

Heinz Endowments
Request for Proposals
Expanding Disability Inclusion and Access

SECTION I: BACKGROUND

The Heinz Endowments is working to create a just community through a focus on the critical priorities of sustainability, creativity and learning. This work flows through a core ethical commitment to seeking equitable solutions to long-standing structural barriers, disparities in opportunity, bias and racism that affect far too many.

At the Endowments, we envision a world of full inclusion. Our commitment to moral leadership involves ensuring that while we are promoting and pursuing equity, we are intentional about advancing access for those with disabilities. Disability is a common, frequently occurring part of the human experience.¹ We tend to think first of disabilities that impact mobility, because they are visible; we can see if someone uses a wheelchair, cane or service animal. But many disabilities are not immediately apparent (mental health, hearing loss, cognitive and learning differences, memory loss, chronic health issues, etc.).

Regardless of each of our organizations' mission or focus, people with disabilities are part of the community that we are working to reach as well as among our staff and volunteers. But even when we, as funders and nonprofits, focus on fostering diversity, inclusion and equity, too often we fail to consider the needs of people with disabilities. We may be perpetuating barriers that keep people with disabilities out, through inaccessible websites, publications, events, programs and facilities. Additionally, people with disabilities are often specifically and disproportionately affected by community issues like education, housing, transportation, health care, and violence, but these connections are not often recognized or addressed by community-wide efforts. We can do better.

To this end, The Heinz Endowments and FISA Foundation are working together to support *Disability, Inclusion & Access: Moving Forward*, a joint effort to raise awareness and remove common barriers. This initiative has three components:

- A launch event held in November 2019 featuring national and local leaders who have advanced the inclusion of people with disabilities. Several of the presentations from the event can be viewed at www.DisabilityInclusionPgh.org.
- Technical assistance to promote accessibility and inclusion, including webinars and a directory of online resources. You can learn more about registering for live webinars or view archived technical assistance webinars at disabilityinclusionpgh.org.
- A small grants program, the focus of this request for proposals, which is intended to assist nonprofits in being more welcoming and inclusive of people with disabilities.

¹ About 1 in 4 American adults has a disability that affects a major part of life, making people with disabilities the largest minority group in the U.S.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0816-disability.html>

SECTION II: Introduction to the Request for Proposals

As part of the *Disability Inclusion and Access: Moving Forward* initiative, The Heinz Endowments is inviting proposals that will help organizations become more fully inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

Areas of special interest to the Endowments include:

- Organizational assessment to identify barriers to inclusion of people with disabilities and plans to address those barriers. Barriers often exist not only in physical environments, but also on website and social media platforms, in staff knowledge and attitudes, and in organizational policies and procedures. You may choose to conduct an overall assessment of your agency's accessibility (from physical space to policy) or to have a more targeted focus (making your website accessible or doing a communications audit).
- Development and implementation of plans to remove barriers and become more intentional about inclusion.
- Training programs for staff, board members or volunteers to develop the knowledge and attitudes needed to assure participation of people with disabilities as clients and colleagues.
- Support for the inclusion of people with disabilities as volunteers, board or staff members.

Please note that requests for funding to address physical barriers through improvements such as installing ramps will only be considered if the requests also include a training component for staff or some other parallel effort to create a more inclusive culture.

The primary goal of the funding is to make organizations that serve the broader community accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities. Organizations that already focus on serving individuals with disabilities may apply for support to make their services more broadly accessible – for example an organization that provides mental health services might propose making their website accessible to individuals with visual disabilities.

SECTION III: INFORMATION SESSION

An information session to address any questions about the RFP will be offered for prospective applicants which is scheduled for:

Thursday, March 5, at 1:30 p.m. to be held at

CLASS (Community Living And Support Services) 1400 S Braddock Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15218

SECTION IV: AWARD INFORMATION

Awards for the *Disability Inclusion and Access* grants will range from \$1,000 to \$20,000.

SECTION V: TIME FRAME

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by June 1, 2020.

SECTION VI: ELIGIBILITY

All applicants must be registered to do business in Pennsylvania as a 501(c)(3).

SECTION VII: APPLICATION EVALUATION

Awards will be made through a competitive panel review process. Criteria will include:

- Feasibility of design and technical approach
- Potential for the project to significantly increase the inclusion of people with disabilities
- Management and operational capacity
- Past performance
- Cost efficiency

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

A. Feasibility of design and technical approach refers to the quality and feasibility of the application in terms of how well proposed activities help meet objectives.

B. Potential for the project to significantly increase the inclusion of people with disabilities addresses the project's potential to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities and the extent to which the increased inclusion can directly benefit them. Applications must demonstrate how the applicants intend to measure the impact of their activities.

C. Management and programmatic capacity is evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. The application should demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity and key personnel in implementing the proposal. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability.

F. Past performance refers to previous or ongoing experience implementing similar projects, such as those involving organizational self-assessment, increased equity or culture change.

E. Cost efficiency is the degree to which budgeting is clear and reasonable, and reflects the best use of organizational and grant resources.

Click [here](#) for the online application for disability & inclusion.