



Grantmaking Frequently Asked Questions

2026 Seeding the Future Grants

What are Seeding the Future Grants?

Seeding the Future Grants are offered to support efforts that pursue accelerated change in conditions and systems transformation through coalition and base building, grassroots advocacy, civic engagement, community organizing, and public policy development/change that aims to improve conditions for community level well-being. Seeding the Future Grants are designed to be responsive to systems-change partners' efforts to propel our work in alignment with our vision for the next seven generations. Funding is unrestricted and supports general operations.

What types of proposals will Deaconess NOT fund?

Seeding the Future grants do not support service delivery, event sponsorship, grants to individuals, capital campaigns, emergency operational funds, activities to elect specific candidates to public office, or work that is strictly programmatic in nature. **While we value programmatic interventions and the work they do to treat symptoms, Seeding the Future is designed to support systemic interventions that address the root cause or transform the conditions people face.**

What are examples of efforts funding may support?

- Advancement of coordinated local or state public policy advocacy and organizing campaigns driving meaningful, systemic change that may include voter engagement, education and mobilization;
- Expansion of organizing capacity to respond to the ever-evolving legislative and electoral landscape;
- Development of research and analysis, convenings and community campaigns that generate innovative approaches to solving policy challenges; and/or
- The testing and incubating of opportunistic or innovative initiatives that are well-positioned to advance policy change such as ballot initiatives.

How may funding be used?

Funding may be used to address organizational needs, support salaries and benefits, invest in technology, strengthen communications efforts, or to meet other operational needs to advance systems change.

What is the grant timeframe?

Seeding the Future Grants are for one year and are non-renewable.



What is the award amount for each grant?

Each grant awarded is \$20,000.

Do interested partners need to resubmit for each grant cycle for a Seeding the Future Grant?

Yes, organizations will need to submit a new proposal to be considered during a particular grant cycle.

Is there a limit to the number of times an organization can submit a funding proposal and be awarded a Seeding the Future Grant?

Organizations that have been awarded a Seeding the Future Grant are not eligible to apply for another Seeding the Future Grant until after the one-year covenant is completed.

Organizations awarded a Seeding the Future Grant are eligible to apply for grants other than the Seeding the Future Grants (e.g. Policy Campaign Grant) that Deaconess offers during the term of the one-year covenant.

Does an organization need to be in existence for a certain period of time to be considered for funding?

No, an organization generally does not need to be in existence for a specific period of time to be considered for funding. Deaconess has funded young, emerging organizations as well as organizations with century-long operational history. During the due diligence process, we want to ensure that the financial health and leadership capacity are such that the organization has long-term viability beyond the grant period.

What are the 2026 Seeding the Future grant cycle dates?

Cycle 1

- Request for proposals opens and will be available: Monday, February 2nd
- Requests for proposals closes: Friday, February 27th

Cycle 2

- Request for proposals opens and will be available: Monday, June 1st
- Requests for proposals closes: Friday, June 26th

Cycle 3

- Request for proposals opens and will be available: Monday, August 31st
- Requests for proposals closes: Friday, September 25th

The online portal will be open during the cycle dates listed above. To be considered for review, grant applicants must be submitted during a cycle by 11:59pm on the closing date.



Who should submit a funding proposal?

Organizations working to improve conditions for community health and well-being through a systems transformation approach through coalition and base building, grassroots advocacy, civic engagement, community organizing, and public policy development/change are encouraged to submit a proposal if they meet the other eligibility criteria. Organizations' work should include efforts that align with [our strategy](#) to achieve liberation in the next seven generations and abolish racial and structural inequities that are felt in the day-to-day lives of all people across the Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois footprint.

Do organizations need a 501(c)(3) status to submit a funding proposal?

Organizations need either their own [501\(c\)\(3\) tax exemption](#) *OR* a fiscal agent. Deaconess aims to reduce/eliminate barriers to accessing grant funding. An organization that does not have its own 501(c)(3) status can identify a fiscal agent - an organization or a legal entity with a 501(c)(3) tax exemption that can manage any awarded funds on its behalf. Organizations will complete the proposal in the online portal and upload the memorandum of understanding (MOU) detailing the confirmation of the fiscal agent relationship and the fiscal agent's Employer Identification (EIN) number. Deaconess will fund 501(c)(4) organizations for specific 501(c)(3) activities.

Can organizations outside of St. Louis submit a funding proposal?

Yes, any organization whose work aligns with the grant criteria *AND* is working in one or more of the counties in Deaconess' footprint is eligible to submit a funding proposal. Deaconess' footprint includes St. Louis City, St. Louis, Jefferson, St. Charles, and Franklin Counties in Missouri and Madison, St. Clair, and Monroe Counties in Illinois.

How can general operating funds be used?

Funding is unrestricted. Funding may be used to address organizational needs, support salaries and benefits, invest in technology, strengthen communication efforts, or to meet other operational needs.

If I have additional questions, who should I contact?

For questions regarding funding opportunities with Deaconess Foundation, please contact the Grants Team at GrantHelp@deaconess.org. Visit deaconess.org/funding-opportunities to also learn more.