Bohemian Fund Application Guide

This application guide provides an explanation for each question in the Bohemian Fund grant application. It then includes a sample summary of what information an applicant could base their full response on.

Section One: Community Issue

1. What is the community issue you are working on? How widespread is the issue locally? How do you use data, research, or stories to understand this issue?

   Explanation: We want you to share your understanding of the issue overall and how it exists locally. Does the issue only affect a particular group or is it something the entire community faces? How are different groups affected differently by the same issue? For example, someone's background or lived experiences, can influence how they experience the issue. How you define the issue—using data, research, or stories—will directly influence the solutions you deploy and the impacts you seek to create.

   Example: In Poudre School District, there were 1,395 students experiencing homelessness in the 2020-21 school year. Only 55% of PSD students experiencing homelessness graduate on time as compared to overall graduation rate of 87%. Homelessness is a significant barrier to youth thriving in PSD.

2. How do you listen to and value the voices and perspectives of the people who directly experience this issue?

   Explanation: We are asking about proximity here. We believe people closest to the issue should inform the work to address it. Describe how you center individuals affected by the issue in your work. Provide specific examples of what you've learned from their perspectives to improve and inform your understanding of the issue. Also, describe how you've incorporated what you learned to shape your strategies and definition of success.

   Example: An organization that supports belonging for black middle and high school students is proximate because they are black-led and founded and use a highly student-centered approach to decision-making at all levels of the organization. Students' lived experiences and interests inform their participation in the organization, and students define whether the organization's work is successful.

3. What systems affect this issue? Please describe the systems and how they affect the issue.

   Explanation: We know that internal systems, such hours of operation or the type of food offered, can affect these issues. External systems like public transportation or local housing ordinances also affect community issues. We want to see that the systems you identify here are the same as those you target with your solutions and are those that your work will impact. We recognize that larger systems and structures, like racism, the economy, or the criminal justice system, affect community issues. You may also address these larger systems and structures if your solutions are impacting these structures.

Example: An organization works with populations whose first language is not English. Most of their client resource documents and their website are in English and they have few bilingual-speaking staff. These internal systems act as barriers for the non-English speaking communities they serve.

Section Two: Solutions

4. What are you doing to address the issue you described in the first section? How is the solution designed to bring about the change you want to see?

   Explanation: Provide the basics of "how" you do the work, including relevant program or organizational details. In describing the when, where, and who of your work, explain why these particular tactics are utilized and why they matter for the community issue you're working on and for the specific population you work with. The connection between the defined issue and the solutions should be clear.

   Example: An organization addresses the opportunity gap low-income youth have to experiential learning opportunities, which have proven positive impacts on health, development, and well-being. Programs are developed to reflect the preferences of the youth served, as indicated directly by the youth, and are provided at no cost. Youth experiencing crises or trauma are recruited to participate in the programs by partnering with organizations that work directly with this population.

5. Describe your participants, where they come from, how you identify them, and how you reach them. Are there people affected by this issue that you do not or cannot reach?

   Explanation: Describe how you selected the group you work with among others who are affected by the issue. Discuss other groups that are impacted by the issue that are not represented by your current participants and what, if any, efforts you are taking to reach them. What are your outreach, partnerships, marketing, or referral efforts to reach the groups affected by the community issue you identified? We know organizations cannot serve everyone, but we want to understand who affected by this issue in relation to those you currently serve.

   Example: An organization recognizes that suicide is a community wide issue, but young men are experiencing higher than average rates of suicide. Young men also do not regularly participate in suicide education and prevention programming. To reach this group, they plan to host events for this group in partnership with organizations that are successful in gathering young men. They plan to pilot activities with an initial group of young men, and then develop more sustained programming. They recognize that other groups—women, seniors, and students—are affected by suicide but their current efforts will target young men, a heavily affected and underserved group.

6. Do these solutions attempt to improve or change the systems that affect this issue?

   Explanation: Describe any potential changes or improvements to the systems that you have identified in your application. We recognize that changes or improvements could be small and occur over time, beyond the typical grant timeline. Systems and structures that are beyond your control may not be changed by your work, and that is okay. We want to understand how your work is systems-oriented, so we can better

understand the potential impact of your work on the issue and systems you've identified.

Example:
An educational organization experiences low turnout for a program designed to improve STEM learning for girls. The program takes place in a part of town that is difficult for families to access. The organization responds by developing a mobile STEM learning lab and taking it to specific neighborhoods where it is easy for girls to access the program. The systems problem the organization addressed was related to transportation and access, so their solution was a system improvement—a mobile learning lab—that will minimize the transportation issue and maximize access.

An organization has identified that there are no spaces of belonging for local LGBTQIA+ youth in the current community landscape. This external system issue has prompted the organization to create a new space for these youth. Here it is important how the external systems problem identified in the community issue aligns with a systems-oriented solution. The "systems issue" is that there are no safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth. The solution should lead to access to more safe spaces, which is a systems improvement.

Section Three: Impact

7. How will people's lives be improved by these solutions, and how will you assess the improvements? What gives you confidence that you will successfully create the impacts you've identified? Please provide evidence from data, stories, experiences, research, and so on to support your answer.

    Explanation: Here we want to know what success looks like. What change did you make in people's lives—big or small? How did you measure the change? Or maybe the change is in progress but will take a long time to fully develop. You may not know whether your solutions will work but explain to us what information you are using to assess progress toward the solutions you're proposing. You might rely on case studies from other communities or individual experiences. Explain how your solutions will support an equitable community where everyone belongs.

    Example: An organization works to offer entrepreneurial training and low-interest loans to groups who lack business skills and access to capital. The organization uses pre-and post-tests of business skills to determine whether participants gain the knowledge needed to launch a business. The organization also tracks businesses launched by participants and tracks whether they are successful after one, two, and three years. These new businesses' employees are tracked to determine if the program was successful. The program interviews participants annually for five years to track progress and determine if the new businesses launched by the program created economic mobility for the participants.

8. How will the work create a sense of belonging for the community you serve?

    Explanation: Belonging is an important component of Bohemian Fund. We understand that people use this term in different ways. We have been inspired by the work of john a. powell who believes that belonging occurs when people have a say in how they are treated and viewed by others and have the power to create real change in their lives and community. Belonging also includes caring for each other and sharing the responsibility for ensuring all community members thrive. Help us

understand how you think about belonging and how your work fosters belonging in our community.

Example: An organization fosters inclusive and safe environments for young people to express themselves creatively and support each other. Programming is often developed and led by young people in the community, and the organization convenes a youth advisory board to guide the organization's overall work. They foster belonging by providing resources and spaces for youth to care for each other's needs, which range from mental health to food security.

Section Four: Repeat Applicants

This section is to help us understand how your organization is learning, reflecting and adapting over time. If you are a returning organization or program to Bohemian Fund, please share any updates or changes. We are interested in what you have learned, your growth on a path towards creating an equitable community where everyone belongs, and any adaptations you have made since your last submitted materials to Bohemian Fund (either application requests or final reports). New applicants should skip this section.

Section Five: More About Your Organization

11. Please describe your efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in your organization. For example, organizational goals, activities including trainings and strategies, and positions such as organizational statements or mission.

    Explanation: We recognize everyone is at a different place in their journey toward equity. If you are early in your journey in this work, acknowledge where you are and where you hope to grow. This question refers to your organization and how you internally work on DEI issues.

12. Budget narrative.

    Explanation: You will also upload a budget for your current request and your prior year budget to actuals. Both documents should show both your income and expenses. All program requests should also include their organization's most recent full-year budget to actuals, including income.