

2021 Grant Guidelines

Citi Foundation



The mission of the Citi Foundation is to **promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world**. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion; catalyze job opportunities for youth; and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation’s “more than philanthropy” approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation.

We focus our resources on the following three focus areas:

- ❖ Youth Economic Opportunities
- ❖ Financial Inclusion
- ❖ Community Solutions

The Citi Foundation applies a racial equity lens across each of our focus areas. Learn more about Citi’s and the Citi Foundation’s commitment to advancing racial equity [here](#).

Grant proposals are evaluated based on the following considerations:

1. Does the organization have the capacity and expertise to successfully leverage Citi Foundation funding?
We consider factors such as the organization’s governance and financial model, record of accomplishment in the community and leadership team expertise.

2. What is the proposed impact Citi Foundation funds will have on the organization and the community?
We consider factors such as attainability of proposed results and the degree to which grant funds will result in increases in organizational capacity and improvements in economic conditions for those served.

3. How is diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) prioritized within the organization and its programs?
We consider factors such as the degree to which the organization is proactively advancing DEI, including through its hiring practices, board composition, procurement practices, and programming.

4. Is this the best possible use of Citi Foundation funds given other opportunities before us?

The Citi Foundation does not provide funding to:

- Private foundations
- Religious or fraternal organizations (unless they are engaged in a project benefiting an entire community)
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, gender identity or expression, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran’s status or other legally protected personal characteristic or status
- Individuals
- Lobbying, political causes, campaigns, or candidates
- Advertising, special events, dinners, telethons, benefits, or fundraising activities
- Memorials
- Gift Matching

To be considered for funding, applicants must have IRS 501c (3) status or an international equivalent, or they must be a registered school, university, or government entity.



Youth Economic Opportunities

The Citi Foundation supports efforts that help boost the employability of low-income, vulnerable young people around the world. In particular, we seek to increase the number of youth, primarily aged 16-24, who become employed or start an income-generating business through leadership and skills training, experiential learning, and access to professional networks. Further, we believe that consistent and meaningful engagement of young people in the design and execution of programs that are intended to benefit them can help ensure that those programs are addressing their priorities and aspirations and improving their economic prospects.

Results we seek in this focus area include:

- Increases in the number of low-income, vulnerable youth who obtain employability skills, gain professional networks, become employed or start or expand their own income-generating business
- Increases in initiatives that incorporate youth in the design, governance, implementation and/or monitoring of programming
- Increases in the number of programs/organizations within the youth economic development sector that embed a focus on racial equity

We make the following **types of investments** in this focus area:

1. Investments in Direct Service

Programs in this investment seek to empower youth through employability and entrepreneurship training, mentoring, coaching and access to professional networks.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Programs that build employability skills through on-the-job experiential learning, such as internships, summer jobs and apprenticeships
- Programs that provide training that helps build business expertise and leadership skills, and helps youth start and/or expand their own enterprises
- Programs that help young people build 21st century workforce skills that prepare them to enter the job market, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, technology literacy, and financial and interpersonal skills

We do not fund:

- Scholarships or tuition-related programming
- Unpaid hands-on work experiences
- Primary, secondary or tertiary education, including graduate or masters-level programming
- Arts education programs

2. Investments in Capacity Building & Planning

Programs in this investment area seek to strengthen the organizations we fund so that they can achieve impact and sustain stronger gains for those served. These programs focus on the needs of the organization and strengthen the ability of the organization to achieve its mission.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Development of new programming, approaches or tools to improve client outcomes
- Investments in strategic planning, new IT or knowledge management systems, or measurement and impact evaluation to strengthen the organization



- Staff training and professional development that helps the organization deliver services more effectively, efficiently, or more broadly
- Training and services focused on helping the organization embed racial equity into their work and internal structures

3. Investments in Systems Change

Programs in this investment area seek to transform broad-reaching systems, processes, policies and/or practices that limit economic progress for low-income individuals and communities of color.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Efforts that share information and create alignment among local policymakers, educators, the business community and/or practitioners about the need to improve programs and systems to significantly increase youth employment
- Research that tests, disseminates, and promotes models for increasing youth employability or entrepreneurship activity and that drive a greater understanding of best practices and better methodologies for defining and measuring impact
- Analysis of systemic racism impact outcomes in systems and communities, and the development of strategies to address those inequities



Financial Inclusion

The Citi Foundation supports efforts to develop a more inclusive financial system that provides greater access to financial products, services and capital to low-income communities and individuals. Access to capital and financial products empowers adults and young people to build financial assets, enables entrepreneurs to grow or launch businesses that create jobs, and helps community-based organizations strengthen and transform communities. Accordingly, the Citi Foundation supports community-based lenders, including Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) that provide access to capital, financial products and wrap-around services to small businesses. However, we believe access to capital and products alone is not enough. Financial capability—the ability to establish financial plans and develop strategies for preserving a strong financial position during times of both economic prosperity and instability—is critical to the financial well-being and upward economic mobility of individuals and communities.

Results we seek in this focus area include:

- Increases in the number of low-income individuals who adopt positive financial behaviors and accumulate and preserve financial assets
- Increases in the number of enterprises that provide new income generation and/or employment opportunities for low-income individuals
- Increases in the supply of capital, financial products, and wrap-around services that improve and accelerate the financial inclusion of small businesses and/or low-income individuals
- Increases in the number of programs/organizations within the financial inclusion sector that embed a focus on racial equity

We make the following **types of investments** in this focus area:

1. Investments in Direct Service

Programs in this investment area seek to help adults, youth and families make positive changes to their financial behavior so that they can manage their money more effectively, save, and improve their financial situation over time. We are particularly interested in supporting efforts that incorporate financial coaching, education, and product access into other service delivery programs including, but not limited to, workforce development, entrepreneurship, social protection efforts, health and housing. However, we also invest in standalone financial empowerment services and support programs that expand access to capital and provide critical business development services to enable entrepreneurs to successfully launch or expand their businesses and create jobs. This includes support to institutions that deliver credit and other financial products and services targeted to low-income individuals, microenterprises, small businesses and community-based organizations.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Efforts that weave financial capability strategies into other service delivery programs such as job training, homeownership and entrepreneurship programs to achieve better outcomes and increase the long-term financial well-being of their clients
- Expansion or delivery of innovative models that build financial knowledge, skills and habits through ongoing coaching or counseling to help individuals define their financial goals, develop financial plans, and select and use appropriate financial products
- Programs that provide technical assistance or business development services, combined with access to financing, for businesses that are owned by people of color and/or have the potential to create new jobs
- Flexible infusion of capital for Community Development Financial Institutions to enable them to better serve diverse entrepreneurs and/or low-income individuals and communities

We do not fund:

- Standalone financial education workshops



2. Investments in Capacity Building & Planning

Programs in this investment area seek to strengthen the organizations we fund so that they can achieve and sustain stronger gains for those served. These programs focus on the needs of the organization and strengthen the ability of the organization to achieve its mission.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Development of new programming, approaches or tools to improve client outcomes
- Investments in strategic planning, new IT or knowledge management systems, or measurement and impact evaluation to strengthen the organization
- Staff training and professional development that helps the organization deliver services more effectively, efficiently, or more broadly
- Training and services focused on helping the organization embed racial equity into their work and internal structures

3. Investments in Systems Change

Programs in this investment area seek to transform broad-reaching systems, processes, policies and/or practices that limit economic progress for low-income individuals and communities of color.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Efforts that share information and create alignment among local policymakers, educators, the business community and/or practitioners about the financial realities of low-income households, the role of innovative strategies in improving financial well-being, the effective use of business development services and entrepreneurship for economic growth, and the expansion of inclusive financial systems
- Research that tests, disseminates, and promotes models for increasing financial inclusion at scale and that drive a greater understanding of best practices and better methodologies for defining and measuring impact
- Analysis of systemic racism impact outcomes in systems and communities, and the development of strategies to address those inequities



Community Solutions

The Citi Foundation supports efforts that break down silos and bring stakeholders together to develop and scale solutions to the most pressing challenges confronting disfranchised communities around the world. By investing in nonprofit organizations' capacity to be change agents, and supporting partnerships and networks, we seek to transform communities into sustainable and thriving epicenters of equitable economic opportunity for all. We support collaborations among stakeholders such as local government, community-based organizations and residents, the private sector, and research institutions and invest in efforts that spur innovation in key areas, including affordable housing, environmental sustainability and resilience, adult workforce training and small business development. Further, the Citi Foundation seeks to partner with community organizations that are working to advance racial equity within these key areas.

Results we seek in this focus area include:

- Improved programs and systems that contribute to the economic progress and resilience of low-income individuals and communities of color as demonstrated by indicators, including, but not limited to, increases in number of individuals employed, businesses formed or expanded, affordable housing created and preserved, and improved environmental conditions ranging from access to green space to energy efficiency
- Increases in the number of programs/organizations within the community development sector that embed a focus on racial equity

We make the following **types of investments** in this focus area:

1. Investments in Direct Service

Programs in this investment area seek to support community-based organizations and public-private partnerships that are working to grow economic opportunities and improve the delivery of services to low-income individuals and communities of color.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Programs that provide training to local community organizations, municipalities and/or other local champions who are working to deliver services more efficiently and effectively
- Programs that support the development of new ideas or the scaling or replication of existing solutions that create more resilient, safe, and affordable communities that provide opportunities for living-wage work
- Programs that leverage the use of data or technology to improve the delivery of services to low-income communities
- Community-based organizations working to advance locally driven solutions

We do not fund:

- Predevelopment expenses such as engineering or architectural plans

2. Investments in Capacity Building & Planning

Programs in this investment area seek to strengthen the organizations we fund so that they can achieve and sustain stronger gains for the people and communities they serve. These programs focus on the needs of the organization and strengthen the ability of the organization to achieve its mission.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Development of new programming, approaches, or tools to improve client outcomes
- Investments in strategic planning, new IT or knowledge management systems, or measurement and impact evaluation to strengthen the organization



- Staff training and professional development that helps the organization deliver services more effectively, efficiently or more broadly
- Training and services focused on helping the organization embed racial equity into their work and internal structures

3. Investments in Systems Change

Programs in this investment area seek to transform broad-reaching systems, processes, policies and/or practices that limit economic progress for low-income individuals and/or communities of color.

Examples of investments in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Efforts that share information and create alignment among local policymakers, educators, the business community and/or practitioners to develop and scale innovative solutions that drive economic progress for all by addressing key community revitalization, economic development or environmental sustainability challenges
- Social justice efforts that engage community residents and stakeholders to ensure they are part of the solutions and programs developed to serve them and/or efforts that endeavor to apply a racial equity lens to community development programming (such as affordable housing, small business development, environmental sustainability and workforce development)
- Research that tests, disseminates, and promotes models that contribute to advancing the field of equitable economic development and environmental sustainability and that drive a greater understanding of best practices and better methodologies for defining and measuring impact, especially for low-income individuals and/or communities of color
- Research and documentation of systems that have demonstrably been used over time to reinforce disparate outcomes in systems and communities based on race, and the development of strategies to eliminate such disparities