



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Fostering a Diverse and Equitable Placemaking Ecosystem in Cleveland

OVERVIEW:

The Cleveland, George Gund, and Saint Luke's foundations have long invested in [placemaking](#) activities as a part of broader efforts to revitalize and strengthen neighborhoods across the City of Cleveland. This funding has included programming and operational support for projects and organizations that work at the intersection of community development, environmental justice, and public arts and culture. While Cleveland has rich diversity across all of its neighborhoods – including a legacy as a majority Black city – the core organizations leading and advancing placemaking efforts in the city do not fully reflect this. Thus, the three foundations came together to explore how to bolster placemaking efforts across Cleveland neighborhoods that:

- Are led by practitioners of color who reflect the diversity of Cleveland's neighborhoods;
- Deploy practices that center resident leadership and stewardship of projects as well as sustainable design/environmental justice;
- Build the capacity of residents and other critical stakeholders (e.g., artists, grassroots leaders, etc.) to drive community engagement strategies; and
- Influence local public policy to ensure ordinances and funding reflect/accelerate equitable design practices.

THE WORK:

For purposes of this request for proposals, the foundations are interested in working with local and regional/national experts on a phased process that will develop a pathway for the following:

Phase I: Fostering a Pipeline of Diverse Leaders in Cleveland's Placemaking Efforts

- What are national programs and/or models (e.g., fellowships) that Cleveland can adapt to support the training and career pathway for Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other professionals of color interested in placemaking?
- What best practices, accountability metrics, and/or standards should local philanthropy adopt to ensure that its grantmaking supports a pathway for these professionals to advance their careers within the local placemaking ecosystem beyond a short-term career development experience? This could include reimagining current grantmaking in placemaking efforts in Cleveland and exploring approaches to support the launch of new organizations and/or firms to diversify the ecosystem.

Phase II: Supporting the Growth of Resident and Grassroots Leaders

- What program design/approach would best support the training of non-traditional "place makers" – residents and grassroots leaders who are engaged in placemaking informally? Core to this approach should be community stewardship, program design, facilitation, community empowerment and trust building, public policy, and political navigation.

- What is the landscape of local organizations and/or leaders that can facilitate the desired program approach, with a deep focus and commitment to cultural competency as well as authentic care and respect for Cleveland’s neighborhoods and its people?
- What is the right structure/approach to establish a funding mechanism, outside of traditional philanthropy, to support resident placemaking projects?

Phase III: Story Telling and Community Cultivation

- Community buy-in and stewardship is central to this effort, therefore, what dynamic, innovative approaches would best ensure the outcomes of Phase I and II are clearly communicated to residents and other critical stakeholders?

QUALIFICATIONS:

The foundations seek to engage with local and regional / national experts for this work. A proven track record of impactful community engagement/empowerment efforts, placemaking and public space design, and urban planning is highly desired. Locally based experts and firms will receive priority consideration for Phase II and III. Regional/national experts and firms will receive priority consideration for Phase I. Local and national collaborations are highly welcomed to foster alignment and synergy across all three phases.

TIMELINE / PROCESS:

Interested experts and firms should submit a response on a proposed approach to the relevant phases of this work, including:

- Your operating values and approach to diverse and equitable placemaking;
- An up-to three-page response as to how you would explore the questions identified in this RFP;
- Two to three examples of relevant projects and/or work experiences that illustrate your qualifications for this engagement, including;
 - Examples of identification of critical success factors and metrics for evaluation
 - Examples of how you have sought feedback during a process to ensure consensus and success
 - Examples of final deliverables for relevant projects (reports, strategies, etc.)
- Qualifications and diversity of your proposed team for this project. High priority will be given to teams that reflect the diversity and lived experience of Cleveland and its residents.

Proposal responses will be due March 1, 2022 by 5:00PM ET. Interested parties should submit their materials, and any questions prior to submission, to Jessica May, Fellow for The George Gund Foundation (jmay@gundfdn.org).

Should your response be chosen for further consideration, you will be contacted by mid-March to schedule an interview. It is anticipated that this engagement will begin in April 2022. A small advisory group of residents and local practitioners will join representatives from each of the foundations in the consultant selection process and throughout the engagement.