

# Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program 2023-2025 Request for Proposals (RFP)



*RFP Announcement Date: September 18, 2023*

*Application Open Date: October 4, 2023*

*NIGP Website: [propelnonprofits.org/capacity-building/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program/](https://propelnonprofits.org/capacity-building/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program/)*

## Summary

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program (NIGP) is aimed at supporting the missions of small, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC)-led nonprofit organizations by strengthening their infrastructure. Increasing the capacity of small organizations that work with historically underserved cultural communities helps position these organizations for greater impact in their community. The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program will provide grants, as well as ongoing support to grow the organizational capacity of small BIPOC-led Minnesota nonprofits. This is a government reimbursement grant, so Propel Nonprofits staff will also work with grantees to navigate the reimbursement process.

Propel Nonprofits is seeking proposals that lead to meaningful improvement in an organization's infrastructure, including technology investments, staff development, relationship building, or other opportunities to increase nonprofits' core mission support. We anticipate making between 50 - 70 grants of up to \$65,000 in multi-year reimbursement-based grants. Funds to grantees will be available upon DEED's release of the first allotment (SFY24) The second allotment (SFY25).

Grantees will be required to closely partner with Propel Nonprofits in terms of managing the tracking and reporting requirements of this grant; they'll also be asked to share lessons learned through midterm and final grant reports and at a grantee annual convenings.

Propel Nonprofits fuels the impact and effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital. We provide capacity building grants, loans, finance, strategy, and governance services. Our vision is a diverse network of mission-driven nonprofits building a healthy, vibrant, and more just community. We provide leadership in the nonprofit sector, with research and reports on issues and topics that impact the sustainability and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations.

Propel Nonprofits supports the nonprofit sector by building capacity of nonprofit leader teams to implement sound financial practices and operation strategies that lead to long-term sustainability.

## Key Dates

RFP announced:	September 18, 2023
Applications Open	October 4, 2023
Community RFP informational webinar:	October 6, 2023, 12 – 1 p.m.
Technical assistance session with applicants:	October 9, 2023, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Technical assistance session with applicants:	October 18, 2023, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Proposals due:	Thursday, October 26, 2023, 5 p.m.
Follow-up calls with applicants, if needed:	November 2023
Awards announced:	December 2023

Deadline for signed grant agreements:	Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 5 p.m.
Required program kickoff Session:	December 15, 2023, 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Grant period begins:	Friday, December 15, 2023
Project workplan due:	January 8, 2024, p.m.

## Program Contacts

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## Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program (NIGP 23-25)

### Purpose of Grant

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program (NIGP) will support the missions of small BIPOC-led nonprofit organizations by providing grants, training, and technical assistance that strengthen vital organization infrastructure needed for long-term sustainability. The program focuses on increasing the capacity of small BIPOC led nonprofit organizations focused on serving historically underserved cultural communities. Grantees will work closely with Propel to develop NIGP project workplans to identify capacity building priorities. They will have access to periodic technical assistance focused on financial administration and other nonprofit finance, strategy, and governance areas.

### Legislative Intent

Propel Nonprofits was appropriated a two-year appropriation by the State of Minnesota under MN Laws of [Minnesota Session Laws - 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 53, Article 20, Sec. 2, Subd. 3\(cc\)](#). The program eligibility criteria align with the legislative intent language. The bill provides Propel Nonprofits with funds and authority to administer a grant program to build the infrastructure of small, culturally specific nonprofit organizations. The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program is funded by an appropriation from the state legislature.

## Guidelines and Application

### Eligibility Organization Criteria

The primary organization eligibility criteria are:

1. Nonprofit organizations with current 501(c)(3) status that are:
2. Minnesota based with primary activities serving Minnesota communities.
3. Small, culturally specific nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations that primarily serve historically underserved cultural communities including organizations where the majority of management or board of directors' positions are held by these members of these cultural communities and the programs are designed to serve this cultural community.
4. Organizations with annual budgets less than \$1,000,000.

## Eligible Program Activities

### *Organizational Infrastructure Improvement*

Grants under this activity area can be used to improve organizational infrastructure. Eligible activities under this category include hiring staff or consultants to assist with: developing database management systems; developing financial systems; and building other administrative systems needed to increase the organization's ability to access and sustain new funding sources and deliver on the organization's mission. Other eligible expenses include investments in technology to improve internal infrastructure.

### *Organizational Workforce Development*

Grants under this activity area can be used to increase workforce capacity that builds the organization's infrastructure. Eligible activities include hiring culturally competent staff or consultants to expand programming capacity; providing training and skills development; and implementing other methods of increasing staff capacity.

### *Organizational Partnerships*

Grants under this activity area can be used to create partnerships with other organizations to increase capacity. Eligible activities include the creation and expansion of partnerships with existing organizations that possess specialized expertise; and the creation of partnerships to increase the capacity of the grantee organizations to improve services for the community.

*This is not an exhaustive list of activities that can be funded by this grant program. Propel Nonprofits will work with grant applicants to determine how and if their proposed activities fit within the eligible activities listed above.*

## Anticipated Grant Term and Amount

Propel Nonprofits is seeking to fund 50 - 70 proposals that lead to meaningful improvement in an organization's infrastructure and position the organization to be financially sustainable. The anticipated grant terms and goals are:

1. Award between 50 - 70 grants
2. Award grants of up to \$65,000 in multi-year reimbursement-based grants.
3. Provide post-award technical assistance to grantees in financial administration and other nonprofit finance, strategy, and governance topic areas.
4. Grantees will be asked to share lessons learned through midterm and final grant reports and attend one annual grantee convening each year.

## Anticipated Payment Structure

NIGP will follow a model similar to state grants in its administration. Its primary objective is to enhance the competitiveness of small BIPOC-led organizations in Minnesota state competitive grant programs. This will be achieved through various activities such as trainings, learning labs, annual convenings, and technical assistance for the grantees.

Grants will be distributed based on a reimbursement system, mirroring the process used for state grants. After grantees are selected, Propel Nonprofits will collaborate with them to

establish an appropriate reimbursement schedule. All grantees will be obligated to submit regular financial and program reports as part of the program requirements.

## Timeline for RFP Process

The RFP process will involve several key elements:

1. An informational webinar, recorded for accessibility, will offer an overview of the grant guidelines, and answer any questions organizations might have about the application process.
2. Two technical assistance days are scheduled, each including a 30-minute session for applicants who wish to receive support in preparing their applications. Note that attending these sessions is optional.
3. Follow-up calls may be arranged, but they will only involve organizations for which the selection committee deems it necessary to seek additional clarifying information.

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## RFP Review Process

Propel Nonprofits will assemble a diverse external grant selection committee to evaluate and select grant recipients. This committee will comprise community members from various backgrounds, including nonprofit leaders, philanthropic community, and state government representatives. Propel staff will oversee and facilitate the selection process.

## Application

### Submitting Your Application

The grant application process consists of two steps: a preliminary eligibility inquiry and a more extensive narrative section. To ensure a successful submission by the deadline of October 26, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., follow these steps:

#### Step one

Begin by completing a short preliminary eligibility inquiry form to determine if your organization meets the basic eligibility criteria. Linked here:

<https://propelnonprofits.my.site.com/NIGP/s/inquiry-home>

Only those organizations that meet these criteria will receive access information via their registered email within 24 hours to proceed to the second phase of the application. If you have any problems or questions using the online inquiry form, please contact us at [NIGP@propelnonprofits.org](mailto:NIGP@propelnonprofits.org).

### **Step two**

Complete the grant proposal by providing the required narrative section and attaching all necessary documents.

- Applicants will receive an email with access information for the second section of the application within 24 hours and the narrative questions are available for download via this link.
- While a Word document of the questions is provided as a resource, all applicants must use the online form for submission. [You can download the Word document here.](#)
- Please allocate ample time to complete the application process. The application deadline is strict, and late submissions will not be accepted.

### **Application Submission Tips**

- Text boxes include maximum word counts to keep proposals simple and concise. There is no formatting (bold or italics). You may find that you do not need all the words allotted.
- Do not include hyperlinks in text boxes, as the panel review will be limited to the content of your application. If you include a hyperlink, they will be removed.

### **Informational Webinar and FAQ Page**

We will be offering an optional informational webinar on October 6, 2023, 12-1 pm.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program-nigp-rfp-webinar-tickets-719337867927?aff=oddtcreator>

There is also a [page on our webpage with frequently asked questions \(FAQ\)](#) about the NIGP program. We are happy to answer any remaining questions directly – please email us at [NIGP@propelnonprofits.org](mailto:NIGP@propelnonprofits.org), or set up a meeting using the information below.

(<https://propelnonprofits.org/capacity-building/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program/nonprofit-infrastructure-grant-program-faq/>)

### **Technical Assistance (Optional)**

Applicants can schedule technical assistance meeting with program staff to support their application preparation. With previous grant programs, we found many applicants wanted support in thinking through the application including the eligibility and narrative questions.

Applicants can schedule a 30-minute technical assistance on October 9 or October 18, but a session is not required to apply.

October 9<sup>th</sup>: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nigp-application-technical-assistance-day-1-tickets-728324477117?aff=oddtcreator>

October 18<sup>th</sup>: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nigp-application-technical-assistance-day-2-tickets-730369443667?aff=oddtcreator>

Applicants can also email [NIGP@propelnonprofits.org](mailto:NIGP@propelnonprofits.org) if they need application technical assistance but can't make an appointment on either of these dates.

## Accessibility

Propel requests all applicants apply online unless a disability prevents you from doing so. Propel works to ensure that grant guidelines, presentations, and any other written materials are created with accessibility principles in mind. Additionally, we are happy to provide materials in Large Print or other formats with advanced notice of at least one week. (Even if the notice timeline has elapsed, we will do our best to accommodate the request.) Documents linked in this text are formatted in a text format that is friendly to screen readers and text resizing.

## Narrative Questions

Below are only the narrative questions for the application. **PLEASE NOTE:** Our review process does not prioritize proper phrasing, language, or exact details. The priority is to provide community-based organizations with the support they need in a timely manner. Please tell us about your work, what organizational infrastructure, workforce development, or partnership support you're asking for. Word limits are to keep proposals simple and concise.

1. *Organizational Description:* Provide a summary of your organization's mission, history, strategic priorities, and key accomplishments.  
(350-word maximum)
2. *Building Internal Infrastructure:* The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program will support organizations that are seeking to strengthen their organizational infrastructure to amplify impact; to increase financial sustainability; to strengthen the ability to meet goals; and, to build strategic competitive advantages. Please describe the following areas as they relate to your organization:
  - a. What three key areas of your organization infrastructure are a priority at this point in time? (Examples include further developing staff expertise, financial systems, grants compliance, partnership structures and agreements, policies and procedures, technology, etc.)
  - b. What are you currently doing to address these infrastructure priorities?  
(350-word maximum)
3. *Capacity Building Initiatives:* Are you currently engaged in any other formal capacity building initiatives or programs with Propel Nonprofits or anyone else? If yes, describe what you are prioritizing with that project. How would participating in the Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program further your organization's long-term sustainability?  
(350-word maximum)
4. *Leadership in Cultural Communities:* The Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program will support organizations led by cultural communities that are using cultural-relevant strategies to address historical inequities in these communities. Please describe the following:
  - a. Describe how your organizational leadership – board and management – reflect the cultural community your organization serves.
  - b. Describe the cultural community your organization serves.

- c. Describe how your programming or services are strategically designed to achieve impact in the cultural community you serve.  
(350-word maximum)
5. *Strategy for Building Infrastructure:* Explain how your organization is strategically addressing the current infrastructure priorities.
  - a. Describe how you are currently deploying resources for your infrastructure priorities. For example, are key objectives part of staff annual goals; are you using volunteers to help fill capacity needs; are you securing in-kind contributions of equipment, technology, etc.?
  - b. Describe how you engage your partners – employees, board members, volunteers, and others – in your infrastructure strategies.  
(300-word maximum)
6. *Organizational Infrastructure Work Plan:* The NIGP program focuses on developing your organization’s internal infrastructure through this grant program. Please describe your work plan for this grant project. The grant is a multi-year reimbursement-based funding. First year funds are from December 15, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Second year funds will be contingent on successful progress made on your organization’s year one work plan, completion of midterm report, and attending identified trainings, learning labs, and one annual grantee convening. If selected for this grant, your organization will be required to submit a more detailed work plan due on January 8, 2023, by no later than 5 p.m. Please describe your work plan for this grant project. Include the following:
  - a. Describe your key activities to be funded through this grant.
  - b. List your goals and how you will measure progress on those goals.
  - c. Describe your timetable for carrying out the activities and achieving the goals in your project.
  - d. Identify a key contact person within your organization that will partner with Propel for the purpose of implementing your project workplan to accomplish your organization’s infrastructure priorities.  
(600-word maximum)
7. *Technical Assistance in Financial Administration:* Propel Nonprofits seeks to help organizations improve their financial infrastructure through skill building, training, leadership development, and board development over the course of the grant program. Many small BIPOC-led nonprofits can’t adequately compete for state and local government grants or contracts because of limitations in this area. Please describe the areas in your organization’s financial administration where technical assistance would be helpful, such as budgeting, cash flow projections, cash management, accounting systems, leadership, and board trainings, etc.  
(300-word maximum)
8. *Building on the Infrastructure:* How will you build on the infrastructure improvements you’ve described in this application? How are you involving staff, board members, and key allies in your sustainability strategies?  
(300-word maximum)

## Project Budget And Financial Questions

1. *Project Budget:* Please list your proposed project's revenue sources and expenses:

Revenue Source	Amount
Nonprofit Infrastructure Grant Program	
Other Grants	
Earned Revenue	
Other	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	
Expenses	Amount
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Consultants	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Travel	
Professional Development	
Other	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	

Please note: Do not enter your organizational budget here. You will be asked to submit it as an attachment. This is the project budget.

2. *Other Funding Sources:* If this grant is meant to cover only part of the costs of an infrastructure project, please describe the larger project and other sources of funding currently prospected or secured. Please disregard this question if this is a stand-alone project.  
(300-word maximum)
3. *Organizational Financial Health:* Describe your organization's current financial health. Please describe:
  - a. Is the organization building up reserves?
  - b. Has the organization recently faced financial difficulties?
  - c. What steps are taking to ensure good financial health for your organization?
  - d. Is there information you feel is relevant to share about the financial health of the organization?
 (300-word maximum)

### Additional Documentation-Required

In addition to the narrative questions, the following documentation (attached as pdfs) will be requested in the application:

- 501(c)(3) Determination Letter (upload pdf file)
- Most recent 990 (If your organization does not file a 990, please attach your most recent 990-EZ or 990-N.) (upload pdf file)
- Current year, board-approved organizational budget (upload pdf file)
- List of board members and affiliations (upload pdf file)
- List of staff and their titles/roles (upload pdf file)



Note: Please ensure accuracy before attaching any documents, double-check to make sure they are the correct ones. Once attached, incorrect documents cannot be deleted. If you accidentally attach the wrong document, please promptly attach the correct one. You can attach multiple documents if needed.