



## 2017 Grant Guidelines

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### ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND NW

Social Justice Fund NW is a member-funded foundation that supports the creation of a just society through fundraising, grantmaking, and member involvement. The foundation provides essential resources to organizations in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming to strengthen grassroots efforts in the broad-based movement for progressive, systemic social change.

The goal of Social Justice Fund’s grantmaking is to strengthen the social justice movement in the Northwest and Northern Rockies. All funding decisions are made by the volunteer grantmakers in our Giving Projects. For information about Giving Projects, go to <http://www.socialjusticefund.org/giving-projects>. If you live in the Seattle or Portland area, you can be part of our grantmaking process by joining a Giving Project; please contact [info@socialjusticefund.org](mailto:info@socialjusticefund.org) for more information.

Anyone can become a member of Social Justice Fund with a tax-deductible gift of \$240 a year or more, or an amount that is meaningful to them. Please contact our office at (206) 624-4081 or go to [www.socialjusticefund.org/donate](http://www.socialjusticefund.org/donate) to join online.

#### OUR VALUES IN SOCIETY:

- **Social change activism** – We believe in grassroots leadership and community organizing as a vehicle for social change.

- **Empowerment** – We value efforts to strengthen the voices of disenfranchised communities to promote human dignity and a more just society.
- **Undoing systems of oppression** – We support the empowerment of disenfranchised communities and the dismantling of all systems of oppression that erode human dignity.
- **Hope and optimism** – We believe that we will achieve our vision through social change.
- **Equity and fairness** – We believe that resources should be equally available to everyone in society, and that human rights are more important than property rights.

#### **OUR VALUES IN OUR ORGANIZATION:**

- **Progressive social change** – Our programs are focused on the root causes of social, economic, and environmental injustice.
- **Risk-taking** – We fund innovative, startup and existing grassroots organizations to support effective social change work.
- **Grantee self-determination** – We trust the people most affected by injustice to organize their communities.
- **Accessibility** – We value a simple, transparent, and accessible grantmaking process.
- **Democratic process** – We invite member participation in Social Justice Fund decision-making. We encourage everyone to use this power responsibly in supporting our constituencies and in shaping the future of Social Justice Fund.
- **Accountability** – We hold ourselves accountable to the broader movement for progressive social change and we commit to applying our values to all of Social Justice Fund’s operations.
- **Broad participation** – We create internal policies and procedures that encourage as many people as possible to join Social Justice Fund’s membership.

<b>GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b>
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To be eligible for any Social Justice Fund grant, an organization or project must:

- Be an organized group of people (we do not fund individuals).
  - If your organization is a nonprofit with 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 status as determined by the IRS, or be a federally recognized American Indian tribal government or agency **OR** is fiscally sponsored by 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 organizations or by federally recognized tribal governments, you can apply.
  - ***If your organization is not incorporated or fiscally sponsored, you can still apply***, but you must speak with SJF program staff first.
- Be led by people who are most directly affected by the problems that the organization or project is addressing.
- Carry out most of its work in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and/or Wyoming.
- Satisfy evaluation requirements for all previous Social Justice Fund grants.

If you have not been funded by Social Justice Fund before, please fill out this questionnaire to help you determine whether you are eligible: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LJLB7Z8>.

## **WE FUND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

In addition to the eligibility criteria above, we only fund community organizing.

Social Justice Fund's primary grantmaking focus is to support organizations that are community based, and that use community organizing to achieve their goals. We recognize that there are many different approaches to community organizing and value diversity in our funding. However all of our grantees share the following characteristics:

- Led by the people most directly affected by the issues the organization is working on.
- Continually builds leadership from within its own membership, base, or community.
- Works to understand and address the root causes of the issues, not just the symptoms.
- Brings people together to build power they wouldn't have individually.
- Uses that power to create systemic change, which includes altering unjust power relations.
- Sees itself as part of a larger movement for social change, and works towards strengthening that movement.

To see examples of the community organizing work Social Justice Fund supports, visit our grantee page for profiles of successful grantees over the last few years: <http://socialjusticefund.org/grantees>.

If you have not been funded by Social Justice Fund before, please fill out this questionnaire to help determine whether your work fits this definition: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LJLB7Z8>.

## **WHAT WE DO NOT FUND**

We generally do **not** fund:

- General operating requests from organizations that primarily provide direct services to individuals and families. Direct service organizations can apply for project-specific funds for projects that fit our definition of community organizing.
- Publications, reports, workshops, classes, conferences, media events, arts, theater productions, research, or litigation efforts **unless** they are part of an ongoing community organizing effort.
- Environmental work unless it is aimed at achieving social justice goals (i.e. environmental justice). For example, SJF generally does not fund recycling or resource conservation projects, but we do fund community organizing projects addressing environmental threats that disproportionately harm communities of color or low-income communities.
- Projects sponsored by a government agency. For example, SJF would not fund a project led by a public school district, but we might fund a project led by communities of color that partners with public schools to address the opportunity gap for students of color. The project must be community driven and led by those most directly affected by the problem.

- Individuals, endowment funds or capital campaigns.

## GRANTMAKING PROCESS

### ➤ You can apply for every grant that you are eligible for.

We encourage you to do so. The questions in the application are all exactly the same, except for question #8, which is specific to the focus of the grant. Therefore you can, if you choose, use the same answers for every grant cycle, only changing your answer to question #8 OR you can customize your answers for each the grant cycle. It's up to you.

Example: A group of immigrant women organizing in rural areas around improving the work conditions for farm workers and their families, including running a leadership program for women farm workers, can apply for the Immigration Justice, Economic Justice, and the Building Grassroots Power grants. If that organization also has a campaign around the use of pesticides and exposure of farm workers to toxic chemicals in the food system, it can apply for the Environmental Justice grant.

### ➤ New funding cap policy (as of 2016): You can receive up to **\$30,000** per calendar year.

Although you can apply for as many grants as you want, there is a limit on the dollar amount of funding you can receive per calendar year. In the above example, let's say the organization decides to apply for all of those grants. In March they receive a Gender Justice grant of \$10,000. In June, the Environmental Justice Giving Project decides to award this organization \$10,000. The organization is now eligible for only \$10,000 more. In July, the InterGenerational Giving Project awards them a Building Grassroots Power grant of \$10,000. They are no longer eligible to receive additional funding in this calendar year, however, this organization is still eligible to for the Economic Justice and Immigration Justice grants, because these grants will not be disbursed until the next calendar year. In addition, an organization can still apply for 2 year grants even if they would not be eligible to receive the first year of funding because they have reached the funding cap. In this scenario, the organization could still apply but would only be eligible to receive the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of funding.

### Grantmaking Process:

Our grantmaking is done through a unique model called Giving Projects.

Each Giving Project is a diverse cohort of 15-25 volunteers who have committed to building community together, learning about social justice, and working together to fund strategic, inspiring, and under-resourced community organizing. The members of every Giving Project each make a donation of an amount that is meaningful to them, develop skills as donor organizers, raise the money for this grant, screen grant proposals, participate in site visits, and make the final granting decisions. We believe the result is a more accountable, connected, and sustainable approach to social justice funding.

Staff, volunteers, and members of grantee and prospective organizations are welcome to join Giving Projects! We currently offer Giving Projects in Seattle and Portland. Learn more about Giving Projects here: <http://socialjusticefund.org/giving-projects>

Every grant cycle is done through a single Giving Project. Every grant cycle follows the same process:

1. Application and Prescreening
  - a. **Applications must be received by 11:59pm PST on the application deadline.** Late applications will not be accepted. Applications may be submitted online (preferred) or by email, postal mail, or hand delivery.
  - b. Staff prescreen to determine which organizations are eligible, and notify applicants of the decision (within 3 weeks after the application deadline).
2. Scoring Applications
  - a. Giving Project members begin reading and scoring all eligible applications for their grant cycle. (See “How Does SJF Make Funding Decisions,” below.)
3. Screening
  - a. Giving Project members discuss the applications and decide through a democratic process which organizations will proceed as finalists. Staff facilitate the discussion but don’t make decisions.
  - b. Staff notify applicants of the group’s decision (within a week after the Screening date).
4. Site Visits
  - a. Staff schedule site visits with finalist organizations. When at all possible, site visits will be done in person, in the organization’s community.
    - i. Exception: Momentum Giving Project site visits will be shorter than regular site visits and done by video or conference call.
  - b. Led by a staff or board member, Giving Project members attend the site visit to meet the organization, ask questions, and learn more about their work.
5. Final Decisions
  - a. Staff look at how much money the Giving Project has raised in total . Of this, 15% goes back to SJF to offset the costs of operating the Giving Project; 85% is granted.
  - b. Giving Project members discuss the finalists and decide through a democratic process which organizations to recommend for funding. Staff facilitate the discussion but don’t make decisions.
  - c. Staff sends the Giving Project’s recommendations to the board and, after board approval, notify the applicants of decisions (within a week after Final Decision date).
6. Disbursement
  - a. **New policy (as of 2016):** Checks are disbursed approximately four times a year, according to the timeline posted below. This schedule is necessary in order to ensure our own cash flow and the sustainability of our grantmaking model. (We may be able to make exceptions and expedite disbursement for some grantees. Contact us if you are selected for funding and you expect that waiting for the planned disbursement date would be difficult for your organization.)

## 2017 GRANTMAKING TIMELINES

Grant Cycle	Application Deadline	Screening	Site Visits	Final Decisions	Expected Disbursement	Project Manager
Environmental Justice	February 15 <sup>th</sup>	April 29 <sup>th</sup>	May 8 <sup>th</sup> – July 17 <sup>th</sup>	July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	August 15 <sup>th</sup>	Karen Toering
Momentum: Native Led Organizing	February 22 <sup>nd</sup>	April 15 <sup>th</sup>	May 1 <sup>st</sup> - June 10 <sup>th</sup>	June 17 <sup>th</sup>	June 21st	Yasmeen Perez
Building Grassroots Power	February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	June 10 <sup>th</sup>	July 3 <sup>rd</sup> – September 12 <sup>th</sup>	September 16 <sup>th</sup>	October 11th	Rebecca Allen & Dianne Riley
Immigration Justice	August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	November 4 <sup>th</sup>	November 27 <sup>th</sup> - February 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	February 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	April 2018	Karen Toering
Economic Justice	September 18 <sup>th</sup>	December 9 <sup>th</sup>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> – March 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	March 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	April 2018	Magan Do

## HOW DOES SJF MAKE FUNDING DECISIONS?

The Giving Project members will make funding decisions based on the following criteria. For more detail, see the **Granting Criteria** (linked at <http://www.socialjusticefund.org/apply-grant>) that the Giving Project members use to help guide their screening process.

- **Program** (35% of total score): Overall, does the organization work to build concrete and lasting collective power to address the underlying causes of the problems that it addresses?
- **Organizational Diversity** (25% of total score): Does the organization:
  1. Work with and benefit communities that are exploited, oppressed or marginalized?
  2. Include members of these communities in the decision-making leadership of the organization?
  3. Work to build a multi-racial, multi-class, multi-gendered social justice movement?
    - Note that SJF prioritizes groups working on racial justice, especially those making connections between racism, economic injustice, homophobia, and other forms of oppression.
- **Organizational Soundness** (20% of total score): Overall, does the organization have the internal capacity and systems to sustain itself as a strong, lasting organization?

- **Collaboration** (10% of total score): Does the organization demonstrate a commitment to cross-constituency, cross-issue coalition building, collaboration, partnership and/or networking as an approach to social change?
- **Lack of Access to Mainstream Funding** (10% of total score): Due to the controversial nature of its work or lack of access to resources, is this organization less likely to receive funding from mainstream funding sources?

In addition, an organization receives additional points for the following criteria:

- **Geographic Diversity:** Will the work described in the proposal happen outside Seattle or Portland? If some of it will and some of it will not, please indicate in your narrative what percentage of the work will happen outside Seattle or Portland.
- **Leadership by People of Color:** Is the organization's board (or comparable leadership body) comprised of a majority of people of color?

Funding decisions are never made based on numeric scores alone. Those decisions are made through lengthy discussion by the Giving Project group. However, the scores are our starting point, and the five criteria listed above form the basis for the group's decisions throughout the process.

## HOW TO APPLY

We prefer that you submit your proposal online:

- Review the descriptions of our [2017 Available Grants](#) on our website
- If you have not applied for a grant before please complete the [pre-application questionnaire](#) to determine your eligibility. If you have questions please contact [grants@socialjusticefund.org](mailto:grants@socialjusticefund.org) to set up a time to talk with one of our Program Staff.
- To access our online portal go to <https://sif-nw.appspot.com/apply>
- If this is your first time using our online portal, you will need to register a new account.
- If your organization has used it before, please use the same account as before. (If you don't know the username or password, we can help you.)
- If you have trouble registering or using the online application, contact [techsupport@socialjusticefund.org](mailto:techsupport@socialjusticefund.org).

If you prefer, you may submit your application by:

- Email to [grants@socialjusticefund.org](mailto:grants@socialjusticefund.org).
- Postal mail to Social Justice Fund NW, 1904 Third Avenue Suite 806, Seattle WA 98101
- Hand delivery to the above address (please call ahead: 206.624.4081)

If submitting an email or paper application, contact us at [grants@socialjusticefund.org](mailto:grants@socialjusticefund.org) or 206.624.4081 to request a blank form in the form of a Word document.