Funding Priority: Uplifting Community Voice and Public Participation in Civic Decision Making

Funding Type: Unspecified

Funding Amount: $10,000

Funding Locations: Applicants’ work must demonstrably benefit, but need not be limited to, the Boston neighborhoods of Mission Hill, Fenway, Roxbury, and/or the South End.

Our Funding Priority
Northeastern Students4Giving will award a one-time grant of $10,000 to an organization employing community-based strategies to give residents a voice and role in the municipal-level decision-making processes that affect their rights, representation, well-being, and quality of life in Boston. Specifically, we will fund programs that empower individuals and communities whose participation in civic decision making may be limited due to their neighborhood of residence, race or ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation, physical or mental health conditions, socioeconomic status, immigration status, court involvement, or other attributes that put people at risk of not being heard. Applicants must recognize the inherent strengths and resilience of the communities they serve and work to make community voices heard. Applicants should work with community members directly to understand and illuminate their needs and concerns and influence the design, adoption, and/or implementation of municipal-level policies, laws, practices, service delivery, and budgets that impact their lives. Eligible programs may include those working to promote public understanding of and participation in non-violent forms of civic engagement such as organizing, movement building, advocacy, communication campaigns, litigation, civics education, voter registration, voting, and public service. Activities may be designed to influence spheres of life such as education, criminal justice, affordable housing, affordable physical and mental health care access, public safety, economic development, public transportation, and environmental equity. These examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. Activities designed to support specific political candidates or influence the outcomes of elections are not eligible for this grant.

Eligibility
Applicants must adhere to the following eligibility requirements:

- Past recipients of NS4G grants are not eligible to apply.
- NS4G will only fund registered 501(c)(3) organizations.
- As part of their selection process, students will conduct a limited number of site visits to organizations advancing to the final round of consideration. Applicants must be willing to host a site visit and be accessible via public transportation.
- At the conclusion of the grant period, the recipient will be asked to submit a report on their activities during the period of the grant.
- Applicants must adhere to comprehensive non-discriminatory practices in hiring and providing services and must demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion within their organization.
- Faith-based organizations may apply, provided that the purpose of the grant is not to advance or promote a particular faith or worldview.

What We Will Fund
This grant is intended to fund overhead, operating, and/or program expenses. Applicants will be asked to explain how the grant will be used and how they will hold themselves accountable to their constituents for meaningful results.
We favor applicants that:

- Demonstrate clarity of purpose informed by a deep understanding of the need(s) being addressed and the community being served.
- Are located in or close to the neighborhoods in which they work, have close relationships with community members including working with multiple stakeholders, and collaborate with them to identify needs, define success, plan for the future, and govern the organization.
- Include community members on staff and/or board of directors.
- Use strengths-based and culturally appropriate approaches.
- Have articulated a commitment to and demonstrated expertise in promoting public participation in civic life.
- Provide a rigorous and defensible rationale and strategies for their work and evidence of how it promotes the community's voice in decision-making processes.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility, sustainability, sound management, and ethical governance.
- Work collaboratively with other nonprofits and community organizations, or public agencies where appropriate.

Application Process
Recognizing that some organizations applying may not use English as their primary language or have professional grant writers on staff, we will evaluate applications based on their substance, not writing style. Additionally, we hope that our application process will benefit all applicants by exposing them to a larger pool of funders. Therefore, we ask applicants to complete a two-step process:

1) Submit a brief Grant Application directly to NS4G. The application is available at https://cssh.northeastern.edu/impactlab/2019-grant-guidelines/
2) Upload an organizational profile to the Boston Foundation’s Giving Common at www.givingcommon.org.

To learn more about our rationale for working with The Giving Common, please visit our FAQ at www.northeastern.edu/impactlab/grantmaking-faqs-2019/.

Important Dates and Contact Information
The NS4G application and Giving Common profile must be completed by March 8, 2019. Please allow sufficient time for your Giving Common profile to be processed. We recommend submitting your information to the Giving Common by February 22, 2019, if possible. Grant awards will be announced in early April 2019.

For more information about the Giving Common and support for completing your profile, please contact Leigh Handschuh, Senior Program Associate, Nonprofit Effectiveness, at leigh.handschuh@tbf.org or 617-338-1623. For more information about NS4G and our application process, please contact Rebecca Riccio, Director of the Social Impact Lab, at ns4g@northeastern.edu or 617-373-4020.

About Us
Northeastern Students4Giving (NS4G) is an experiential philanthropy education program that enables students to make a positive and lasting impact in the communities where we live and learn through grant making. We make grants to community-based nonprofit organizations that address critical economic and social challenges facing the Boston neighborhoods of Mission Hill, Fenway, Roxbury, and the South End. Through our grant making, we further strengthen the relationship between the Northeastern University community, our grantees, and the neighborhoods they serve.

Since 2008, students have used a consensus-based approach to manage all stages of the NS4G funding cycle, from conducting needs assessments through making grant determinations. Past funding priorities have included trauma treatment, diversity and inclusion, youth violence, household financial insecurity, positive youth development, resilient families, intimate partner violence, post-incarceration reintegration, mental health, policy advocacy for marginalized populations, and social and economic justice. Our philanthropy is informed by coursework in human services and nonprofit management as well as many experiences students have had working and volunteering in the nonprofit sector. NS4G is advised by Social Impact Lab Director Rebecca Riccio and Human Services Director Lori Gardinier, MSW, PhD. Our decision-making is completely independent of any other relationships applicants may have with the university.

Funding for NS4G’s grant making is provided by the Learning by Giving Foundation and other Northeastern University donors.