



Request for Proposals (RFP) BCF Safety Net Grant Program – 2023-2024

Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis

BCF invests in organizations and efforts building a more inclusive and equitable Brookline.

As one of the largest funders in Brookline, BCF is committed to partnering with community organizations and programs that advance opportunity for those most impacted by inequities and to focusing our collaborative efforts on addressing challenges head on.

BCF understands that while Brookline is a well-resourced community, we are not an equitably resourced one. Like many communities across the country, Brookline struggles with poverty, food insecurity, gaps in the social safety net, and more. Black communities, Indigenous communities, other communities of color, and vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted by these challenges. That is why our aim for grantmaking is to make transformative investments in organizations and community efforts that create an inclusive and equitable Brookline for all, and prioritize efforts led by and focused on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and other vulnerable populations. This includes but is not limited to BIPOC individuals and/or communities who identify as immigrants, women, children, older adults, LGBTQIA+, disabled, members of racial, ethnic, religious and/or linguistic minorities, incarcerated or formerly incarcerated, and those consistently excluded from access to resources and services vital for thriving.

Through our grantmaking, we work with organizations, efforts, and initiatives with a shared commitment to advancing equity. Our grant programs – Community Grant Program, Racial Equity Grant Program, Safety Net Grant Program, and Youth Development Grant Program – offer ways to partner with BCF to fortify the local safety net, create new pathways out of poverty, and maintain a vibrant, welcoming community.

Safety Net Grant Program Overview

The Safety Net Grant Program supports organizations and community groups that provide critical access to essential services and emergency assistance for individuals and families, particularly for those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Safety Net grants can be used to support a range of activities related to providing, adapting, or expanding vital essential services and/or addressing crises such as fires or pandemics.

Grant Program Details

Safety Net grants support organizations, projects, and efforts that provide essential services to individuals and families who live, learn, work, and play in the Brookline community. Essential services can include, but are not limited to: direct cash assistance, rental assistance, food access programs, utility payments, and child care assistance.

In the context of this grant program, essential services are defined as being any and all resources essential to promoting and maintaining health, wellness, safety and belonging. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Healthy food
- Safe, stable, and affordable housing
- Access to medical and mental health care
- Primary and continuing education
- Quality affordable childcare or out-of-school time programming
- Social support services, including those that address social isolation
- Language and translation services

Total amount available to grant: This fiscal year, BCF has \$250,000 to distribute to community organizations and groups. All funding distributed through the BCF Safety Net Grant program is federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding awarded to BCF from the Town of Brookline.

Maximum Grant Amount: Grant requests are limited to \$30,000 or below this year. For reference, the average Safety Net grant awarded in fiscal year 2023 was ~\$15,000.

BCF is inviting requests for one-year Safety Net grants to be submitted through our FY24 grant application. BCF may invite organizations who have received Safety Net funding over the past few years for the same program to submit a multi-year grant request. If you think your organization aligns with this criteria and is interested in multi-year funding, please reach out to the Program & Partnerships team or indicate this in your grant application.

Please note that BCF is unable to provide direct cash assistance to individuals, but can fund organizations that offer direct cash assistance to individuals and families. If your program/project includes the distribution of financial, rental, or utility assistance to individuals or families, we ask that you share your distribution plan in your grant application. Additionally, if your organization is applying for funds to distribute financial assistance via gift cards, we ask that your organization tracks and retains gift card recipient information for audit purposes. Please note that gift card recipient information does not need to be submitted to BCF during reporting.

Priority Considerations

In alignment with our organizational vision, as we review proposals, we will give preference to community organizations and groups that:

- are working to advance equity (including removing barriers to opportunities, meeting the immediate individual needs of those impacted by inequities, addressing root causes of inequities);
- are led by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color); and/or
- focus on BIPOC and other vulnerable or marginalized populations, including those populations most impacted by the pandemic

For this grant program, an organization/group is considered BIPOC-led if they meet at least **one of the following three criteria**:

- The organization/group's Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer or Board Chair identifies as BIPOC.
- 50% or more of the organization's leadership staff or program directors identify as BIPOC.
- 50% or more of board members identify as BIPOC.

Eligibility

501(c)(3) nonprofits organizations, Town departments or agencies, and community groups can apply for funding. If you are a Town department or agency, please see our [additional guidelines](#). Organizations and groups that are currently funded through other BCF grant programs are eligible to apply.

Proposed projects or programs should directly benefit members of the Brookline community, which we define as those who live, learn, work, or play in Brookline.

If an organization or project is new and/or not yet tax-exempt (is not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit), an application may be submitted through a fiscal sponsorship. BCF can assist applicants in identifying an appropriate fiscal sponsor. If you are interested in pursuing fiscal sponsorship, please refer to our [Grant FAQs](#) for more information or contact BCF.

BCF grants cannot be used to cover travel costs, political campaigns, or lobbying, and we are unable to provide direct support or scholarships to individuals. While we cannot provide direct assistance to individuals, BCF grant programs may fund organizations and groups that provide direct financial support or scholarships to individuals.

To be eligible, an applicant must be operated and organized so that it does not discriminate in the hiring of staff or provision of services on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, marital status, military status, or disability.

BCF Values

At the Brookline Community Foundation, our commitment to creating lasting impact is unwavering and is deeply rooted in core values that guide our actions, decisions, and collaborations. We Lead by Listening, understanding that the nuances of our community's strengths, challenges, and needs are best grasped by lending an attentive ear. Our mission is firmly Anchored in Equity, ensuring that our vision and processes consistently hold us accountable to the diverse community we serve. We recognize the importance of Sustainable Support; by investing in Brookline, we are not just addressing the immediate needs but are also building a resilient foundation for generations to come. At the heart of our ethos is the principle of Community First. Your insights, experiences, and feedback shape our endeavors, fostering a collaborative environment where our shared objectives are realized in unison. We invite you to keep these values in mind as you prepare your applications and partner with BCF. We hope these values serve as a guidepost for our collective journey towards a brighter, more inclusive future for Brookline.

Application Timeline

Rolling deadline: Safety Net Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis, year-round, as funding is available. Grant decisions are announced within three weeks of grant application submission.

How to Apply

Please apply in one of the following ways:

- Through our [online grant application](#), or
- By emailing your application to BCF at grants@brooklinecommunity.org with the subject heading "Grant Application Submission"

Grant application materials:

- Download the full grant application as a Word doc from the BCF website
- Review our [Grant FAQs](#)
- Access budget and fiscal sponsorship [templates](#)

Application Support / Technical Assistance (TA)

We encourage all applicants to contact us prior to submitting your application so that we may support you, as needed, in your submission. Please reach out at any time to the Program & Partnerships team at grants@brooklinecommunity.org or 617-566-4442.

We also welcome you to review and utilize the recently released *Understanding Brookline* research publications which include the [Understanding Brookline: Economic Inequality in Brookline Report](#) and the [Understanding Brookline Community Indicators Database](#).

Contact

Please contact us with any questions before or during the application process for any of BCF's grant programs.

Program and Partnerships

[Brookline Community Foundation](https://brooklinecommunity.org)

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