



## Management Improvement Fund of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

### Overview

The Management Improvement Fund, a special fund of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation, provides grants to nonprofit organizations operating in or serving the Twin Cities East Metro (Ramsey, Washington and/or Dakota counties). This Fund makes grants to small to midsize nonprofit organizations to finance the cost of consultation or technical assistance to expand organizational capacity, improve management capabilities to better serve the community, and nurture Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) leadership in the nonprofit sector.

The staff of the Foundation provide assistance to potential grant applicants to help them define needs appropriate for funding and works closely with grant recipients to monitor their progress on their projects. Since 1991, the Foundation has provided more than 600 Management Improvement Fund grants totaling \$6 million to nonprofit organizations across Minnesota.

In 2023, the Foundation expanded its approach to supporting the management and leadership of Minnesota nonprofits. Specifically, we saw the lack of support and resources available to BIPOC leaders and decided to expand the Management Improvement Fund to provide resources that are meant to be agile and responsive to nonprofits as they continue to pivot and grow from the racial reckoning and COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this expansion, the Management Improvement Fund has broadened its funding guidelines so that BIPOC nonprofit leaders and organizations have what they need to thrive.

Funding will primarily be focused on organizations working in and serving the Twin Cities East Metro; however, West Metro and Greater Minnesota applications will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Partners in the Funding Collaborative

- F. R. Bigelow Foundation
- Mardag Foundation
- Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
- Katherine B. Andersen Fund

### Challenges Addressed

- Many nonprofit organizations struggle financially to raise enough revenue for their programs to serve BIPOC and/or low-income individuals and families and don't have the

financial resources to pay for much needed professional consultation and technical services. Management Improvement Fund grants to nonprofit organizations help them stay strong and healthy, paying dividends to the communities they serve.

- The needs of nonprofit organizations vary widely due to the type, age and size of organizations as well as external factors influencing the nonprofit environment. Because of these differences, Management Improvement Fund grants offset the expenses of a variety of capacity-building activities.
- The Foundation acknowledges that the needs of our communities, and especially our BIPOC communities, cannot be properly addressed by a single source. More specifically, BIPOC communities have a multitude of needs and strengths requiring flexibility and responsiveness. A priority of the Management Improvement Fund is to reflect community-defined needs and identify mechanisms which work to enhance and improve conditions in low-income and BIPOC communities. The Management Improvement Fund is committed to being an on-going, responsive opportunity for organizations to meet community needs.

## Activities Funded

The Management Improvement Fund makes grants for technical assistance and consultation to help improve the capacity and management of nonprofit organizations. Examples of these activities include but are not limited to:

- Organizational assessment
- Strategic planning
- Organizational restructuring / merger / dissolution
- Board development / governance
- Human resources / personnel assessment
- Marketing and Communications assessment
- Program evaluation
- Translation services
- Accessibility consulting services
- Technology assessment
- Financial planning management / grantwriting services
- Community healing circles and spaces
- Planning and preparation work for receiving a 501c3 nonprofit status
- Innovative approaches for groups working together to better serve the community
- For BIPOC led organizations: Leadership development and executive leadership coaching / skill building / training and mentoring for staff, board members and volunteers

## Eligible Expenses

The primary use of a Management Improvement Fund grant is to pay for consultation fees or training expenses. A limited number of funds may be allocated to expenses related to the successful completion of the proposed work including interpreters, stipends, childcare, transportation, and staff time. Applicants select the consultant and are encouraged to thoroughly assess their needs. Please note that Management Improvement Fund applicants must include the written proposal / bid from the prospective consultant(s).

The Foundation does not require that you select a consultant of our choosing. If you have not yet

identified a consultant that you'd like to work with, we encourage you to tap into the networks of your board and leadership for recommendations. You can also visit [\*\*Nexus Community Partners\*\*](#) and [\*\*Minnesota Council of Nonprofits\*\*](#) to search for consultants in your area.

## **Funding Criteria**

Organizations and groups applying for a Management Improvement Fund grant are reviewed with the following criteria in mind:

- Organizations seeking to benefit the Asian American/Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Latinx and Black communities will be prioritized
- New/emerging BIPOC-led organizations will be prioritized
- Organizational annual operating budgets of \$5 million or less
- Organizations must primarily serve low-income persons
- They are not likely to undertake the effort without financial assistance from the Fund
- Time and staff capabilities to commit to the consultation and to implement changes

## **Grant Amounts**

The Management Improvement Fund will consider grants up to \$10,000.

## **Grant Requests Not Accepted**

The Management Improvement Fund of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation will not consider grant requests for support of:

- Sectarian religious programs or organizations
- Direct work of individuals
- Organizations that are not classified as a 501(c)3 nonprofit or do not have a fiscal sponsor
- Organizations exclusively serving the West Metro (Hennepin, Anoka, Carver or Scott counties)

If your organization does not fit the funding criteria for the Management Improvement Fund, we encourage you to explore our [\*\*Resources Beyond the Grant\*\*](#) page on our website to see if your request and organization may be a fit for one of our other grant resources.

## **Contact Us**

All interested applicants are encouraged to email the Management Improvement Fund at [\*\*mif@spmcf.org\*\*](mailto:mif@spmcf.org) before applying to ensure that the Fund fits your needs.