Accountable Local Government in Philadelphia
July 2024 RFP FAQs

RFP Eligibility

Q: Can you elaborate on what you mean by service delivery?
A: Service delivery is the process through which public services are provided to Philadelphians.

Q: Are projects limited to Philadelphia residents or are projects still eligible if non-residents participate alongside Philadelphia residents?
A: The primary beneficiaries should be Philadelphians, but it is okay if there are other communities in neighboring counties benefiting from the project.

Q: Could a project focus on Philly and the region or just be Philly focused?
A: The project should have a primary benefit to the city of Philadelphia and Philadelphians.

Q: How does the foundation feel about community organizing as an approach to local government accountability? Is the foundation comfortable with grantees talking about building community power as an outcome?
A: Community organizing is eligible for funding through this objective and an approach we hope to see from some submitted proposals. We invite applicants to talk about their work and their desired outcomes in the way that is most authentic for them, which could include building community power.

Q: I understand there are restrictions around lobbying for this objective. How does the Foundation define lobbying?
A: As a 501(c)3 private foundation, WPF cannot earmark funds for lobbying. This is in accordance with the federal IRS rules around what private foundations can/cannot fund. We use the IRS definition of lobbying: https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/lobbying

Q: Can research be part of the budget for your project?
A: Yes.

Q: If our organization received an Exceptional CivicOpportunities grant closing in 2024, would we be eligible to apply?
A: Yes.

Q: Are you all interested in breadth or depth, as it relates to mobilizing and organizing communities? What are you all looking for from an impact perspective?
A: We are interested in hearing from applicant organizations around what they feel is the most effective approach to achieving this objective. The Foundation is looking for impact over time, so all objectives under the new strategic plan are on a 10-year timeline. We understand we will not accomplish all goals around an objective in a 15–18-month period, but we are looking for your best ideas on how to get started.

Q: Are you interested in funding full proposals (i.e., where a whole project will be completed with the available funding) or parts of larger programs (i.e., this would cost more than $250K but could help fund a portion of the tactics)?

A: As a program that supports collective and collaborative action, we always appreciate the opportunity to be involved in work alongside other funders.

That said, if you have a project that can be completed solely with WPF funding and you feel it makes a strong contribution to advancing this objective, please apply.

Q: Do you see increasing voter participation as a way to meet this objective and is that eligible for funding?

A: For this RFP, the primary goal is related to increasing Philadelphia’s confidence that their local government is responsive and accountable to its constituents. There may be a secondary benefit in increasing voter participation, but we encourage applicants to keep the primary goal in mind.

Increasing voter participation is a separate objective within the Democracy and Civic Initiatives program. An RFP will be released around that objective in December 2024.

Q: Would evidence-based policymaking be considered for funding?

A: If a project can connect how evidence-based policymaking will help advance this objective, we want to hear from you.

Q: Given that it is not a census year, why was the census considered for this RFP?

A: The census is not a priority of this RFP. The census is the focus of a different objective within the Democracy & Civic Initiatives program.

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**RFP & Application Process**

Q: What do you mean when you say responsive, accountable government?

A: A responsive, accountable government builds trust and participation with local communities in the democratic process.

Q: What role does William Penn see the media playing in building constituent trust and increasing government accountability?

A: Media and journalism projects that seek to advance this objective are eligible to apply. We would like to hear from you about what role the media can play in trust and accountability.
Q: What if you do not have a site for the site visitor or if the project is digital?
A: The primary purpose of a site visit is to help program staff build connections, better understand an organization’s work, and the people doing the work. Understanding that all projects may not have a physical site, we will work with you on a case-by-case basis to achieve those purposes in other ways.

Q: Does the grants portal support multimedia (i.e., video) elements in the RFP application?
A: Proposals require written responses to the questions and have a 2GB file size limit for uploads. While it is not required, if an applicant would like to provide an example of their work in a multimedia format, we recommend uploading the video to a public or private cloud repository (Vimeo, YouTube, Box, Google Drive, etc.) and sending us a file with the URL in it and a brief description.

Q: Regarding the budget proposal, would you consider an application that provides a tiered budget proposal?
A: Proposals are easier to review and evaluate when there is one ask vs. multiple options. We encourage applicants to apply for the funding they want for the project they feel would best advance this objective.

Q: Does WPF have any contacts and resources available to help with projects? It would be helpful for planning around what is feasible in the allotted time frame for the RFP.
A: Because many diverse types of projects and organizations are eligible to apply and all may have quite different needs, we do not have pre-established contacts and resources. Organizations are encouraged to apply for what they need to do the work well.

Fiscal Sponsor

Q: Are non-profit fiscally sponsored organizations eligible to apply?
A: Yes. Organizations with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor are eligible.

Q: I am fiscally sponsored but typed the incorrect information into the grants portal. How do I address this technical issue?
A: For any issues with the grants portal, please email our grants management team at portal@williampennfoundation.org.

Q: If the project lead is in Philly, but the fiscal sponsor is located outside of Philly, would we still be eligible?
A: Yes.
**Collaboration**

**Q:** Can two nonprofits join together to make the request?

**A:** Yes, the Foundation encourages partnerships. Please review page six of the RFP packet for more information on collaboration and partnerships for this opportunity.

**Q:** Can two branches of the same organization partner for the RFP?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** If an applicant organization is based in/serveing Philadelphia, do partnering organizations also have to be located in Philadelphia or can they come from elsewhere, including other states?

**A:** As long as the lead applicant is located in Philadelphia and has a history of successfully serving Philadelphia, they would be eligible to apply.

**Learning Communities**

**Q:** You mentioned selections will involve a good cohort to advance the objective. What kinds of balance do you see forming a great cohort? Are you looking for different organizations/communities organizing toward a similar purpose or working toward addressing various kinds of needs?

**A:** As this is a new area of funding, cohort selections will be based on the variety of proposals we received for this objective. The Foundation is looking to serve the widest variety of communities and approaches working toward this objective.