

**The Community Voice Fund**

**Framing the Foundation’s Next Ten Years with Resident Voice**

In March 2023, the Jefferson Regional Foundation will celebrate ten years as a community partner and resource to organizations serving Jefferson communities. The Foundation operates through three spheres of work- grantmaking, convening, and research to improve the health and well-being of our 200,000+ neighbors. In the past ten years, the Foundation has awarded over $20 million in grants, supported the Jefferson Community Collaborative ([jeffersoncollaborative.org](https://jeffersoncollaborative.org)), launched successful civic engagement initiatives including Census 2020 and Jefferson Votes, shared placed-based data and analysis, and began to amplify community voice through the Around the Table South initiative.

The Foundation’s 10th anniversary provides an opportunity for a renewed focus on engaging community members on strategies for increasing overall health and well-being. Although the Foundation has consistently partnered with non-profit organizations to offer resources for unmet needs, this opportunity illuminates the importance and necessity for residents to have a voice in the creation of strategies and planning that impact their communities. During a recent Collaborative meeting, the Foundation learned through survey responses that while all the nonprofit partners are highly invested in serving our neighbors, only 39% of respondents live within the Jefferson service area. Further, Collaborative members acknowledged and expressed a need for casting a wider net when convening for the purpose of community service planning.

The passion, pride, drive, resilience, and ingenuity of residents within the Jefferson service area, often who are under-resourced and over-burdened, cannot be understated. Faced with the systemic challenges of racism, poverty, housing, community violence, transportation, and the stigma of mental health, no person or entity is better poised to address community need than residents with lived experience.

With the recognition of the need for a highly localized focus, the Foundation acknowledges that the entire Jefferson area footprint is large and diverse. The needs of each community vary based on the geographics and demographics of the area. The disparities across geographies are dramatic with a $70,000 difference between the highest and lowest median incomes, and a gap to sustain a family of four.

Through feedback from members of the Jefferson Community Collaborative organizations the Foundation has grouped the 26 communities in the service area into the following five focus geographies:

* Bethel Park, South Park, Pleasant Hills, and Jefferson Hills
* Brentwood, Baldwin, and Whitehall
* Clairton, Port Vue, Dravosburg, Glassport, Liberty, Lincoln, Versailles, South Versailles, and McKeesport
* Forward, Elizabeth Borough, Elizabeth Township, and West Elizabeth
* West Mifflin, Homestead, West Homestead, Munhall, Whitaker, Duquesne

**The Community Voice Fund**

The Foundation is pleased to announce the *Community Voice Fund* as a vehicle to encourage partners to convene residents and stakeholders of the Jefferson service area and include their existing energy, knowledge, passion, and lived experience for immediate and long-term ideas and action plans that will increase health and well-being. The Foundation, as a caring neighbor and partner desires to further its role in building a healthier community with its neighbors over the next ten years.

Nonprofit organizations are invited to apply to the *Community Voice Fund* at the Jefferson Regional Foundation for a **grant request not to exceed $35,000.**

The *Community Voice Fund* is focused on providing funding for convening residents and stakeholders to address critically important barriers to healthy living. Grant applicants will be asked to create a strategy for convening a wide range of community voices and stakeholders, foster an opportunity for problem solving, and, if a grant is awarded, report back to the Foundation the results of the convening session(s). The application should include a plan for compensating individual residents for their time and expertise. Upon receiving final reports, the Foundation staff will work with each grant awardee to further understand and explore all options to leverage resources and support to help mitigate barriers to health and well-being within the Jefferson service area.

The Foundation requests that all convening(s) are completed by the end of September 2023 and will request final reports and any suggested action items be submitted in mid-October 2023.

**Guidelines for Community Voice Fund**

1. Applications must be submitted by a fiduciary with a qualified 501(c)(3) or a public entity. If a resident wants to apply and does not hold a 501(c)(3), they will need to work with an organization that can act as the fiscal agent and holds a 501(c)(3) status. Foundation staff are happy to assist with this connection if needed. Please contact Kelleigh Boland, Director of Grantmaking and Strategy at [kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org](mailto:kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org) or 412-990-7117.
2. Organizations are welcome to collaborate on an application.
3. Participation does not prohibit an organization from applying for the Foundation’s annual grant cycles which take place in December, March, and June.
4. Organizations applying should be willing to establish a relationship with the Jefferson Regional Foundation or have an existing relationship with the Jefferson Regional Foundation.
5. The program or project cannot compete with any activities of Jefferson Hospital or the Allegheny Health Network.
6. Applications will be accepted, and grant awards will be provided, on a rolling basis. It is the Foundation’s intention to provide a funding decision within two weeks of a submission.
7. Applications must clearly outline how the organization will serve the Jefferson area which encompasses the South Hills and lower Mon Valley communities in Allegheny County. A full list of the Jefferson area’s Allegheny County communities can be found here: <https://jeffersonrf.org/about/service-area/>
8. *Community Voice Fund* grant applications can be submitted to Kelleigh Boland, Jefferson Regional Foundation’s Director of Grantmaking and Strategy at [kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org](mailto:kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org) beginning **March 3, 2023** **through April 28, 2023.** Applications will be accepted, and grant awards will be provided, on a rolling basis. It is the Foundation’s intention to provide a funding decision within two weeks of a submission.
9. If awarded a *Community Voice Fund* grant, organizations should know some of the final reports may be highlighted at the November 2023 Jefferson Community Collaborative meeting.
10. Potential applicants can submit questions related to the *Community Voice Fund* to [Kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org](mailto:Kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org) after March 3, 2023. Questions and answers will be posted on the Foundation website (<https://jeffersonrf.org>) weekly.

**Application Requirements**

1. When considering expenses, Foundation staff are recommending the following when planning:
   1. **Stipends for Participants:** The Foundation believes residents are the experts about their own communities and should be compensated for that expertise. The Foundation does not have a suggested stipend; however believes that a competitive stipend should be decided on by the convening party.
   2. **Staff Time:** To be thoughtful and strategic about convening takes time and capacity. The Foundation believes in compensating for this time.
   3. **Space and Supplies:** Sites that can offer equitable access and ready supplies are vital to successful convening and conversations. Consideration should also be given to the time and day of the week. The Foundation acknowledges that multiple gatherings may be necessary to assure a wide range of expression.
   4. **Food:** A great equalizer, food sparks camaraderie at any event. It sets the tone of appreciation and provides a natural comfort to begin conversation.
   5. **Recruitment/Marketing/Engagement:** The Foundation recognizes that people must know about a convening to participate in one! How a partner will implement drawing people to the event and building relationships is crucial for success.
2. Identification of the focus geography where the convening will take place. From conversations with Jefferson Community Collaborative partners five sub areas were identified (listed above). Proposals for convenings in any communities within those geographic area will be welcomed especially areas with limited nonprofit services such as Elizabeth Borough, Elizabeth Township and Forward.
3. Description and scope of the proposed convening:
   1. What demographic do you hope to attract?
   2. What will be the structure of the convening?
   3. Who will you collaborate with to implement the convening?
   4. What do you hope to learn and how will it be used moving forward?
4. A clear and reasonable list of project expenses
5. Any immediate actions that can be taken to address community needs identified

**Community Voice Fund Application**

Application information should be completed in this Word document and submitted with any attachments via email to [kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org](mailto:kelleigh.boland@jeffersonrf.org) **between March 3, 2023 and April 28, 2023.** Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Foundation staff will notify partners when the Community Voice Fund has been closed.

**PART 1: Organizational Information-** Please fill in the following information:

1. Name of Organization Applying:
2. Address of Organization:
3. The Organization’s Current Fiscal Year Budget:
4. The Organization’s Tax ID:
5. Brief description of organization’s work in the Jefferson service area (one paragraph):
6. Organizational Contact Person for Community Voice Fund efforts
   * Name:
   * Job Title:
   * Phone Number:
   * Email Address:
7. If you are a resident working with an organization with 501c3 status, please provide your contact information below:
   1. Name:
   2. Address:
   3. Phone Number:
   4. Email Address:

**PART 2: Focus Geographic Area**

* 1. Please indicate by writing or checking which of the following priority areas the community voice funding will address. Check all that apply.
     + Bethel Park, South Park, Pleasant Hills, and Jefferson Hills
     + Brentwood, Baldwin, and Whitehall
     + Clairton, Port Vue, Dravosburg, Glassport, Liberty, Lincoln, Versailles, South Versailles, and McKeesport
     + Forward, Elizabeth Borough, Elizabeth Township, and West Elizabeth
     + West Mifflin, Homestead, West Homestead, Munhall, Whitaker, Duquesne

**PART 3: Convening(s) Information**

* 1. In 1-2 paragraphs, describe the community demographic you hope to convene and why.
  2. In 2-3 paragraphs, describe your current connection to the geographic focus area you hope to convene and how you will engage participants for the convening.
  3. In 3-4 paragraphs, describe the proposed structure of the convening(s) (space, content, interactive activities, stipends for participants, timing, etc.). Include any nonprofit organizations you hope to collaborate with on planning and delivery.
  4. Provide a proposed timeline for how/when the convening(s) will take place. All convening(s) should be planned and completed no later than September 30, 2023.
  5. What do you hope to learn and how will it be used moving forward?

**PART 4: Project Costs and Amount Requested**

Provide a general idea of project costs and what other resources will be used and/or leveraged. If you have a budget template your organization regularly uses, please feel free to attach. **The grant request should not exceed $35,000.**

* Total Community Voice Fund request amount:
* Listing of project costs:
* Other leveraged funding also being used for the project, if applicable:

**PART 5: Additional Feedback**

The Jefferson Regional Foundation acknowledges that our nonprofit partners are always closely listening and participating in the communities they serve.

In the space below, please share thoughts/ideas for ways the Foundation can further engage in elevating resident voice.

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