



Responsive Grants 2026 Call for Ideas: Now Accepting Proposals

Greater Rochester Health Foundation invites nonprofit organizations and government entities serving our nine-county region to share bold, collaborative, and community-informed proposals for our **Responsive Grants 2026 Call for Ideas** grant opportunity.

Responsive Grants are one way we partner with and support a broad array of communities and organizations as they are best suited to understand their priority needs and to create solutions that improve health.

This multi-year funding opportunity allows for annual requests ranging from **\$25,000 to \$175,000, up to three years**. Our goal is to award approximately \$2.5 million, across an estimated total of 15-20 grant awards. The process to submit for this opportunity happens in two stages and is outlined in detail below.

Centered in equity, the mission of the Greater Rochester Health Foundation is to pursue and invest in solutions that build a healthier region where all people can thrive. We see health holistically – as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity – and recognize that health outcomes are shaped by systems, policies, and lived experience.

We recognize that many organizations and communities are navigating increased demand, shifting conditions, and are having to make difficult decisions. For 2026, our Responsive Grantmaking approach is intentionally focused on sustaining community services, harm mitigation, and collective strength and security.

Organizations Selected for Funding Will:

- Support communities that have historically experienced health inequities and are currently facing heightened risk and systemic harm. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Immigrant, migrant, refugee, rural, disabled, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), older adults, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQIA+) communities, and people impacted by poverty
- Approach work with an intersectional lens, recognizing that overlapping identities often intensify barriers to health and opportunity
- Have established, ongoing relationships with the communities they serve

What We're Prioritizing in 2026

Established organizations of all sizes, deeply rooted in the communities they serve will be prioritized this year. Proposals should clearly align with at least one of the following areas:

Sustaining Community Services

We're prioritizing organizations and programs that are working to **maintain and stabilize core services that improve health equity** by addressing the social determinants of health.

This may include:

- General operating support
- Staff compensation (e.g., salaries and benefits)
- Maintaining access to health care (e.g., mental, behavioral, physical), food, transportation, language access or legal services
- Addressing funding gaps to prevent service disruption of key services/supports

Harm Mitigation

We are prioritizing work that helps prevent worsening outcomes for communities facing heightened risk and systemic harm.

This may include:

- Mental and social-emotional health supports
- Crisis response and outreach
- Efforts that reduce barriers to care or essential services

Collective Strength & Security

We are prioritizing organizations that are navigating disruption thoughtfully and collaboratively to protect the communities they serve.

This may include:

- Responsible transition or restructuring/pivoting efforts
- Advocacy and community organizing (non-lobbying)
- Legal or compliance support
- Safety or security measures
- Partnerships and collaborative efforts that coordinate services and avoid duplication

We recognize that many organizations are operating with limited capacity and may not be positioned to establish new partnerships at this time. We encourage submissions to highlight and strengthen structured partnerships that already exist.

What We Will NOT Fund

For clarity, the following are **not priorities for the 2026 Call for Ideas**:

- Requests primarily for capital or equipment purchases, including: furniture-only requests, vehicles, AEDs, electronic signage
- Construction-only or research-only requests
- Small, one-time grant requests intended to meet short-term needs
- Neighborhood beautification, community gardens, or playground equipment
- Arts programming (with the exception of therapeutic arts)
- Education programming or summer youth opportunities
- Hospice services
- Lobbying or direct legislative advocacy

Please note: This list reflects **priorities for this 2026 funding cycle** and does not necessarily indicate a permanent funding shift.

Who May Apply?

Eligible organizations include nonprofit organizations and government entities of any size, **providing** services in one of the nine counties we serve: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates.



Only one proposal per organization will be considered.

Current and past grantees are eligible to submit. (If you are a **current grantee partner**, please reach out to your Health Foundation contact **before** submitting a proposal.)

Please note: Fiscal sponsorship is **not available** for this year's funding opportunity. Applicants must be organizations with their own nonprofit status.

Timeline/Key Activities

March 2	2026 Call for Ideas opens!
March 12	Q&A webinar, 10 a.m. to noon <i>Registration opens: 3/2/26</i> <i>Registration closes: 3/10/26</i>
April 8	2026 Call for Ideas closes at 4 p.m. <i>(This timing is a hard deadline)</i>
May 12	Stage 1 decision notifications made
May 18 – 22	Stage 2 process for selected organizations
June 1	Organizations notified of award recommendations
July	Board of Directors confirm award recommendations; notifications of grant awards made
August	Grant agreements finalized
September	Payments disbursed and grant begins!

Process

We strive to balance demands on partners' time with information needed for informed and equitable decision-making. This selection process will take place in two stages:

Stage 1: Proposals are submitted to the Health Foundation.

Review: A diverse panel reviews and assists in decision making. This panel includes both Health Foundation staff and external community stakeholders.

Stage 2: If invited to move forward, additional questions or site visit will be required*.

First Stage of Approval: The Program Committee reviews recommended proposals as the first stage of the approval process.

Final Approval: Recommended proposals approved by the Program Committee are presented to the full Health Foundation Board of Directors for final funding approval; notifications of award status are sent to organizations.

**As we continue to explore ways to reduce burden, build relationships, and meet partners where they are, our process may include site visits.*

In the spirit of partnership, some proposals may be considered for co-investment with Rochester Area Community Foundation. **If selected for co-investment, organizations will receive separate grant agreements from each foundation.** Co-investment decisions are made in alignment with each foundation’s investment priorities and funding parameters.

Preparing Your Proposal

We receive your proposals through our grants management portal, Submittable. Once in Submittable, you’ll also input your organization, contact, and other relevant information. Detailed information on how to access the portal is provided below – we **strongly** encourage you to **set up your account** (or log-in) ahead of the submission deadline to avoid last-minute technical issues.

Reminders

Grant Length & Size: Requests can range from \$25,000 - \$175,000 annually, up to three (3) years.

Format: Up to five (5) pages single-spaced, or ten (10) pages double-spaced.

Proposals may be submitted for general operating support **OR** project support. When writing your proposal, respond to the questions as outlined below **only** for the type of support you are requesting – do not respond to both sets of questions.

General Operating Support Questions:

- Describe your organization’s core purpose and how your efforts advance health equity by sustaining community services, mitigating harm, or building collective strength and security during this period of uncertainty.
- How would general operating support strengthen or stabilize your organization to ensure these services remain reliable and accessible? How would having access to flexible funding help your organization meet its goals?
- Describe your organization’s established relationships with the communities you serve: how are community members involved in shaping your work and making decisions?
- How does your organization’s approach align with and complement the broader, collective work happening in this space? (i.e., those serving the same population(s) or addressing the same issue(s))
- Describe key partnerships and how these partnerships strengthen your efforts to advance health equity.
- Are there anticipated funding changes, risks, or shifts over the next 12 to 24 months that may affect your work? What aspects of your work are most important to sustain over the next few years?

Budget: Along with your proposal, please be prepared to upload your organization’s current annual budget.

OR

Project Proposal Questions:

- Project summary: Describe your proposed project, including:
 - The overarching goal of the project, the specific health inequity(ies) being addressed, who the project is intended to benefit, and the proposed solution(s)
 - How the community identified or prioritized this need and how the solution(s) was developed through meaningful co-design and inclusion with those most impacted
 - How the project helps sustain community services, mitigate harm, or build collective strength and security during this period of uncertainty, including the primary activities you will carry out
 - How community/people/health will be different after participating in the project and how that change will be measured (i.e., number of people you hope to reach, how you will know community is better off)
- Are there anticipated funding changes, risks, or shifts over the next 12 to 24 months that may affect your work?
- How does the project align with and complement the broader, collective work happening in this space? (i.e. those serving the same population(s) or addressing the same issue(s))
- Describe key partnerships and how these partnerships strengthen your project to advance health equity.

Budget: Along with your proposal, please complete and upload the provided [budget template](#).

Do not include indirect costs in your funding request. If awarded, indirect costs will be added separately.

Submitting Your Proposal

- Access our grants portal, Submittable, [here](#). On the bottom of the landing page, click 'Submit' for the 2026 Call for Ideas.
 - If you already have a Submittable account, log in using your credentials
 - If the account holder is no longer with your organization, you *will* need to create a new account
- Click [here](#) for instructions on how to register and how to submit your proposal
- Click [here](#) for instructions on how to add other members of your organization to your proposal
- For technical assistance or questions about Submittable, please contact Program Officer Rachel Betts at ideas@thegrhf.org **Please note:** *Responses to technical assistance and troubleshooting requests may take up to 48 hours.*

Questions & Feedback

We welcome questions and are available to provide clarification as needed. Please send an email to ideas@thegrhf.org, or reach out to a member of the Responsive Grants team:

Rachel Betts, Program Officer (585) 258-1730
Hannah Castelli, Program Officer (585) 258-1703
Monica Brown, Senior Program Officer (585) 258-1710