



Request for Proposals (RFP)
California Black Freedom Fund
April 19, 2021

Introduction

In 2020, the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery – among many others – placed anti-Black policies and practices into greater context for the American public. The recognition of systemic racism and the calls for greater accountability have created a window to act now in service of Black communities and communities of color in general. Seeing this opportunity, the California Executive Roundtable on Philanthropy and Equity partnered with leaders of the largest Black nonprofit networks in California to consider what resources and support would be needed to achieve a vision for a powerful, healthy and thriving Black community. These leaders were engaged because of their proven track records in regional network-building, nonprofit capacity development, and policy strategy and implementation. The result was a proposal to establish a \$100 million, five-year philanthropic effort, the California Black Freedom Fund.

Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) is delighted to be supporting the California Black Freedom Fund (CBFF). SVCF's support includes programmatic, administrative and fiscal management of the fund. The first state-based fund of its kind, CBFF prioritizes investment in the courageous and visionary grassroots advocates and community leaders who are transforming our cities, our state and our world. CBFF publicly launched in February 2021, and is a five-year, statewide initiative to ensure that Black power-building and movement-based organizations have the sustained investments and resources they need to eradicate systemic and institutional racism. During the course of this initiative, there will be multiple grant rounds to fund organizations that are improving the lives of Black communities and/or addressing systemic policy changes in local communities and/or statewide.

We invite you to apply.

Grant Application Deadline

Grant applications must be submitted online using SVCF's online grant application form by **Friday, May 14, 2021, 11:59 p.m., Pacific time.**

The Problem

According to data from the California Health Care Foundation [Health Care Almanac](#), Black Californians have the lowest life expectancy (75 years, versus the California average of 81 years) and the highest death rate in 2017 (865 deaths per 100,000, versus the California average of 618 deaths per 100,000). COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation, as Black communities continue to have the highest death rates from COVID-19 across the country. Black women also face the highest lifetime rates of domestic violence in California, with 43 percent experiencing domestic violence versus the California average of 35 percent. Black men, women and adolescents are disproportionately over-represented among those in contact with the juvenile court and criminal legal system, and Black girls and boys remain under-represented among high school graduates statewide and uniquely vulnerable to exclusionary school discipline. Despite data that clearly shows the disproportionate impact of these issues on Black communities, funding and support to effectively combat these issues is remarkably scarce.

Black-led and Black-serving nonprofits have experienced a cumulative pattern of underinvestment, as evidenced by a recent [Ms. Foundation report](#) showing that women and girls of color in the United States received just 0.5% of the \$67 billion granted by foundations in 2017. Black women and girls fared even worse than girls and women of color overall. Per the report, of the \$356 million of philanthropic funding for women and girls of color in 2017, less than \$15 million (4.2%) was specified as benefitting Black women and girls. Black-led and Black-serving nonprofits also lack the infrastructure and support available to other communities of color (e.g., the [Latino Community Foundation](#) and its [Nonprofit Accelerator](#)).

The Opportunity

The purpose of the California Black Freedom Fund is to invest in the power and capacity of Black-led organizations, coalitions and networks to support structural policy changes that will improve the health, safety, and economic well-being of Black communities in California. Such investment increase Black-led organizations' access to the practical resources and tools they need to continue driving toward transformative, multi-sector policy change.

CBFF's goal is to invest for the following objectives:

1. Strengthened policy and advocacy agenda for racial justice and equality.
2. Strengthened ecosystem of diverse, Black-led organizations working at local, regional and state levels that share a common agenda to combat cultural and systemic anti-Black racism.
3. Increased active participation of Black communities to influence local, regional and state-level civic matters that impact health, safety and socioeconomic opportunity.
4. Increased pipeline of Black leaders in positions of decision-making power.
5. Increased and sustained funding from a diverse set of state and national foundations, corporate and individual donors to strengthen Black-led organizations at the center of a racial justice movement.

During the five-year initiative, CBFF will provide grants and capacity-building support to Black-led nonprofit organizations that are advancing equity. Areas of focus may include support for organizations addressing state-sanctioned violence, public safety, economic opportunity, restorative justice, education, public health and domestic violence.

Focus of CBFF Grant Round

Under this RFP, general operating support grants will be provided to Black-led nonprofit organizations with operating budgets of \$1 million or less that are focused on combatting systemic anti-Black racism and building power in the Black community. CBFF intends to enhance the infrastructure of Black-led organizations focused on power-building.

CBFF views Black power-building infrastructure¹ as a growing ecosystem of locally rooted, Black-led organizing efforts that develop a statewide base of Black community members with the ability to:

- Develop and advocate for policy changes based on a Black community agenda;
- Exercise culturally competent and responsive leadership and play decision-making roles in multiple sectors;
- Deploy multiple forms of power, informed by an intersectional lens, to win systemic change through strategies including advocacy, mass protest and voter organization and mobilization.

¹ Description by Anthony Thigpen, Manuel Pastor and Cathy Cha

There are complementary components of such an infrastructure, including narrative development, relevant research and legal support. The immediate focus of CBFF centers on organizing, base-building and mobilizing community members to shape policy decisions and ensure that those who govern in their names actually carry out their interests.

CBFF will prioritize support for grassroots organizations with missions and strategies that focus on mobilizing young people, families and the community to build Black power. This grant round will allow for organizations to increase their capacity to enhance advocacy and organizing efforts. The focus of this RFP is not to fund direct services to residents, although we understand that many organizations that engage in power-building also provide direct services. Direct services organizations may apply; however, this grant would fund only the power-building aspect of the organization's work.

Application Process

1. Review this RFP and learn more about the [California Black Freedom Fund](#) (CBFF).
2. Participate in an information session. This is highly encouraged for those responding to this RFP, but not required. The information session will provide an opportunity for applicants to review the RFP in more depth and ask questions. Register for the online information session:
 - Tuesday, April 27, 2021, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Pacific time – online only – [Register here](#).
 - The information session will be recorded and posted online afterward on the [CBFF website](#) and on [SVCF's website](#).
3. Submit grant application, including required attachments, online at the following [link](#). Applications must be submitted by **Friday, May 14, 2021, 11:59 p.m., Pacific time**.

More specific questions about project eligibility, proposal process and evaluation can be addressed through phone calls and/or email communication with the program staff, as time permits. Please ensure that you prepare the application in advance and review the instructions for setting up your online account in SVCF's application portal. After reviewing the RFP and information session, if you need any assistance or have questions regarding the application process, please do not hesitate to contact us:

For technical support regarding the application and/or online portal access, email: applsvcf@siliconvalleycf.org

For programmatic questions regarding eligibility, email: cablackfreedomfund@siliconvalleycf.org

Proposal Eligibility Criteria

- Organizations based in California and working with Black communities with budgets of \$1 million or less.
- Organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation or those that have a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) designation.
- Organizations that do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical disability, veteran status or any other protected category.
- Organizations with religious affiliations will be considered for funding only if the project for which they seek support attempts to address the needs of the wider community without regard to religion or religious affiliation.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Successful proposals must meet the minimum eligibility criteria and provide a clear and compelling narrative about how this funding will increase the capacity and effectiveness of the organization. Proposals will also be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Clarity of organization description and strategies/activities to be implemented to reach desired outcomes.
- Alignment with the focus of this RFP.
- Ability to communicate successes and lessons learned with the field.

Awards

Grant awards will range from \$50,000 to \$150,000 and will be provided to nonprofit organizations in California in the form of a two-year grant. The total grant award will be split into two payments. For example, if an organization receives a \$50,000 grant, it would be awarded \$25,000 upon execution of a grant agreement, and another \$25,000 at the beginning of the second year of the grant. Please note that organization information and/or proposal descriptions may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our value of transparency and encourage learning among grantees, future applicants, and the community at large.

Review and Selection Process

SVCF staff and a CBFF Grants Committee will review and provide recommendations for funding. Applicants may receive a telephone call and/or other type of communication from SVCF staff as part of the review process. If the primary point of contact listed on your grant application will not be available in May and June to answer any questions that arise, please ensure that your organization notifies SVCF by email and provides an alternate point of contact.

Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in June 2021.

Grantee-Partner Learning Activities

Nonprofit organizations funded under this RFP will join the California Black Freedom Fund cohort of grantees and participate in convenings and/or technical assistance opportunities to enhance their efforts. Capacity-building and organizational support will be provided to grantees to help with the long-term sustainability. The community of funders supporting these grants would also appreciate learning from nonprofit organizations in the field, so grantees will be asked to share information about their successes, challenges and lessons learned.

About SVCF

At Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), we are committed to creating a region where everyone can lead a financially secure and fulfilling life. We partner with key stakeholders across the community to address our region's biggest issues, including income inequality, the housing crisis and early childhood development. Together with our network of community leaders, donors and policymakers, we work to ensure that all residents in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties have equitable access to the opportunities and resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for your interest in responding to this RFP. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.