

## The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation | Community Solutions | Scoring Rubric

### Grantmaking focus areas:

Community & Economic Development	Health & Human Services	Youth & Education
<p>The Foundation seeks to invest and partner in solutions informed and formed by the people facing the highest barriers to wealth creation, economic security and family-sustaining career pathways. This includes BIPOC, women, veterans, young people, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated people and LGBTQIA+ people.</p> <p>Specific priorities for wealth creation include strengthening the entrepreneur ecosystem, increasing local ownership of businesses, and expanding access to culturally appropriate services. Regarding economic security, the Foundation recognizes the importance of anchor institutions embedded at the neighborhood level. For workforce development, we will prioritize employment pathways that meet the needs of individuals and employers alike.</p>	<p>The Foundation continues to prioritize health organizations that focus on health equity and increase access to affordable, culturally relevant health services. The Foundation hopes to align its health grants to be inclusive of programs and organizations that serve low-income families and provide free or affordable, culturally relevant services and holistic care.</p> <p>Given the increase in severity, cost of and demand for mental health services, urgent care and/or crisis prevention, access to reproductive health care, trauma-informed health care, and free or reduced services for uninsured or underinsured communities, the Foundation will prioritize these programs and organizations to continue to serve our most vulnerable and marginalized communities.</p> <p>In addition to supporting work that centers the voices of the people most impacted, special priority will be given to disability support services, child welfare support services, family and parent support services, food relief and assistance, older adult services, immigration and legal services, and re-entry supports for formerly incarcerated people.</p>	<p>The Foundation recognizes how important it is for students and young people to feel cared for, protected, valued and seen. This is complex and urgent work, and the Foundation will prioritize organizations that blend academic, social and emotional supports for young people most impacted by educational inequity.</p> <p>The Foundation will also support organizations working toward ensuring a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to high-quality early care and education programs.</p>

## Section 1: Opportunities, Challenges and Barriers

**Application Question:** (Please share the most important information about your organization. Most people write about 3 – 5 paragraphs or about 2,000 characters.) Note to applicant: Please share information about your organization. Relevant information could include some of the following: · Your organization’s mission statement · A brief organizational history · Current programs and recent accomplishments or achievements · Recent major changes to financial and/or organizational circumstances · Current goals including any goals around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant contextualize its work including its opportunities, challenges, and barriers? Does the narrative clearly connect to the Foundation’s strategic priorities?

Score	Description
5	The organization does an excellent job clearly defining the context of their work, demonstrating a nuanced view of the opportunities, challenges, and barriers and making direct connections to the Foundation’s strategic funding priorities.
4	The organization does a good job defining the context of their work, accompanied by a satisfactory analysis of the opportunities, challenges, and barriers and making some connections to the Foundation’s strategic funding priorities.
3	The organization does an adequate job defining the context of their work (opportunities, challenges, and barriers), but the connection to the Foundation’s strategic funding priorities is not as clear.
2	The organization’s description of the context of their work is vaguely defined and/or does not fully align with the Foundation’s strategic priorities.
1	The organization does not provide a clear description and logical connection between the opportunities, challenges, and barriers to contextualize their work nor how it connects to the strategic funding priorities of the organization
<b>Comments or Questions</b>	

## Section 2: Communities Served

**Application Question:** About Your Community (Please share the most important information about your community. Most people write about 3 – 5 paragraphs or about 2,000 characters.)\* Note to applicant: Please share information about the community where, or with whom, you do your work. Relevant information could include some of the following:

- The community opportunity, challenge, issue or need that your organization works to address
- Information about the people you serve such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and language
- Details about how you work with other organizations, coalitions, or networks
- Details about how you listen to/involve constituents, community members, and/or volunteers (inform/form/benefit)

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant provide a clear description of the community they serve and is that community aligned with the Foundation’s priorities? *The Foundation prioritizes efforts addressing disparities and/or creating more equitable outcomes for communities experiencing marginalization due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability or geography. (About your Community and Racial Demographics Section)*

Score	Description
5	Proposal explicitly and thoroughly defines the communities they serve and their primary beneficiaries are aligned with the Foundation’s desire to support communities experiencing marginalization due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability or geography (East Metro region: Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties).
4	Proposal clearly identifies communities served with some contextual evidence but shows limitations in depth of answer. Their primary beneficiaries are mostly aligned with the Foundation’s desire to support communities experiencing marginalization due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability or geography (East Metro region: Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties).
3	Proposal does an adequate job defining the communities they serve and their primary beneficiaries are aligned with the Foundation’s desire to support communities experiencing marginalization due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability or geography (East Metro region: Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties).
2	The proposal makes superficial and general reference to the communities they serve, without describing who or where the target population for their work is.

1 The organization does not provide a clear description of the communities they serve and/or does not fit the Foundation's priorities.

Comments  
or  
Questions

### Section 3: Organizational Partnerships

**Application Question:** About Your Community (Please share the most important information about your community. Most people write about 3 – 5 paragraphs or about 2,000 characters.)\* Note to applicant: Please share information about the community where, or with whom, you do your work. Relevant information could include some of the following:

- The community opportunity, challenge, issue or need that your organization works to address
- Information about the people you serve such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and language
- Details about how you work with other organizations, coalitions, or networks
- Details about how you listen to/involve constituents, community members, and/or volunteers (inform/form/benefit)

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the organization detail how they work with other organizations, coalitions, or networks to strengthen and amplify its work? *The Foundation wants to understand how applicants work in partnership with a broader ecosystem of organizations to break down silos, increase efficiencies and amplify impact.*

Score	Description
5	Proposal explicitly describes the ways the organization works with partner organizations, coalitions and networks providing names. The organization is also clear in demonstrating how these partnerships increase effectiveness and amplify impact of the work for which they seek funding.
4	Proposal generally describes the ways the organization works with partner organizations, coalitions and networks providing names. The connection between these partnerships and how it helps advance the organization's mission is clear.

- 3 Proposal does an adequate job defining the types of partnerships the organization leverages for its work, but does not provide specific names nor give clear examples of the way the partners help deliver their mission more effectively.
  - 2 The proposal makes superficial and general reference to organizational partnerships, but does not provide much information about which partners and how it helps advance the mission
  - 1 The proposal does not address how it works in partnership other organizations, coalitions, or networks .
- Comments**  
or  
**Questions**

#### Section 4: Community Voice – Informs, Forms, Benefits

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant demonstrate that their work is shaped by community voice? Has the organization engaged the community to inform its priorities (Informs)? To what extent is the work being led or guided by community members themselves (Forms)? Does the work provide clear and meaningful benefits to East Metro communities (Benefits)? *The Foundation holds point of view that community should be embedded throughout -- those experiencing barriers should not only benefit from the work we support, but inform, form, and lead it as well- thus stronger applicants will speak clearly to inform and form stages.*

Score	Description
5	The organization meaningfully embeds community voice in its work at all stages (inform, form and benefit). They describe clear and sustainable structures and methodologies to incorporate community voice. It is clear this is baked into the approach of the organization.
4	The organization embeds community voice at different stages of its work.
3	The organization engages community to help inform aspects of its work, but does not clearly describe how community is involved in design, decision or other implementation steps.
2	The organization vaguely described broad engagement approach with community, but does not articulate how this engagement is sustained and incorporated in specific strategies proposed for funding.

**1** The organization does not involve community in shaping its work.  
**Comments**  
**or**  
**Questions**

### Section 5: General Operating Description (ONLY- Skip for program/project/capital requests)

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant describe a clear and compelling use of funds for General Operating purposes? Strong proposals will explain how a general operating grant is necessary and how it will directly respond to community needs or opportunities, and the ways in which it will serve and impact the community. The applicant should demonstrate how the grant is grounded in equity, addresses barriers or disparities, and strengthens long-term community well-being.

Score	Description
<b>5</b>	Proposal does an excellent job clearly articulating the work that would be carried out with grant funding. Described work, activities and timeline address urgent needs within community to achieve the Foundation’s strategic priorities.
<b>4</b>	Proposal does a good job articulating the work that would be carried out with grant funding. Applicant describes work and activities that would address urgent needs within community and aligns with the Foundation’s priorities, but the description is limited in depth.
<b>3</b>	Proposal does an adequate job describing the work funded by the grant. Applicant provides a satisfactory overview of activities and timelines, urgency of need is not clear, but ultimately the work aligns with Foundation’s strategic priorities and desire impact in community.
<b>2</b>	The proposal makes superficial reference to the work supported through the grant and its desired impact. While aligned to the Foundation’s strategic priorities, the readiness or urgency was not explained in enough detail. Desired impact is vaguely described.
<b>1</b>	The proposal does not provide clarity and detail on the work that would be carried out, does not make a strong case for the urgency of needs and/or the proposed strategy is misaligned to community need.

**Comments**  
**or**  
**Questions**

## Section 6: Program / Project / Capital Description (ONLY- Skip for general operating requests)

**Application Question:** Please describe the work this grant will support, including why this work is necessary now and how it will serve the community. (Please share the most important information about the program/project or capital request. Most people write about 3 – 5 paragraphs or about 2,000 characters.) \*

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant clearly describe the work this grant will support, why it is necessary now, and how it will impact the community? Does the proposal feel timely, responsive, and aligned with community needs?

Score	Description
5	Proposal does an excellent job clearly articulating the work that would be carried out with grant funding. Described work, activities and timeline address urgent needs within community to achieve the Foundation’s strategic priorities. There is strong alignment between the problem they have identified and the proposed solution- with clear impact statement.
4	Proposal does a good job articulating the work that would be carried out with grant funding. Applicant describes work and activities that would address urgent needs within community and aligns with the Foundation’s priorities, but the description is limited in depth. There is sufficient alignment between the problem they’ve identified and the proposed solution.
3	Proposal does an adequate job describing the work funded by the grant. Applicant provides a satisfactory overview of activities and timelines, urgency of need is not clear, but ultimately the work aligns with Foundation’s strategic priorities and desire impact in community.
2	The proposal makes superficial reference to the work supported through the grant and its desired impact. While aligned to the Foundation’s strategic priorities, the readiness or urgency was not explained in enough detail. Desired impact is vaguely described.
1	The proposal does not provide clarity and detail on the work that would be carried out, does not make a strong case for the urgency of needs and/or the proposed strategy is misaligned to community need.
Comments or Questions	

## Section 7: About Impact

**Application Question:** Please share the most important information about your impact. (Most people write about 3 – 5 paragraphs or about 2,000 characters.) \* *Note to applicant: Briefly, please explain what success looks like overall and for any goals stated, above. How do you track impact and how do you know you're moving toward it?*

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of their impact and what success looks like? Do they explain how they measure progress and how the benefits of their work are meaningful to the community?

Score	Description
5	Applicant articulates a strong vision of success and a clear way to understand, track and demonstrate progress towards the stated vision.
4	Applicant describes a clear vision of success, but lacks detail explaining how they will know they are making progress towards the stated vision.
3	Applicant partially describes the vision of success, but the way impact is tracked is confusing or disconnected from the vision.
2	Applicant provides a vague vision of success and does not explain how that impact is tracked and how they assess progress towards the vision.
1	Applicant does not provide a vision of success and/or it appears unconnected to the work described in the proposal.
Comments or Questions	

## Section 8: Organizational Leadership

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the organization’s leadership, staff, and board reflect BIPOC communities? *If 50% or more identifies as BIPOC the Foundation would consider them BIPOC led. (Refer to Demographic Questions)*

Score	Description
5	The organization demonstrates that its organizational leadership, staff and board is reflective of BIPOC communities they serve and aligns closely with the priority constituencies of the Foundation.
4	The organization demonstrated that more than 50% of its leadership, staff and board identifies as BIPOC and aligns closely with the priority constituencies of the Foundation.
3	The organization demonstrates that at least 50% of its leadership, staff and board identifies as BIPOC.
2	The organization demonstrates that less than 50% of its leadership, staff and board identifies as BIPOC.
1	The organization does not have BIPOC representation within its leadership, staff and board.

Comments  
or  
Questions

## Section 9: Overall Impression

**Scoring Description:** Based on the application as a whole, to what extent does the organization demonstrate readiness, credibility, and alignment with the foundation’s values of equity, inclusion, and community voice? Do you feel confident that this organization will use the grant to advance community benefit?

Score	Description
5	Strong evidence of readiness with a clear, actionable plan, and a demonstrated ability to mobilize quickly to deliver meaningful benefits to communities in need. Throughout the proposal, the organization has shown a commitment to centering community voice, equity and inclusion.

- 4 Mostly ready and aligned. The proposal shows the ability to begin implementation promptly and respond with urgency to community needs.
- 3 Moderate readiness and alignment. The plan appears feasible but lacks clarity in key areas. The proposal suggests potential for impact but limited evidence of timely mobilization.
- 2 Limited readiness and alignment. Some plans are unclear, and the organization's ability to initiate work or respond to community needs with urgency is uncertain. Community engagement is demonstrated, but meaningful inclusion of community voice within organization's design is limited or unclear.
- 1 Not ready. Lacks evidence of a credible plan and overall preparedness to act quickly or effectively. Community voice is not at the table at any stage of the organization's work.

**Comments  
or  
Questions**