

Funding Opportunity

OPEN CALL

Catalyzing Community-Led Change

Background

“Change happens in the micro communities. We have to be hopeful and continue to support each other and continue to uplift the voices.” – [Community Partner, Bastrop County](#), Community Health Needs Assessment 2024

Communities across Central Texas are navigating significant pressure: public funding cuts, political division, higher cost of living, and threats to basic services that affect daily life and ability to thrive. At the same time, residents have demonstrated remarkable ability to organize, advocate, and step in where systems have fallen short.

St. David's Foundation is committed to advancing health and well-being across Central Texas by investing in strategies that center community voice and grow in resident leadership. Through the Foundation's work across the region, [we have learned](#) that residents are a cornerstone of healthier communities, progress moves at the speed of trust, and systems change takes time and investment. We have also learned about the need to shift power so community members lead efforts to improve health and well-being in their communities. We believe that lasting change is driven by communities themselves, and that community-led networks with strong resident leadership is foundational to improving health and well-being.

We envision a Central Texas where networks of resident leaders are empowered to drive community change and advance their health priorities—and where those networks are connected, coordinated, and equipped to work collectively on shared civic opportunities and challenges, including voter participation, census engagement, and community mobilization efforts that strengthen civic health across the region.

Through the *Catalyzing Community-Led Change* funding opportunity, the Foundation seeks to:

- Advance community-driven health priorities by:
 - Strengthening locally rooted networks in communities with the greatest health needs in Central Texas
 - Increasing the number of individuals from historically marginalized communities trained as resident leaders.
- Support a coordinated and connected ecosystem, or “network of networks” required for sustained, community-driven impact in health and well-being.

Funding Opportunity

Through this open call, we will advance community-driven health priorities by investing in existing community-led networks and organizations across Central Texas that are supporting resident leadership [in communities facing the greatest health challenges](#). This effort will ensure residents have the resources, influence, and power to improve health in ways that reflect their community's priorities and act collectively on shared issues that support civic health.

The Foundation recognizes that community-led approaches vary across contexts. Rural communities and/or communities with less developed infrastructure often operate with fewer resources and less formal infrastructure than urban areas.

This funding is not intended to support direct service delivery or one-time projects. Instead, it is intended to provide flexible support for activities that grow, strengthen, and connect community-led networks as a foundation for building and sustaining resident leadership and collective power over time to address community-determined health priorities with the goal to influence practices, policies, and systems.

Examples of supported activities to advance community health priorities include:

- Strengthening existing community-led networks, including deepening relationships, building trust, and improving coordination among residents, organizations, and partners.
- Growing community-led networks by expanding participation, engaging new residents, and building a broader base of community leadership.
- Connecting networks across communities and geographies to foster alignment, shared learning, and collective action.
- Developing resident leaders, including training, stipends, and leadership pathways that support long-term leadership roles within networks.
- Guiding community-driven priority setting and strategy development grounded in local needs, assets, and lived experience.
- Supporting resident-led efforts to address health and well-being, including non-medical drivers of health (e.g. safe housing, access to healthy foods, transportation, education, income stability and community safety) and civic participation (e.g. voter and census engagement).
- Supporting data collection, learning, and community-owned knowledge building to strengthen network effectiveness and demonstrate impact.
- Participating in cohort learning, peer exchange, and collaboration to build relationships across networks.
- Strengthening capacity necessary to sustain networks and resident leadership (e.g. staffing, coordination, communications, and network infrastructure).

This funding opportunity is open to organizations working within and across the Foundation's five county service area: Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties. Organizations working in any of the five counties are encouraged to apply. We anticipate half of the grant awards would be invested in communities outside Travis County that face disproportionate health inequities.

Eligibility Criteria

We encourage applications from a wide range of organizations that are rooted in and trusted by the communities they serve. Organizations must:

- Operate in one or more of the following Central Texas counties: Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, or Williamson.
- Demonstrate a track record of resident organizing and leadership development to achieve meaningful, community-driven improvements to health and well-being.
- Be a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (with a valid determination letter at the time of LOI Submission), a public or government entity (county, municipality, public health department, public university, public school), religious organization, or use a fiscal sponsor that meets these criteria.
- Have an annual operating budget of at least \$150,000.

Note: Organizations with an existing St. David's Foundation grant are eligible to apply.

How to Apply

The *Catalyzing Community-Led Change* funding opportunity will open on May 27, 2026, with a two-step process.

1. Letter of Intent (LOI): A brief screening narrative describing your organization, community geography, and focus area of community work being done which will be scored using both the Potential for Impact and Of and By Community sections of the rubric. The LOI portal opens on May 27, 2026; submissions are due no later than June 11, 2026, at 5pm CT.
2. Invitation to Submit Full Application: *By invitation only, extended to applicants that demonstrate strong alignment with the intent and priorities of this funding opportunity* (see Potential for Impact, Of and By Community in the scoring rubric below). Invited organizations will have until July 23, 2026, at 5pm CT to submit their full application materials. Funding decisions will be announced in October 2026.

Additional information about applying:

- An organization may only submit one LOI.
- One or more organizations may use the same fiscal sponsor. See additional information about fiscal sponsorship in the FAQs.

- If applying as part of a collaborative, only one LOI may be submitted for that collaborative. The group must designate one organization to serve as the lead. A collaborative is defined as two or more organizations formally partnering to deliver coordinated services. We value partnerships grounded in shared goals and long-term commitment, not those formed solely to pursue this funding opportunity. See additional information about collaboratives in the FAQs.
- Applicants submit a requested grant amount in their proposal only after receiving an invitation to submit a full application. A grant amount is not required to be stated in the LOI process.
- The entire application process is through an online grant portal. All letters of intent and applications must be submitted through the [GivingData online portal](#) (link on funding opportunity page). Paper copies and emailed submissions will not be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Milestones	
May 27, 2026	Funding opportunity opens, LOI submission form will be available
June 11, 2026, at 5pm CT	Deadline to submit an LOI
June 23, 2026	Organizations notified if invited to submit a full application
July 23, 2026, at 5pm CT	Deadline to submit a full application if invited
By October 2026	Funding decisions will be announced
October 2026–September 2029	Grant Term is 3 years

Contact Information

- For programmatic questions, please email questions@stdavidsfoundation.org
- For technical questions, please email grantsinfo@stdavidsfoundation.org

Grant Details

The Foundation expects to award up to \$10M for this three-year funding opportunity, roughly up to \$3.3M each year. We aim for half of these awards to support organizations whose work impacts communities outside Travis County. Grant announcements will be made by October 2026.

Organizations invited to submit a full application will be asked to propose an amount and budget aligned with the actual scope of the proposed work. Additional budget guidance will be provided for organizations invited to submit a full application. The Foundation will make the decision on the grant amount based on the scale and impact of the proposed work, the organization’s annual budget, the organization’s potential for long-term impact and durability, and the organization’s capacity to translate the award into positive community impact in a timely way. [View Budget Guidance.](#)

Each awardee will receive a one-time, 36-month grant and have discretion on how the funds are spent as they carry out the grant purpose. Most grant payments will be distributed in three annual installments.

Grantee Learning Cohort

Organizations selected for grants will be expected to provide information and insights through annual reports, learning and evaluation conversations, and participation in grantee cohort meetings for training and learning activities. We anticipate that bringing these networks together both in-person and virtually, will foster more coordination and connection among the networks to advance shared community health and well-being goals. In addition, the grantee cohort will engage in sharing learning over the three years of the grant period to explore what it would mean to build and support a "network of networks" in Central Texas.

Rubric for Decision-Making

During the LOI phase, we will use the Potential for Impact and Of and By Community to evaluate your LOI. If your LOI advances to the full application phase, the entire rubric will be used to score your proposal.

Categories	Possible Points
1. Equity-focused: The organization or network is focused on historically marginalized Central Texans and located in communities with the greatest health needs.	5
2. Potential for Impact: The organization or network demonstrates a track record of resident organizing and leadership development to achieve meaningful, community-driven improvements in health and well-being.	15
3. Of and By Community: Residents are centered as leaders and problem-solvers.	10
4. Team Capacity: The organization or network has the capacity (people, skills, time, tools, resources, formal and informal assets) to organize community and/or develop resident leadership.	5
5. Durability: The organization or network clearly and compellingly describes how their work will serve as the foundation for strengthening communities and enabling communities to continue driving meaningful change to improve health and well-being well beyond the life of the grant.	10
6. Collaboration: The organization or network has or is developing cooperative networks and trusted partnerships to keep the cause moving forward.	5
	50

Rubric Details

#1 EQUITY-FOCUSED

Rate the extent to which the organization is focused on organizing and/or building leadership among historically marginalized community members—including people of color, immigrants, women, and/or rural community members—and in communities with the greatest health needs.

Does the organization or network prioritize serving historically marginalized Central Texans? Does the organization or network focus on a geography with the greatest health needs?

EQUITY UNADDRESSED: The proposal does not focus on historically marginalized communities, and the geography does not focus on a community with the greatest health needs.	0
The proposal is either does not focus on historically marginalized communities or does not focus on a community with the greatest health needs.	3
EQUITY CENTERED: The proposal clearly focuses on historically marginalized communities and focuses on communities with the greatest health needs.	5

#2 POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT

Rate the extent to which the organization or network demonstrates a track record of resident organizing and leadership development to achieve meaningful, community-driven improvements in health and well-being.

Does the organization or network have a track record in resident organizing and leadership development? Does the organization or network work toward community-driven improvements in health and well-being? For clarity, additional questions include: Does the proposal demonstrate the number of residents engaged? Does the proposal show the specific improvements sought and their connection to community health and well-being? Does the proposal show the roles residents play in decision-making and implementation?

LOW POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT: The proposal shows no clear evidence that the organization has a track record of resident organizing and leadership development and that it is not well-positioned to achieve meaningful, community-driven improvements in health and well-being.	0
The proposal shows a limited track record of resident organizing and leadership development and/or limited ability to achieve meaningful, community-driven improvements in health and well-being.	7
HIGH POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT: The proposal shows clearly that the organization or network has a strong track record of resident organizing and leadership development and evidence that it is well-positioned to achieve meaningful, community-driven improvements in health and well-being.	15

#3 OF AND BY COMMUNITY

Rate the extent to which residents are centered as leaders and problem-solvers.

Does the organization describe a consistent presence, cultural responsiveness, and demonstrated commitment to the community residents? Does the network or organization demonstrate an understanding of the community's history, needs, and assets? Does the proposal describe how the issue arose as a community priority in that place? Does the proposal describe the community residents holding the power to problem-solve?

ABSENCE OF COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP & PARTNERSHIP: Residents are not centered or holding power as leaders or problem-solvers.	0
Residents have limited power as leaders or problem-solvers. It is unclear who is driving change.	5
MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP & PARTNERSHIP: Residents are centered and hold power as leaders and problem-solvers.	10

#4: TEAM CAPACITY

Rate the extent to which the organization or network has the capacity (people, skills, time, tools, resources, formal and informal assets) to organize community and/or develop resident leadership.

Does the organization prioritize the lived and community experience in its staff? Does the organization's staff have experience organizing and/or developing resident leadership? Is elevating community as experts evident in operational practices (examples include language access, operating hours, availability of childcare, etc.)?

LIMITED CAPACITY: The proposal shows no evidence that the organization or network has experience or expertise to effectively organize in the community and/or develop resident leadership.	0
The proposal shows limited evidence that the organization or network has the community experience or expertise to effectively organize in the community and/or develop resident leadership.	3
ROBUST CAPACITY: The proposal shows clear evidence that the organization or network has the community experience and expertise to effectively organize in the community and/or develop resident leadership.	5

#5: DURABILITY

Rate the extent to which the organization or network explains how changes supported by the grant will be a long-term building block for strengthening communities and enabling communities to continue driving meaningful change to improve health and well-being well beyond the life of the grant.

Does the proposal clearly and compellingly show how this work will serve as the foundation for strengthening communities, enabling communities to continue driving meaningful change well beyond the life of the grant?

LIMITED DURABILITY: The proposal does not clearly and compellingly show how this work will serve as the foundation for strengthening communities, enabling communities to continue driving meaningful health and well-being change well beyond the life of the grant.	0
The proposal provides limited evidence of how this work will serve as the foundation for strengthening communities, enabling communities to continue driving meaningful health and well-being change well beyond the life of the grant.	5
ROBUST DURABILITY: The proposal clearly and compellingly describes how this work will serve as the foundation for strengthening communities, enabling communities to continue driving meaningful change to improve health and well-being well beyond the life of the grant.	10

#6: COLLABORATION

Rate the extent to which the organization or network has or is developing cooperative networks and trusted partnerships to keep the cause moving forward.

Does the organization or network list specific partners and describe how they work with each organization or network to support the cause? Does the organization provide evidence and examples that this collaboration keeps the cause moving forward? Is this organization going beyond its own operational systems to collaborate with others on a shared priority—examples include: build relationships at multiple organizational levels, make connections with groups with different levels of power and access, reduce barriers, coordinate and share information, respond to community need, build aligned infrastructure.

ABSENCE OF COLLABORATION: The proposal shows no evidence of collaboration or only lists partner organizations without describing their roles and how those partnerships keep the cause moving forward.	0
The proposal shows evidence of some partnerships with specific organizations, but these partnerships do not collaborate meaningfully to keep the cause moving forward.	3
MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY COLLABORATION: The proposal shows clear and compelling evidence of strong partnerships and their roles and describes how the collaboration keeps the cause moving forward.	5