Disability Inclusion Fund
RFP 2025: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Disability Inclusion Fund (DIF)?

The Disability Inclusion Fund (DIF) supports U.S.-based groups led by people with disabilities, disabled people of color, disabled queer and trans folks, building a more liberatory world free from ableism. The Fund is supported by donors including the Presidents' Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy, which is composed of foundation presidents who are committed to disability inclusion.
The Disability Inclusion Fund utilizes a participatory grantmaking process. All grantees will be selected by a grantmaking committee composed of majority disability advocates and invited funders.

What are the DIF guiding values?

- **Participation:** Movement funding is accountable to the disability justice movement. Those most impacted by injustice and exclusion should be involved in strategies to advance justice and inclusion.
- **Intersectionality:** Acknowledging that disabled people have multiple and intersecting social and political identities that can influence their ability to have access and inclusion including race, gender identity, class, and sexual orientation.
- **Radical inclusion**: Deeply committed to removing barriers and ensuring access so that those most affected by intersecting identities can participate, valuing lived experience.
- **Leadership by those most impacted:** We prioritize organizations whose leadership reflects a diversity of lived experiences, including but not limited to race, gender identity, and sexual orientation, alongside disability.
- **Cross-movement solidarity:** Intentional focus on collaboration and bridge-building amongst disability justice activists and across movements.
- **Sustainability:** Resources and tools that support the growth of grassroots disabled-led organizations, and expand operational capacities for ongoing movement building.

Who are the foundations that support the DIF?

Current DIF donors include: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Fondation CHANEL, the Ford Foundation, the Heinz Endowments, the Kresge Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Missouri Foundation for Health, The New York Women's Foundation, Open Society Foundations, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Weingart Foundation, WITH Foundation, and anonymous donors.

What are the DIF funding priorities?

We prioritize support for organizations that are disability-led and whose leadership reflects the lived experiences of those most impacted by ableism. This includes, but is not limited to, organizations led by Black, Indigenous, People of Color, queer, gender non-conforming, and women with disabilities.

In addition, we seek to fund:

- Work that engages with other social movements and across issues, such as racial justice, climate change, immigrant rights, labor rights, and other efforts for a more just world
- Efforts that bring together organizations, leaders, and communities to build relationships and collective power
- Projects that celebrate and uplift the representation of disabled people in arts, media, education, literature, and culture
- Programs that advance disability inclusion and justice, such as community organizing, advocacy, mutual aid, and policy work

How much funding can I request?

This funding opportunity will provide one to two-year grants. Grant sizes will range between $25,000 to $100,000. Grant sizes will not typically exceed more than 25% of your total committed budget.

Eligibility

To be eligible, your organization must:

- Have an annual budget with committed revenue less than $1 million.
- Your organization must be U.S-based or U.S. territory-based 501(c)3, or be fiscally sponsored, or an LLCs restricted to projects with a charitable purpose.
- Your organization programming is in the U.S. or U.S. territories.
- Your organization is in full compliance with federal antidiscrimination law.

What we cannot support:

- Organizations that are non-U.S.based or not based in a U.S. Territory
- Individuals
- Universities
- Hospitals
- Organizations or projects whose primary work is providing direct service (i.e., Personal Care Attendants, durable medical equipment, behavioral or medical care, employment supportive programs, adaptive sports, etc.) - Organizations or projects that provide direct services are eligible *only if their primary focus is* engaged in community organizing, advocacy, and/or policy work.
- Organizations or projects whose primary work is research. Organizations or projects that provide research are eligible *only if their primary focus is* in community organizing, advocacy, and/or policy work.

When can organizations apply for this funding opportunity?

The application is available **now through June 25, 2025 at 8:59 pm PT or 11:59 pm ET**. **To access the DIF 2025 eligibility quiz and application, please use the following link:** See below for how to apply in alternate formats.

Will you provide an information session for applicants?
We will be hosting a virtual informational session for applicants on June 2, 2025 at 11

AM PT, 1 PM CT, 2 PM ET. To register for the informational session please Click Here. The session will be recorded.

Where can I access the recording from the applicant webinar?
Here's the link for the video recording DIF Applicant Webinar recording 2025
Passcode: 5wa^0%3u
to access the applicant webinar recording. Here is link to the written transcript Transcript to DIF applicant webinar
Passcode: 5wa^0%3u
If you have problems accessing the recording please contact DIF@borealisphilanthropy.org
Here is a link to the webinar powerpoint
DIF RFP 2025 Applicant Mtg powerpoint.pptx

What is the Eligibility Quiz?

We do not want organizations to go through any unnecessary labor in applying for this opportunity. The purpose of the Eligibility Quiz is to help determine if your organization is a good fit for the fund. If the Eligibility Quiz is successful, you will be able access the application.

You may access the Eligibility Quiz and application HERE.

Below are the questions on the Eligibility Quiz.
If you answer No to any of the questions below, this grant opportunity is not a good fit for your organization. We recommend you consider other opportunities.

Budget

- Is your total organizational budget with committed revenue less than $1 million?

Program

- Does your organization pursue one or more of the following areas of work: grassroots movement-building, advocacy, the performing arts/cultural change, mutual aid, or policy change?

    - This fund does **not** provide grants to organizations working in research or direct service providers (Personal Care Attendants, durable medical

equipment, behavioral or medical care, employment supportive programs, adaptive sports, etc.)

Will I be able to submit applications in alternative formats?

We accept applications in other accessible application formats including: application in Word Document, PDF, Zoom video interview or phone interview. To obtain and complete the application in alternative formats, please contact the Disability Inclusion Fund at dif@borealisphilanthropy.org with the subject line: NEW DIF RFP 2025.

Contact

- If you have questions, need technical assistance with the portal, or have technology issues in submitting your application please email grants@borealisphilanthropy.org
- If you have questions about what we fund or eligibility for grants, please email DIF@borealisphilanthropy.org

Where can the application be accessed?

The eligibility quiz can be accessed: HERE

Once you have passed the eligibility quiz it will direct you to the application.

We strongly recommend you use Google Chrome for the best results.

The application process will involve providing information about your organization (including but not limited to executive and finance contacts and your fiscal sponsor information if applicable), and your organization's payment preferences. Currently, we offer ACH/direct deposit payment and paper check payment. ACH/direct deposit payment is faster than paper check payment. The bank account information you enter to set this up will be stored securely and is only visible to our Finance Team.

What questions will be on the application?

Narrative questions
Your response to questions below should be **no longer than 350 words each.**

1. Describe your organization's work and how it aligns with Disability Justice Principles, or other approaches to advancing access, equity, and inclusion for disabled communities
2. In what ways have your organization's programming and activities built collective power to address ableism? For example, please tell us about the other organizations, groups, communities/collectives that you organize and/or collaborate with.
3. If your organization is selected to receive this one to two-year grant, what are some of the key program plans and activities for the next two years? We understand that plans may shift over the course of two years, and would be interested to know the potential direction, planned activities, and future growth of the organization.
4. How will you use funds to build out your organization's infrastructure, staff growth, and operating capacity?
5. How does your organization measure change? How will your team know progress is happening during this time? Please briefly describe the kinds of indicators or evidence of progress your team considers for the work that is being done.
6. Please provide a list of current and prospective funders.
7. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Other required information

- 2025 total operating budget amount. Please note we are not asking for a budget. (do not include prospective grants unless you have a written commitment from funder)
- a copy of your 501(c)3 letter of determination
- If fiscally sponsored, we will need your sponsorship agreement, MOU, Fiscal sponsor budget information, project budget and their fiscal sponsor 501(c)3 letter of determination
- Mission/Purpose
- Organizational Status (501c3, fiscally sponsored, LLC)

Financial Information

- Grant amount requested

What is your preferred format for our organizational budget?

We are not asking for a budget.

What do you mean by "committed budget"?

If you have a grant application that is pending, do not include it in your budget total. Please only include funds that have already been approved by other funders.

How do you define "disability-led"?

The Disability Inclusion Fund defines disability-led as: The leadership in your organization are people with disabilities, including more than 50% of the organization's management staff/advisory committees/governing boards.

How do you define the Leadership of an Organization?

We define leadership as people who have decision making power in the organization such as the executive director, management staff, and advisory committee members or governing boards.

What is the word count for narrative questions?

The word count for each question is limited to **350** words.

If I applied for a Rapid Response grant, can I apply for this grant?

Yes, you may apply for this grant. Please review our criteria for this grant as they differ from the Rapid Response grant.

If I applied for a Collaborative grant, can I apply for this grant?

Yes, you may apply for this grant. Please review our criteria for this grant as they differ from the Collaborative grant.

What is the difference between this grant application and DIFxTech?

The DIFxTech grants are for organizations working at the nexus of technology, disability rights and justice. DIFxTech focuses on three specific areas of work: (i) To transform and identify the ways technology can/should be used to uphold disability rights and justice at the intersection of tech and civil rights; (ii) To democratize tech development, provide collective and equitable access to digital infrastructure, and mobilize cross disability solidarity in the tech sector; (iii) To expand the participation, leadership, and thought partnership of overlooked and under resourced people with disabilities in all areas of the technology sector.

Where can I find the application for the DIFxTech grant?

At this time, we do not have an open application for DIFxTech. Please sign up on our mailing list to receive updates and announcements about DIF, DIFxTech and Borealis' other funds at https://borealisphilanthropy.org

How are funding decisions made?

All eligible applications are reviewed by the DIF grantmaking committee, which is composed of a majority of disability advocates and invited funders. While the committee prioritizes organizations aligned with the values of disability justice and led by those most impacted by ableism, all eligible applicants will receive fair and full consideration. Final grant decisions are based on a variety of factors, including alignment with DIF's values, the overall balance of the funding portfolio, and the discretion of the committee.

When will funding decisions be made on applications submitted by June 25, 2025?

Applicants who submit proposals by the June 25, 2025 deadline will be notified about whether or not their project will be funded by **December 5, 2025**. Please provide your Executive Director's phone number on the application in the field provided. Projects that are approved for funding will receive their grant awards once we receive their signed Grant Agreement Letter.

What is the difference between a 501(c)3 organization and a fiscally sponsored organization?

A 501(c)(3) is an organization that does charitable work and is exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States tax code.

A fiscal sponsorship is when a nonprofit organization extends its tax-exempt status to an organization, individual, or group that is doing charitable work related to its mission.

Can I apply as an individual?

The Disability Inclusion Fund does not provide grants to individuals.

My organization is international, am I able to apply for a grant?

This grant does not support organizations outside of the U.S. and U.S. territories. Grant funds can only be used for work done within the U.S. and U.S. territories.

Will the DIF have other grantmaking opportunities this year?

We will not have another open call application in 2025. To receive updates and announcements about other DIF funding opportunities and Borealis' other funds, sign up for our mailing list here.