



THE DENVER FOUNDATION

**STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOODS
GRANTS GUIDELINES
FOR RESIDENTS
2015**



Our mission:
We inspire people and mobilize resources to strengthen our community.

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These guidelines now apply to both grants for nonprofit organizations and grants for resident groups through our Strengthening Neighborhoods Program. This booklet has two sides. If you are a group of residents (not representing a formal nonprofit organization), use this side. Note: A "resident" need not have a permanent residence address.

Please read these guidelines completely, whether you're a new applicant to The Denver Foundation or if you've applied in the past. Critical elements of our guidelines and application process have changed.

After that, if you still have questions, please contact LaDawn Sullivan at lsullivan@denverfoundation.org or call 303.300.1790 ext. 118.

What is The Denver Foundation?

The Denver Foundation is a community foundation dedicated to improving life for residents of the seven-county Metro Denver region. As a community foundation, The Denver Foundation stewards hundreds of charitable funds for individuals, families, and businesses. We also maintain a Community Endowment – a permanent pool of money contributed by thousands of generous donors since our founding in 1925. The Community Endowment generates income that supports Community Grants.

Community Grants in 2015

In 2015, we will continue to make grants in four areas: **Basic Human Needs, Economic Opportunity, Education, and Community Leadership.**

In each of these areas, the Foundation has worked with community volunteers and nonprofit and resident leaders to develop specific pathways for action that will help us achieve the long-term goals set out in our 2012 Strategic Plan. These goals and pathways reflect the Foundation's ongoing commitment to reducing disparities and promoting equity for the most vulnerable members of our community. Each year, we adjust our strategies based on community feedback and what we've learned.

This booklet describes long-term goals for each of the four areas, as well as the priorities for which groups of residents can apply for funding in each area. Full descriptions of our Strategic Plan, pathways, and strategies for grantmaking and action are available at www.denverfoundation.org.

Background

For sixteen years, The Denver Foundation has been making grants and supporting resident activities and leadership through its Strengthening Neighborhoods program. This program supports neighborhood residents who want to make a difference in their communities.

We recognize that residents themselves usually have the best ideas for improving life in their communities. We believe that all communities have assets – including their people, institutions, and public resources. Our goal is to help more residents work together to build on those assets to strengthen their communities.

Starting in 2013, we broadened our focus beyond the defined geographic area previously served by Strengthening Neighborhoods. Strengthening Neighborhoods grants and resources are now available to residents from low-income communities throughout the seven counties of Metro Denver

(see map), particularly low-income communities of color.

How to apply

If you live in a low-income community, and you have ideas that fit with the priorities and strategies outlined below, we invite you to apply, either via our online application or through a written application.

- If you need a hard copy of the application form, please call us at 303.300.1790 or visit our website at strengtheningneighborhoods.org to print one out.
- To apply online, go to strengtheningneighborhoods.org and click on the “Apply” tab at the top of the page. Please complete either the writable online PDF, paper version, or the online version – COMPLETE AND SUBMIT ONLY ONE version.

Timing: If we receive your proposal by the last business day of the month, we will have a decision to you by the third week of the following month. Applications should be submitted at least two months prior to the project start date.

What we fund

Through Strengthening Neighborhoods (SN), The Denver Foundation helps residents organize to create positive change in their communities. Through its grantmaking, SN seeks to support the development of relationships within communities that recognize all residents have something of value to contribute. SN also seeks to support the development of leaders from within low-income communities and communities of color, and to connect residents and community-led groups from across communities so they can learn from one another and take action on common concerns.

SN supports efforts led by residents that advance grassroots solutions to issues arising from or contributing to disparities in race, ethnicity, and income. SN will primarily focus on advancing community-led solutions in the areas of Basic Human Needs, Economic Opportunity, Education, and Community Leadership. SN will also fund grassroots projects that contribute to the development of new leaders who have the skills to take action in these focus areas. Priority will be given to projects, groups, and organizations that are led by and work with people living in poverty, immigrants, refugees, or people of color.

A resident group does NOT need to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to apply. Any group of three or more unrelated residents with an idea for a project in their own community that fits within the guidelines is eligible to apply.

In 2015, we will focus our funding on supporting groups of Metro Denver residents in our four main focus areas as described on the following pages.





Economic Opportunity

The Denver Foundation will focus its support on projects that:

- Support low-income individuals in receiving the training and skills they need to enhance their employability and to gain access to the labor market
- Support local entrepreneurs and neighborhood-based small businesses, especially those that train and hire local low-income community members
- Support resident-led efforts to identify and/or develop local economic opportunities that will increase employment for low-income residents
- Explore ideas and launch projects to strengthen the economic life of the community, especially those that emerge out of resident-led planning efforts
- Conduct visioning or planning efforts to create community-wide economic opportunity plans for their neighborhood
- Experiment with forms of collective ownership, such as cooperatives, that build wealth within a community

Basic Human Needs

Basic Human Needs focuses on food, shelter, safety from domestic violence between partners, and basic medical care that people need.

The Denver Foundation will work with and fund residents to:

- Support people in meeting their basic human needs by connecting residents with one another and teaching about helpful resources in the community
- Develop resident-led ways to fill gaps in basic human needs services and make it easier to get services
- Share stories about your community's basic human needs to make others want to take action on these issues
- Organize your neighbors to not only help one another but to solve the problems that result in people not having their basic human needs met





Education

The Denver Foundation will focus its support on projects that support children in having greater success in school through:

- A whole-child approach, supporting social and academic growth together (from birth through high school graduation)
- Providing in school, after school, and summer activities that increase success in school
- Supporting child-family-teacher-community relationships to further success in school
- Developing community and family organizing or other advocacy for and outreach to underserved low-income and immigrant/refugee families with a strong focus on educational success
- Activities with a strong link to school and to educational success such as:
 - arts education
 - drop-out prevention and intervention
 - parent engagement
 - early childhood education both in school and in homes
 - Restorative Practices and Restorative Justice in schools

All projects must show a strong connection to school and to increasing student success in school.

Community Leadership

The Denver Foundation will focus its support on projects that:

- Seek to help residents take action on the issues they think are most important in their own neighborhood, especially issues in the areas of Basic Human Needs, Education, or Economic Opportunity
- Address emergent issues within communities of color and low-income and immigrant/refugee communities

These grants help residents develop their leadership skills as they address issues identified by the community.

Questions:

If you have questions about how your work or ideas fit into these guidelines, or if you need help completing the application, please email LaDawn Sullivan at lsullivan@denverfoundation.org or call 303.300.1790 ext. 118.

Technical assistance (skill-building and training):

In 2015, The Denver Foundation will focus technical assistance on expanding our grantees' skills and ability to carry out their projects successfully. If you receive a grant from The Denver Foundation in 2015, you will receive information about how to apply for technical assistance.

Important note on evaluation, learning, and final reports

If you receive a grant, you must submit a final report when the funded project is over. You may also be invited to:

- Participate in learning projects such as collaborative grantee learning groups
- Participate in final report gatherings to share what happened and the challenges and successes of your grant
- Provide stories of your project's work, and help The Denver Foundation communicate these stories to wider audiences

"Building leaders in the community is the key to making the change that we all need."

— Community Leadership Partner



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