doing proven interventions and creative projects that think outside the box. It is a space where all ideas are welcome. If you are unsure if your work aligns with the Village Fund, you are strongly encouraged to attend the Informational Webinar on Thursday, October 9th or contact us at VillageFundLA@investinkidsla.org. Our team will be happy to speak with you.

| **Activity** | **Date** |
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| **Application Opens** | Wednesday, October 1, 2025 |
| **Informational Webinar** | Thursday, October 9, 20251:30 - 3 pm on Zoom ([Register here](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/6Pq0psKjSWiG1XiW9i2-Qg#/registration)) |
| **Deadline to Submit** | Monday, November 3, 2025 |
| **Review and Selection Process** | November 6 - December 12, 2025 |
| **Award Decisions Announced** | By Friday, December 19, 2025 |

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### Eligibility Criteria

* Independent and fiscally-sponsored nonprofit organizations, networks, coalitions, individual service providers, micro-enterprises, or small businesses are eligible to apply. Priority consideration will be given to entities that are Black-led. See Section 1 (Application Information) below for further information on business applicants.
* Applicants must be located in Los Angeles County.
* Funds received from The Village Fund must be used to serve Los Angeles County’s Black communities.
* Applicants must have a history of working with Black families and an ongoing commitment to empowering and supporting Black people.
* Funds must be used to support one or more grantmaking strategies listed in the section above.
* If funded, applicants must commit to participating in the AAIMM Ambassadors program. The program is a cohort-based learning community that meets once every quarter over the duration of the grant. More information about the AAIMM Ambassadors program is below. An additional financial stipend is provided to organizations to support their ability to participate in quarterly convenings.
* Only applicants who have not received a grant from the Village Fund will be considered.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

* Only projects or services that **cannot** be billed to MediCal or another health insurer will be eligible for funding.
* Only projects that **cannot** be paid for with other existing resources will be eligible for funding. We want to fund the unfunded needs and creative ideas.
* Events such as conferences, workshops, symposiums, one-time trainings, and/or briefings are **not** eligible for funding.
* Political activities, including lobbying, products, and online platforms, are **not** eligible.

### Submission Process

Application materials, bulleted below, must be submitted via a form linked [here](https://form.jotform.com/252684796003160). Those materials must include:

* Responses to the [Application Questions](#bookmark=id.qjarnwh5e3f6) (see page 6).
* Project budget (using only the budget template found [here](https://villagefundla.org/apply)). *Please upload the budget as a PDF with all relevant columns and rows visible.*
* If you are a nonprofit, your organization's W-9 or IRS letter of determination. If you have a fiscal sponsor, please send in their W-9 or IRS letter.
* Individual service providers, micro-enterprises, or small businesses do not need to send a W-9. If chosen to receive a Village Fund grant, you will be given instructions on setting up a fiscal sponsor.

If you have any questions about the terms used in the grant application, please refer to the “[Definitions](#bookmark=id.xmk8za8qgab2)” section at the end of this document.

### Review and Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a community review committee representing the breadth of the LA County AAIMM Prevention Initiative. The committee will select 8-10 applicants based on the [scoring criteria](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uHHNr7eM4jVTFuQ3cY8dHUBiIgqBAgRI/view?usp=sharing) and will endeavor to choose a cohort that represents the geographic diversity of the County as well as a mix of programs, business services, and innovations offered by the applicant pool. *Note: the scoring rubric is subject to change this round. Revisions will be minimal, so the use of the 2024 scoring rubric can still be used as a guide*.

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### Awards

There will be 8-10 grants awarded, ranging from $5,500 to $33,000, depending on the nature of the project and The Village Fund’s total capital. Special note: In general, only 1-2 applicants will be awarded at the $33,000 level. Most grant awards fall between $5,000 - $15,000. Please consider this when developing your proposal and budget.

Grants are awarded on a one-year basis and ***may*** be renewed depending on community need, funding available, and if The Village Fund remains a good fit for your work.

### Reporting Requirement

A final report will be due at the end of the one-year grant, which will be used for the evaluation, and each grantee will be asked to schedule a one-on-one check-in call to share their progress on the work they were funded to perform, highlights, lessons learned, and new skills and/or competencies gained from the AAIMM Ambassadors Learning Community.

### AAIMM Ambassadors Learning Community

The Village Fund is intended to accomplish three goals: 1) fund community-led programs and services that aid in joyous and healthy births for Black families; 2) build community among the funded partners; and 3) connect those organizations to the broader countywide AAIMM network. Funded partners will be asked to participate in quarterly facilitated learning sessions and connect with a local AAIMM Community Action Team to further plug into the countywide network.

**Benefits of the AAIMM Ambassadors**

As part of the community-building process, grantees of The Village Fund will become a cohort. The cohort participates in a series of facilitated learning sessions designed to meet the cohort’s desired learning goals and connect each of the funded participants to the broader AAIMM network. Participants become AAIMM Ambassadors by learning to tell the story of the initiative and share how their work advances its broader goals in the communities they serve, as well as with stakeholders who manage direct resources for infant and maternal health issues.

The LA Partnership will convene four (4) learning community meetings per year. Each meeting will be a half-day. Those who should attend the convenings are: 1) the person performing/delivering the service directly, and 2) someone who can influence the learning culture of the organization/business/service provider/network/collaborative.

The commitment is for one year. Participation in the learning community is mandatory, and each participant is expected to attend all meetings and share their story, experience, challenges, and successes with the evaluator, both orally and in writing, throughout the year.

**Each organization/entity in the cohort will receive a $500 per meeting stipend ($2,000 total). This is in addition to your grant award.**

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### Definitions

* **Black-led is defined as: (Black Equity Collective definition):** A plurality of the Board of Directors is Black (i.e., are the largest racial group represented on the Board) and the Executive Director/Organizational Leader or the Executive Leadership is majority Black. This demonstrates that Black people are in positions of power to influence organizational culture, make strategic decisions around programming, operations, and the use of funds, and have responsibility for the successful execution of the mission and vision.
* **Community presence:** The applicant has pre-existing and long-standing relationships in the community for which it seeks funding support through The Village Fund, either because the applicant currently provides programs or services in the community that work to address racial disparities or because the applicant partners with others who do. It is expected that applicants do not see The Village Fund as an opportunity to “helicopter in” to a community or serve a population with which they have no prior relationship.
* **Fiscal sponsor:** Fiscal sponsorship is an arrangement between a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and a project conducted by an organization, group, or individual that does not have 501(c)(3) status. Fiscal sponsorship permits the exempt sponsor to accept funds restricted for the sponsored project on the project’s behalf. The sponsor, in turn, accepts the responsibility to ensure the funds are properly spent to achieve the project’s goals. (Definition provided by CharityLawyerBlog.com)

The California Black Women’s Health Project has agreed to serve as a fiscal sponsor for The Village Fund. If you do not already have a fiscal sponsor and are interested in seeking fiscal sponsorship, you will be able to indicate this in your application.

### Contact Information

For more information on The Village Fund, please email Laresha Franks at laresha@socialgoodsolutions.com. For technical questions on the application, please email Mary Kopp at mary@investinkidsla.org. For general questions, please email VillageFundLA@investinkidsla.org.

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### Application Questions

*You will have the opportunity to save your grant application as a draft in the portal.*

**Primary Contact Person for the Grant**

* Name, Title, Email, Phone Number

**Section 1: Applicant’s Information**

* Category (choose one):
	+ Nonprofit organization, network, or coalition
	+ Individual service provider, micro-enterprise, or small businesses
* Applicant’s Name (Legal name of organization, business, network, coalition, etc.)
	+ Email and Phone Number
	+ Fiscal Sponsor (if applicable)
	+ Street Address, City, State, Zip (if fiscally sponsored, please list the fiscal sponsor’s address)
* Name of highest-ranking staff member, business owner, or person performing the service.
	+ Title, Email, Phone Number
	+ Is the highest-ranking staff member, business owner, or person performing the service Black?
* Year Established/Launched
* Website or social media handle (if applicable)

**Section 2: Proposed Work**

1. Please choose the primary strategy that best describes your proposed work:
* Supporting the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of Black women/birthing persons, fathers, partners, and families before, during, or after birth by providing respite care; fostering a positive sense of self; increasing access to healthy and joyous births.
* Testing new ideas and/or contributing new discoveries, lessons, or information to the body of knowledge around Black infant and maternal health.
* Promoting community education and/or engagement through program services.
* Promoting community engagement, partnership, and advocacy.
1. Please describe the broad goals of your work. In your description, include your service or mission, geographic communities served (i.e., Pasadena/Altadena, South LA, Van Nuys, etc.), and demographic communities served (i.e., Black fathers, Black mothers generally, Black mothers experiencing postpartum stress, etc.). Your description should be written for the entity performing the funded work, not the fiscal sponsor. (150 words)
2. Provide a brief description of your project. What do you plan to do, and what results will you achieve? Please include the number of Black people and/or families you plan to serve. (150 words)
3. How does the work you do address the high rates of Black infant and maternal mortality in LA County? If you are not sure, that’s okay. Please say how it might help to address the problem. (250 words)
4. How do you recognize and support Black women on your staff or in the community as leaders and experts in infant and maternal health? If you are new to the infant and maternal health field, please describe how your work empowers the voices and leadership of Black women. (500 words)
5. How is your work unique/impactful, or how does it meet a specific need with Black families experiencing pregnancy or childbirth? Why do you believe this work is important to help increase joyous and healthy births for Black moms and babies? (500 words)
6. Describe how you will implement the project and how you will use the funds to implement your proposed work. Please include staffing for the proposed project and their experience with conducting the specific work proposed as part of the project. (250 words)
7. Please name any organizations or businesses you plan to collaborate or work with on this project. If you are not sure, that’s okay. Please tell us who you currently partner with within the community.
8. What is the most difficult aspect of this project that could affect your success? (150 words)
9. What do you (or your organization) hope to gain from participating in the AAIMM Ambassadors (Learning Community)? What do you hope to contribute? (250 words)
10. Can your proposed work be billed to MediCal or another health insurer (or paid for with other existing resources)? If you are unsure, please ask us. (Yes/No)
11. If you answered yes to the above question, please describe why you believe this project should be considered for funding by The Village Fund. If you answered no, please proceed to the next question. (150 words)

**Fiscal Sponsorship**

*If you are a nonprofit, please upload your organization's W-9 or IRS letter of determination. If you have a fiscal sponsor, please send in their W-9 or IRS letter. Individual service providers, micro-enterprises, or small businesses do not need to send a W-9. If chosen to receive a Village Fund grant, you will be given instructions on setting up a fiscal sponsorship with the California Black Women’s Health Project.*

* Do you need a fiscal sponsor (yes, no)?