

Responsive Grants 2026 Call for Ideas: Helpful Definitions

Advocacy: Activities that elevate community voice, increase public understanding, strengthen systems, and advance equitable outcomes through education, research, storytelling, coalition-building, and nonpartisan engagement. Our funds awarded for advocacy cannot include lobbying or efforts to influence specific legislation. (Adapted from Schwartz & Barkin, *The Role of Advocacy in Philanthropy: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations*).

Community engagement: An active and intentional process involving individuals in decisions, actions, and efforts that impact their lives and communities. This involves building relationships, fostering collaboration, and empowering community members to participate in the development and implementation of programs, policies, and initiatives. The goal is to ensure that the voices of communities that have been historically impacted by health inequities are heard. (Adapted from Kahne & Westheimer, *The Role of Social Justice Education in Promoting Civic Engagement* and Reich, *Community Engagement in the Nonprofit Sector: Approaches, Challenges, and Opportunities*).

General operating support: Often called core support, operating support, infrastructure support, or general-purpose support. These terms refer to grants that help sustain an organization's mission and operations, rather than funding specific programs. This type of support provides flexibility for nonprofits to allocate funds as needed across various organizational needs. (Adapted from Froelich, *Diversification of Revenue Strategies: A Key to Nonprofit Financial Sustainability*).

Harm mitigation: Practices, policies, and principles that aim to reduce the negative effects of certain actions or systemic inequities without requiring people to completely stop those behaviors. It emphasizes empowerment, dignity, and respect for individuals, particularly those affected by systemic barriers or social stigma and works towards fostering equitable access, reducing systemic harm, and creating inclusive environments for historically underserved/under resourced groups. (Adapted from *The Oxford Review*).

Health: A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Adapted from the World Health Organization).

Health equity: A public health concept that refers to disparities in access to health resources and opportunities occurring when individuals are unable to achieve their highest level of health due to factors beyond their control. Working toward health equity aims to correct these disparities by addressing the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to unequal health outcomes. (Adapted from the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control).

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Indirect costs: General expenses that support a project but are not tied to a specific activity. This may include expenses such as rent, utilities, office administration, shared supplies, shared staff time, etc. Unlike direct costs, which are specifically linked to project activities, indirect costs help cover the overall operations that make the project possible. (Adapted from the National Council of Nonprofits).

Intersectionality: The recognition that inequality can arise from interconnected social categorizations—such as race, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender—which create overlapping systems of oppression. These systems compound one another and must be addressed to rectify the resulting inequities. The term intersectionality, first coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989, underscores how multiple forms of disadvantage intersect to create obstacles that are often overlooked by traditional solutions to discrimination and social justice. (Adapted from Oxford Dictionary and Misty McPhetridge, BSSW).

Social Drivers of Health (also known as Social Determinants of Health or SDoH): The nonmedical factors that significantly influence health outcomes. These include the conditions in which individuals are born, grow, live, work, play, and age, as well as the broader social, economic, and environmental systems that shape a person's daily life. These factors—such as access to education, economic stability, social support, and living conditions—play a critical role in determining overall health and well-being.

Note: The term "determinants" suggests that health outcomes are fixed and beyond an individual's or community's control. By shifting to "social drivers of health," the focus is reframed to emphasize that social factors are not fate but rather factors that can be influenced and changed. This change highlights that people and communities have the power to address and improve the conditions that impact their health, rather than being passive recipients of their circumstances. (Adapted from Elevance Health and the Centers for Disease Control).