



2026 Seeding the Future Grant Funding Proposal Questions

Instructions (please note that these questions are intended to be submitted through the grant portal noted [here](#)):

OVERVIEW OF DEACONESS INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY:

Deaconess Foundation recognizes that significant gaps in civic and community infrastructure to realize systems transformation and racial liberation:

1. Multidisciplinary coordinated long-term measures to anchor and center individual and community healing and wellness, restoration, and reconciliation;
2. Community member-led redistribution of wealth;
3. Coordinated year-round base- and coalition-building; and
4. Shared narrative strategy.

Deaconess Foundation aims to act boldly with its power, influence, and resources strategy to pursue liberation within seven generations, an intentional and conscious movement in which our community freely exists, dreams and thrives in the absence of oppressive systems in a culture of solidarity, respect and dignity.

Components of the strategy include:

Building Beloved Community through

1. intentional undoing and unlearning of internal and external practices and processes rooted in white supremacy culture to create a more anti-racist, intersectional, equitable and democratic workplace which mirrors the ways Deaconess Foundation shows up and exists in community and the broader ecosystem while
2. elevating, celebrating, and inspiring the ecosystem in Missouri and Illinois by lifting up the liberated behaviors that are creating the conditions that lead to individual and community wellness and liberation.

Building Power through

1. investing in the bi-state area to support strong enduring civic agency and engagement for equitable participation in the democratic process to public policy,
2. catalyzing the local, regenerative economy based on reflective, responsive, and reciprocal relationships,
3. brokering interdisciplinary multigenerational collaboration, and
4. positioning Deaconess Center as public square and public good for community members.



For more detail about resources that are informing our work, see:

[Innovation Ambition Continuum](#)

[Social Change Ecosystem](#)

Seeding the Future Grants are \$20,000 awards for general operating support to advance efforts which pursue change in conditions through coalition and base-building, grassroots advocacy, community organizing and/or public policy development that aims to improve conditions for community level well-being. Seeding the Future Grants are designed to be responsive to systems-change partners' efforts and propel our work in alignment with our [vision](#) for the next seven generations. Grants will be awarded for one year.

For more information about Deaconess Foundation funding guidelines, please visit our website [here](#). All application materials are due electronically via the online portal.

The 2026 Seeding the Future Cycles are as follows:

Cycle 1

- Request for proposals opens and will be available: Monday, February 2nd, 2026
- Request for proposals closes: Friday, February 27th, 2026

Cycle 2

- Request for proposals opens and will be available: Monday, June 1st, 2026
- Request for proposals closes: Friday, June 26th, 2026

Cycle 3

- Request for proposals opens and will be available: Monday, August 31st, 2026
- Request for proposals closes: Friday, September 25th, 2026

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

If you have any questions, would like assistance, please contact Deaconess Foundation's grants team at GrantHelp@deaconess.org.

Below are the specific questions that are posted in the online portal for Seeding the Future Grants.



Applicant Information

Applicant Legal Name *(as shown on IRS Letter of Determination)*:

**NOTE: Please enter the organization name here, not the name of an individual*

Doing Business As *(if different from legal name)*:

Address, City, State, ZIP code:

Area Code/Telephone #:

Year Organization was established:

Employer Identification Number (EIN) as shown on IRS Letter of Determination Letter:

If you do not currently have a 501c3 IRS determination, you can denote an identified fiscal sponsor.

Organizational Website (Optional):

Fiscal Sponsor:

Are you using a Fiscal Sponsor?

If yes, please complete the following fields.

Fiscal Sponsor Organization Name

Fiscal Sponsor Address

Fiscal Sponsor Tax ID

Fiscal Sponsor Contact Name

Executive Director (or Top Executive):

Prefix

Pronouns

First Name Last Name

Title

Area Code/Telephone #

E-mail

Main Contact for this Proposal:

Check here if same as Executive Director or Top Executive



Prefix

Pronouns

First Name Last Name

Title

Area Code/Telephone # Title

E-mail

Proposal Information Section

Organization's Mission/Vision Statement:

Proposal Title:

Systems Change Tactic (Please check all that apply):

Deaconess offers how we define two of the lesser-known system change tactics:

Narrative Advocacy is a persuasive form of communication intended to influence audiences' real-world knowledge and beliefs and move them to action.

Healing Justice encompasses efforts that respond to intergenerational trauma and violence, facilitates healing and aims to transform systems into those which foster well-being.

- Community Organizing/Base-building
- Grassroots Advocacy
- Healing Justice
- Narrative Advocacy
- Public Policy Development/Change
- Other (please specify):

Proposal Summary:

(1) In 1000 words or less, provide a summary of your funding request defining how your effort will advance policy or systems that address the following gaps in civic and community infrastructure to realize systems transformation and racial liberation. Please include details about the desired impact you expect to achieve as a result of successful implementation:

- What is the issue your effort aims to solve? What is the civic and/or community infrastructure gap(s) the proposed effort will close?



- Who will be impacted by the proposed activities? Are there unintended impacts that you are making plans to address?
- How will the most affected people/communities share power in decision-making throughout the proposed effort timeframe to advance the desired change?
- Are you aware of any other efforts underway to address the issue your efforts aims to solve? How might you enhance, complement and/or avoid duplicating them?
- Please describe your most valuable partnerships.
- Identify the level of ambition for change in your organization, constituency or network. Is it incremental (focuses on improving, rather than changing the performance of existing systems), reform-oriented (focuses on changing systems to address significant shortcomings), transformative (focuses on building entirely new systems based on radically different worldviews, values and narratives), or a combination of levels? (See page 3 of [Innovation Ambition Continuum](#) for more information)

(2) Optional: Please select and respond to one of the prompts below.

- What are markers/hallmarks of liberation for the region? How does what you propose accelerate the journey to liberation?
- Where does the future need to be healed, and how does this effort seed a healed future?
- Drawing from creative inspiration (e.g. poets, philosophers, theologians, writers, musicians, counter-culture creators, children’s expressions, dance, and design) where do you see glimmers of the future in the present?

(3) Impact Analysis

- Identify the level of ambition for change in your organization, constituency or network. Is it incremental (focuses on improving, rather than changing the performance of existing systems), reform-oriented (focuses on changing systems to address significant shortcomings), transformative (focuses on building entirely new systems based on radically different worldviews, values and narratives), or a combination of levels?
- Given the level of ambition for change you outlined—whether incremental, reform-oriented, transformative, or a combination—how would you describe your current level of impact?

Total amount Requested (*maximum \$20,000 for one year*):

Current Annual Organizational Budget:



Impact Demographics (options vary per category)

Describe the specific geographic areas and populations that will be impacted by, and benefit from this funding request.

- *Age Group* (Please indicate the age of those who will be most impacted because of this effort)
- *Race & Ethnicity* (Please denote the race/ethnicity of those who will be most impacted because of this effort)
- *Gender* (Please denote gender of those who will be most impacted because of this effort)
- *Geographical Area Served* (Please denote the geographical area that will be most impacted as a result of this effort.) Choose up to three. Search for the state (either Missouri or Illinois), then select the appropriate county from the drop-down menu. If an entire County is impacted, you need not select geography at the ZIP code level.

Institutional Commitment to Liberation

- Please provide the racial/ethnic and gender demographics of your organization's staff and board.
- How does your work impact different racial/ethnic groups and/or intersectional identities?
- How does your organization aim to address racial bias and inequities within your internal structures?
- Does your organization have established racial equity goals? If so, please describe including detail on how internal processes and systems are accessible and accountable to people of color.
- How are the racial/ethnic groups most affected by your efforts represented in your organization's work (e.g. Board governance, organizational staff leadership)?
- How does your organization interrogate and replace existing policies that perpetuate harm with particular attention to race, gender, and disability?

Impact and Learning

- How will you track and measure progress towards the desired change your work aims to address?
- How will you know the desired change has occurred? (*e.g. this could be expressed as metrics, indicators, frameworks, or qualitative proof points.*)

Partnership Enhancement Support

- Other than a funding investment, how can Deaconess advocate and/or engage to support this campaign?

Requested Budget

Budget Narrative: In 1000 words or less, detail (1) the sources of revenue and primary expenses for your organization annual budget and (2) how the funding will be used to support your proposal.



Current Organizational Annual Budget (*please upload*)

Attachments

Supporting Documents:

To Upload a file, click choose file, browse to the document on your computer and select it. When you return to this page, be sure to click the UPLOAD button to complete process.

Do we have your IRS Letter of Determination letter on file?
If YES, you do not have to upload it in the next field. If NO, please upload below.

Tax Status Determination Letter: IRS Letter of Determination. NOTE: This is not the state sales and use tax exemption certificate. If there has been a name change, provide copies of the amended state certificate of incorporation and amended IRS Letter of Determination.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): If applicable, if applying with a fiscal agent copy of a signed agreement letter/memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the applicant and the fiscal sponsor.

Submission Agreement

I certify to the best of my knowledge, that all information included in this proposal is correct. The tax-exempt status of this organization, or its fiscal agent, is still in effect. If a grant is awarded to this organization, then the proceeds of that grant will not be distributed or used to benefit any organization or individual supporting or engaged in applicable anti-terrorist financing and asset control laws, statutes, and executive orders.

In the space below, please type your legal name.

Signature, Executive Director (or authorizing official on behalf of the organization)

Date

Reserved Rights



Deaconess Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications submitted; request additional information from any or all respondents; and contact respondents to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to the solicitation requirements.