



Description

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.” – Frederick Douglass, 1857

“Power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change.” – Martin Luther King, 1967

The Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) is preparing to launch a new grant making program in the fall of 2017 to support low-income young people and young people of color who are at the forefront of organizing for social, economic, and racial justice. **Pipelines to Power** will support youth and intergenerational organizing groups in strengthening organizing strategies to build the power necessary to win meaningful change for historically disenfranchised communities across the U.S. In addition to providing grant funds, this initiative will create a national learning community of organizers focused on theories of change and political analysis, and will support organizations to experiment with new strategies for building power in the current moment. Pipelines to Power is designed to help young people play critical roles in building strong intergenerational social movements by helping build a regenerating base of young social justice leaders and by supporting youth organizing groups to develop new strategies to build meaningful power.

Young organizers from Black, Brown, Asian, Native, immigrant, and LGBTQ communities have been at the forefront of movements to end the school to prison pipeline, protect the human rights of immigrants and LGBTQ people, end police murder and brutality of Black people, and address gender and reproductive justice. While these organizers have had great success, many are articulating limits to current organizing models in achieving their long-term vision of equity and justice for their communities. These limits are related to the need for power to compel decision makers to make real transformative changes. Many youth organizing groups are already beginning to consider new power building strategies including increasing scale, building new alliances, experimenting with new models, and increasing voter participation of young people of color. Achieving just and equitable communities requires the construction of real civic power. Now is a critical moment to support growing youth movements to develop strategies to do just that.

Pipelines to Power will select ten to twelve youth and intergenerational organizing groups to participate in a three year grantmaking initiative. In addition to receiving general operating support, selected organizations will participate in a learning community and receive additional funds for organizational experiments in power building. Selected organizations will demonstrate a strong track record for engaging low-income young people and young people of color in successful organizing and a strong desire to reflect on and strengthen strategies for building power.

Timeline

June 15 - Release Letter of Intent (LOI)

- Organizations will be invited to submit a short Letter of Intent that will share a bit about their organization’s analysis, work, and plans to strengthen its organizing strategies. The LOI process will be open to a broad range of youth organizing groups and intergenerational organizations.

June 22 - Informational Webinar



- FCYO will host a webinar to discuss this new program area and answer questions from groups that are interested in submitting a LOI

July 7 - LOIs Due

Aug 7 - Release Request for Full Proposals

- Groups will be notified on whether they are one of the 25 organizations selected to submit a full proposal

Sept 5 - Full Proposals Due

Sept. 18 to Oct 25 - Site Visits

- Staff will conduct site visits and review final proposals using a rubric based on criteria described below and make final recommendations

Nov 3 - Grant Decisions completed

- All groups will be notified of whether they are one of the 10-12 organizations selected to participate in the cohort Pipelines to Power

Informational Webinar

Please join us for an informational webinar on **June 22 from 4-5 ET** where we will discuss this and other FCYO programs and answer any questions. [Register here!](#)

Goals

1. To support a cohort of organizations to develop comprehensive strategies and conduct innovative experiments to engage low-income young people and young people of color in building meaningful power.
2. To support youth organizing groups to strengthen ties with various partners in order to build a stronger social justice leadership pipeline.
3. To establish a national learning community of organizers to share and deepen theories of change to support a more powerful youth organizing field.
4. To share lessons learned with the broader youth organizing field.

Why Power Building

A focus on power building is the next phase in FCYO's trajectory towards building both a stronger youth organizing field and a more powerful movement for social, racial, and economic justice. FCYO views young people as critical actors in leading social justice movements and building winning coalitions. We see a focus on power building as critical and timely for a few reasons:



- To achieve concrete and durable change in communities: Real change to address long standing structural inequities cannot be achieved by moral arguments alone. It requires significant civic power that compels policy makers to act. Youth organizing groups have achieved many concrete policy victories, and yet conditions in many communities have continued to worsen. These conditions have been exacerbated by recent political changes. A critical next step in this moment is to help groups think about how to build the power needed to fundamentally impact the conditions in their communities.
- Timely support for innovation and experimentation: Many youth and intergenerational organizing groups are already engaging with questions of how to build meaningful power. They are exploring how to incorporate voter engagement into issue based organizing, experimenting with new organizing models, examining the role of mass protest and narrative change, and building new regional and national relationships and infrastructure. This is an important time to support these groups to connect with each other and resource bold and strategic experiments.
- A means to impactful democratic participation: At a time when many young people are disillusioned by politics, youth organizing groups represent one of the most effective ways to encourage meaningful civic participation among low-income young people and young people of color. Attempts to increase civic power will expand the scale at which these organizations are engaging this critical and growing population

Defining Power

At the most fundamental level, FCYO considers power to be control over the conditions that affect our communities and society. To move from protest towards self-determination and governance, organizing groups representing marginalized communities must set their sights on the ability to make and/or influence key decisions. This means actually having power to hold decision makers accountable. After numerous conversations with organizers throughout the country, we have decided to support youth organizing groups that are strategically focused on two aspects of building power:

- Constituent Power: FCYO seeks to support groups that are working to engage a critical mass of people in their organizing work, while considering how they can exercise their power within institutions which rely on their participation and cooperation (such as schools). This aspect of power includes both strategies to build base and scale, but also intentionally considers how groups can wield power to win meaningful change over the institutions and power structures that serve their communities. Constituent power building relies on the ability to organize a significant percentage of participants within pertinent institutions.
- Political Power: The current political moment coupled with the realization of the type of power needed to compel decision makers to act has led many groups to strategize about how to engage with the electoral process. There is a growing recognition amongst youth organizers that winning lasting change requires increasing the political participation of constituents. Given that young people of color are the fastest growing part of the population, they have the potential shape our democracy through increased civic participation. To do this, organizing groups must consider how to integrate non-partisan voter engagement with issue based organizing and long-term leadership development and explore different organizational forms.



In addition, we believe there are several key questions that must be considered in any strategy to build power. These include:

- Alliance building: What alliances are needed to win?
- Infrastructure: What types of structures and organizational forms are needed?
- Strategies and tactics: What are the roles of policy change, direct action, and mass protest?
- Cultural change: How do we shift dominant narratives?
- Impact of oppression: How do structural racism, gender inequity, and other forms of oppression impact the ability of communities to build power?

Initiative Design

FCYO will select a cohort of twelve youth or intergenerational organizations to participate in the Pipelines to Power cohort. Selected organizations will be able to provide evidence of successful past organizing and demonstrate a strong desire to take their power building work to the next level. Organizations should also articulate how they would like to strengthen their current power building model. Preference may be given to organizations that are already experimenting with new ways to build power. The majority of participants will engage 13-18 year olds in local or statewide organizations, but a few national organizations and groups working with 18-25 year olds may be included as well in order to represent the current diversity of the youth organizing field.

Pipelines to Power will have the following core components:

- Grantmaking: Each organization will receive a general operating grant of \$40,000 per year for three years.
- Peer Learning Community: Each organization will identify two individuals involved in the leadership of the organization to participate in a peer learning community. Participants will learn from leading thinkers on power building, share lessons from their current and past organizing with each other, and be supported to develop and implement an individualized strategy for how to build the power needed to achieve their vision for their community.
- Experimentation Fund: FCYO believes that this is an important time to experiment with new strategies for building power: Therefore, after one year of participating in the learning community, organizations will receive additional funding to attempt a new power building strategy. Lessons from these experiments will be shared in the peer learning community.
- Sharing Lessons: Throughout the process FCYO will document lessons and will create opportunities to share learnings with the broader field through publications, toolkits, webinars, and workshops at our semi-annual Youth Power Convening.

Applicants must:

- Actively engage low-income young people and/or young people of color in organizing collective action for social, economic, or racial justice
- Have a 501c3 or a fiscal agent
- Have a strong history of engaging young people in community organizing with a track record of concrete victories that improve the lives of their communities as evidenced by strong organizing



campaigns, clear leadership development programs, and the inclusion of youth in organizational decision making

Preference will be given to projects that:

- Demonstrate a strong track record for building power for low-income communities and communities of color and potential for significant growth
- Are able to articulate strengths and limits of current organizing/power building model
- Have clear ideas about how to strengthen their power building model that are either already in action or active discussion with leaders and members
- Are engaged in innovative experiments around power building that could provide lessons for the broader field
- Articulate a desire to learn more about aspects of building power (constituency building, voter engagement, and democratic participation)
- Show capacity and desire to engage in a learning community that will be a shared space in which groups will discuss and learn about organizing and power building strategies
- Engage constituencies impacted by racial, social and economic injustice that are likely to suffer increased attacks due to the political landscape (such as black and brown youth, immigrant, and LGBTQ communities)

LOI Process

Step 1: Online Profile

Please complete your organizational profile on the FCYO online mapping tool at <https://fcyo.org/register>. If you have already begun or completed a profile, please update it with your most current information by logging in at <https://fcyo.org/login>. We will use this as the first step in any application for FCYO programs. This site will also help us share information about the great work that youth organizers are doing with funders and the wider community. Please contact **Will Buford**, will@fcyo.org, with any questions or issues that arise with your map profile.

Step 2: Cover Page

Create a cover page with all of the following information:

- Organization Name
- Name of Fiscal Sponsor if Applicable
- Address
- Contact Person Name
- Contact Person Phone
- Contact Person Email
- Organizational Budget
- Age of young people involved (check all that apply):
 - 13-18
 - 18-25
 - 25-30



- A one paragraph summary of your request

Step 3: Letter of Intent

Please complete a narrative answering all the following questions below. Please include question prompts. Do not exceed 3 pages.

1. Please describe an organizational accomplishment, recent victory or significant result of your work over the past two years.
2. Please describe your current organizing and leadership development model. Are there different levels of engagement (ie. core leaders, members, base)? How many youth are involved in the different levels?
3. Please describe your current theory of power. What kind of power are you trying to build and how are you building it. If you do any voter engagement, please describe your current model or strategy?
4. What are the strengths and limits of your current organizing/power building model?
5. How would a grant focused on developing power building benefit your organization at this point in your organization's history and the current political moment?

Step 4: Budget

Please submit a current organizational budget including expenses and sources of revenue.

Submitting Your Proposal

Please send complete proposals to grants@fcyo.org by **11:59pm PT on July 7, 2017**. All documents should be in PDF format. Please submit steps 2, 3 and 4 as a single PDF. Please name the file as follows: ORG NAME.PP.LOI.pdf.

Submission of a proposal does not guarantee approval of and receiving a grant. All applications will be reviewed by FCYO and we unfortunately have a limited amount of funds for this project. You will be notified on or about **August 7, 2017** regarding our decision concerning your grant application.