



Activist Collaboration & Care Fund Request for Proposals - Summer 2022

I. About the Ms. Foundation and the Activist Collaboration & Care Fund

The mission of the Ms. Foundation for Women is to build women’s collective power in the U.S. to advance equity and justice for all. We achieve our mission by investing in, and strengthening, the capacity of women-led movements to advance meaningful social, cultural and economic change in the lives of women. Ms. has six grantmaking initiatives, one of which is the Activist Collaboration & Care Fund.

Launched in 2020, the Activist Collaboration & Care Fund (ACF) seeks to deepen collaboration across movement building organizations, learn with movement leaders, and increase investment in social justice movements across the country. It provides responsive, one-year, general operating support grants to organizations led by and for trans and cis women and girls of color and nonbinary people of color to support their collaboration efforts. Multiple forms of collaboration have been supported through the ACF, including:

- **Relationship Strengthening:** Efforts to deepen relationships and build trust across organizations, including proactively preventing conflicts by building shared understanding, repairing relationships, and working through challenges that can stall cross-movement collaboration
- **Shared Analysis:** Efforts to increase shared analysis, messaging, and mobilization of constituencies within and across intersecting social justice movements
- **Strategy & Action:** Efforts to co-create organizing and advocacy strategies and plans that advance intersectional movements and defend against threats to the fundamental rights—and very existence—of trans and cis women and girls of color and non-binary people of color.
- **Healing Justice Support:** Efforts to create policies that allow for rest and restoration; investments in training, convenings, or spaces that enable healing, resiliency, wellness, and restoration for staff engaged in collaborative movement building work.

During its first two cycles, the large majority of efforts supported by ACF focused on Relationship Strengthening and Shared Analyses. Information on past partners supported through the Activist Collaboration & Care Fund can be found [here](#).

II. Grant Context and Goals

This summer, the ACF will invest approximately \$400,000 in organizations and networks of, by, and for trans and cis women and girls of color and nonbinary people of color who are engaged in coordinated Strategy & Action and/or Healing Justice efforts.

This funding opportunity comes in direct response to what we continue to hear from movement leaders: greater resources for fostering collaboration, strategizing and adapting across movements, and healing, wellness, and restoration are needed.

Throughout the U.S. and U.S. territories, we continue to see multi-pronged attacks, threats, and reversals of fundamental rights. Abortion access has been systematically under attack for decades; and now, in this current social and political context, we are seeing an unprecedented escalation toward criminalizing people for accessing abortion care. Roe must be protected but legality alone has never been enough. At the same time, efforts to suppress voter engagement and limit voting rights, particularly in communities of color, remain rampant. Anti-Trans legislation has surged. These threats – among other attacks on human and civil rights – build on a history of white supremacy, patriarchy, extractive capitalism, and state violence that produced patterns of systemic abuse to control women, transpeople, gender non-conforming, and BIPOC bodies, and our wellness, cultures, and capacity to transform conditions.

Like those before them, social justice activists and organizers across diverse movements are organically coming together to better defend against increased threats, proactively strategize toward a future of justice and shared liberation, and create unified cross-movement messaging and mobilization efforts. This work can be affirming, invigorating, and nourishing. It also is demanding, for it requires emergence, adaptation, and collaboration. And we know it is fatiguing—not only because of the pervasive nature of both oppressive systems and harmful narratives; but also because, for many organizers and movement leaders, this work is deeply personal and traumatic. As such, movement leaders and organizers are working to center healing justice – that is, survival, resiliency, and sustainability practices that prioritize collective safety, collective care, and the emotional, physical, spiritual, environmental, and mental wellbeing of themselves and their communities.

Given this context, this summer, the ACF will invest approximately \$400,000 in organizations' coordinated Strategy & Action and/or Healing Justice efforts. Ms. anticipates providing approximately \$20,000 in general operating support to 20 organizations and their partners during this funding round.

III. Eligibility

To be considered for funding, applicants should meet the following criteria:

- Organization must be led by trans women, cis women, and non-binary people who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). We define leadership as at least 50% of your organization's leadership (i.e. the executive director, management staff, and advisory committee members or governing boards).
- A majority of the organization's work should focus on issues impacting trans women, cis women, and non-binary people, with an emphasis on who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).
- Organizations must have 501(c)(3) status or be a project of a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. Ms.

Foundation cannot fund 501(c)(4) organizations through this fund.

- Organizations that have an annual budget of \$2M or less.
- Organizations that are operating in the U.S. or U.S. territories, with a particular emphasis on state and local movements and campaigns.

The Ms. grantmaking team will assess applications based on:

- **General alignment with fund purpose and this round's grant goals.** The team will look for work that aligns with one or multiple of priorities of the fund; specifically, efforts focused on strategy development, action, and adaptation across organizations and movements in defense of threats to abortion rights, voting rights and other pressing priorities; and efforts that allow for rest, restoration and care in order to continue momentum, sustainability and wellbeing.
- **Strong analysis of movement context in an applicant's state and local region.** The team will want to understand the dynamics that organizations are witnessing and what's driving possibilities and tensions.
- **Compelling vision and thoughtful strategy.** The team will seek to understand how the proposed work will contribute to the impact and efficacy of an organization and its partners' movement building work.
- **Demonstrated commitment to working collaboratively.** The team will seek to understand an organization's relationships with its key partners, learn how it builds trust, collaborates, and cares for its people and partners.
- **Past experience in intersectional movement and cross-movement building work.** Our team will seek to understand the extent to which your work addresses intersecting forces and/or works across social movements, such as the movement for Black lives, climate change, immigration rights, labor rights, racial justice, queer and trans liberation, indigenous self-determination, etc.
- **Geography served.** The team will strive to support a geographically diverse portfolio, with an emphasis toward providing resources to under-resourced regions—including rural areas, the South, the Midwest, Great Plains, Alaska & Hawaii, and U.S. territories.
- **Broadening the Ms. network.** The team will strive to make this fund accessible to both existing grantees of Ms. and to new partners. We will prioritize funding for first-time grantee partners.

Not all projects will be funded. However, with applicant permission, Ms. may share submitted proposals and/or proposal summaries with members of its network to help generate greater interest in and visibility of proposed projects.

IV. Grantmaking Process

The application process consists of: **1) Eligibility Quiz, 2) Online Application Form, 3) Written Responses to Open-ended Questions, and 4) Supporting Financial Documentation.** The application and selection process for this grant opportunity seeks to be mindful of organizations' time and effort, the limited funds available, and Ms.' own capacity. Below is a brief overview of the four-part process.

Ms. will make its best effort to offer accommodations for language and accessibility during the process if needed. Please reach out to Ms. Foundation's Grants Management Team to request accommodations: grantsmanagement@ms.foundation.org.

Eligibility Quiz
(takes about 5 minutes)



Proposal
(takes about 1-2 hours)



Interviews
(30 minutes)



Award



1. **Eligibility Quiz (approximately 5 minutes)**

Once you create a user account (directions below), please begin the online application process by completing the eligibility quiz. This section seeks to validate that applicants meet the eligibility criteria laid out above. If the quiz is successful, you will be directed to continue the online application and be able to submit your proposal. If the eligibility quiz is not successful and you have questions, please contact the Grants Management Team at Ms. Foundation: grantsmanagement@ms.foundation.org.

2. **Proposal Submission (approximately 1-2 hours)**

Applicants whose work is aligned with the goals of this funding round and meet the eligibility criteria above are encouraged to submit a proposal. The proposal consists of the following:

1) Online Application Form

2) A written narrative that responds to each of the following open-ended questions. We recommend one to two paragraphs per question. **Applicants will have to upload this to the portal as a PDF document.**

- a. Briefly describe your organization and the work for which you are seeking support.
- b. Describe the environment (in your state or locality) in which you do your work. What forces are you pushing against? Where are you seeing opportunities to create change?
- c. How do you envision this work benefitting your organization, staff, partners, and/or community?
- d. In one to two paragraphs, please describe your key strategies and activities for the next 12 months.
- e. Do you plan to have partners in this work? If yes, what is your vision for a positive collaboration?
- f. Does the Ms. Foundation have your permission to share your proposal with Ms. staff that oversee other funds, as well as members of our network to help

generate great interest in and visibility of your work? (Yes, No)

- g. *Optional*: If readily available, please share 1-2 links to documents, materials, and/or other highlights that give insight into the work your organization is engaged in.
- 3) Supporting Financial Documentation: In addition to the completed application form and written responses to the questions listed above, applicants are required to upload the following:
- a. Most Recent Operating Budget: The budget must show total income and expenses for the fiscal year. NOTE: We accept existing organizational budgets; you are not required to use the Ms. budget template. If you do not have an existing budget that clearly delineates income and expenses, we strongly encourage you to use the [Ms. budget template](#).
 - b. Selected Pages from Form 990 (Page 1 and Schedule A): Please submit a copy of Page 1 and Schedule A from Form 990; you do not need to send the full document. If your organization is not legally required to file a Form 990, please submit the financials you share with your board in lieu of the 990. If you are unsure, please click [here](#) for additional information.
 - c. Audited Financial Statements: A complete copy of your organization or fiscal sponsor's most recent audited financial statements. If your organization is not legally required to get an audit, please submit the financials you share with your board in lieu of audited financials. If you are unsure, please click [here](#) for additional information.

If you need assistance with the online application process please contact the Grants Management Team at Ms. Foundation: grantsmanagement@ms.foundation.org.

Proposal submissions are due on Friday, June 24, 2022 by 8:59pm PT or 11:59pm ET.

3. Applicant Interviews (~30 minutes)

Ms. will notify approximately 20-25 finalists that have been selected to interview. The primary purpose of these conversations is relationship building: Ms. seeks to understand applicants' context, aspirations, and way of being and offers the same to partners about the Ms. Foundation. As needed, we will discuss clarifying questions regarding applicant's proposals and leave space for any questions for Ms. staff. Interviews will likely be scheduled for 30 minutes, and will take place between July 13 – 29, 2022.

4. Final Selection and Funding Receipt

Ms. staff will select approximately 20 awardees and will notify the awardees between July 25 – August 5, 2022. Awardees will receive funding roughly 1-2 weeks after notification.

V. How to Apply

1. Please use the link below to access the online application form and create a user account. Please retain your username and password. The Ms. Foundation for Women does not have access to your login information.

https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_829?SA=SNA&FID=35145

To log back into the system once the application has been saved or submitted, please use this link.

https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_829?SA=AM

In order to view your account page, your internet browser must accept cookies. Please use Google Chrome to complete the application. For questions or assistance with the online application process please contact our Grants Management Team at grantsmanagement@ms.foundation.org.

2. Once your account is created, take the eligibility quiz. If successful, you will be directed to both complete the application form and upload your proposal narrative, organization's operating budget, selected pages from Form 990, and audited financial statements.

Please submit proposals by Friday, June 24, 2022 by 8:59pm PT or 11:59pm ET.

IV. Key Dates

RFP Released	June 8, 2022
Proposal Due	June 24, by 8:59pm PT or 11:59pm ET
Invitations to Interview	Sent by July 13th
Interview Period	July 13 - 29, 2022
Award Notification	July 25 - August 5, 2022
Funding Distribution	1-2 weeks after funding notification

V. Contact

If you have questions, please contact grantsmanagement@ms.foundation.org. In addition, please review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to see if your question is addressed.