



WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund Build Back Better (B3) Request for Ideas (RFI)

Introduction and Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented hardship to nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve. As a result, philanthropy, business, nonprofits, government, and individuals have responded generously to address an extraordinary wave of basic human need. The WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund coalesced philanthropic support with a sense of urgency, providing over \$6.6M in grants to 156 nonprofits plus an additional \$340K in microgrants to more than 185 nonprofits to address emergency needs in April, May, and June throughout the 8 counties.

The impact of COVID-19, coupled with the persistent challenges to racial equity, has been felt across multiple systems in the WNY region. Systems intended to support community needs (such as food access, childcare, housing, and elder services) have been stretched beyond their capacity. During this difficult time, we have uncovered profound inequities and challenges in providing services to vulnerable populations.

The WNY community has a history of banding together in difficult times and working collaboratively. The response to the COVID-19 crisis and the call for racial justice invites us to rise to the moment. The time is now to make fundamental changes in systems intended to support the quality of life of WNY residents. The WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund is now moving to support the region's longer-term recovery, with a Build Back Better (B3) initiative. The purpose of B3 is to support innovative solutions from and for the nonprofit sector as it strives to continue to serve the needs of this region.

Build Back Better (B3)

B3 will focus on identifying and supporting innovative solutions developed by the nonprofit community in three phases:

- **Phase 1—Request for Ideas (RFI):** In this time of extraordinary need, the WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund is releasing an RFI to solicit visionary concepts from nonprofit leaders which have the potential to improve the quality of life for people living in WNY. The RFI is intended to surface creative ideas. Issue areas may include, but are not limited to: Food security, housing and homelessness, childcare, arts and culture, out of school time, behavioral health, community-based health, and eldercare support and services. The RFI is not intended to close immediate service gaps, address the needs of individual nonprofit organizations, or improve healthcare infrastructure. Instead, it provides a platform for nonprofits to work collaboratively **per the guiding principles** below.

- **Phase 2—Planning or Piloting:** Grants will be awarded to a selected group of concepts for planning or piloting innovation. These grants will support the development of plans or pilots for addressing challenges **per the guiding principles** below.
- **Phase 3—Implementation and Change:** Selected plans or pilots from Phase 2 will be eligible for implementation grants based on available funding.

Phase 1: Request for Ideas (RFI) Guidelines

The response to the RFI consists of your answers to a brief set of questions that describe an innovative approach to address systemic issues which impact the WNY community and which no one nonprofit, private, or public entity could solve independently. Such challenges will have arisen from, been exacerbated by, or are in response to the changed environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Submissions could include for-profit/nonprofit joint ventures, public-nonprofit partnerships, geographic coordination, or issue-area approaches. Issue areas may include, but are not limited to: Food security, housing and homelessness, childcare, arts and culture, out of school time, behavioral health, community-based health, and eldercare support and services. Collaborations between community organizations across issue areas are encouraged as new ways of addressing community challenges and improving outcomes.

Responses may include innovations that require planning or plans that are ready for piloting.

RFI Concept (Where applicable, please incorporate the guiding principles—which follow these questions—as you answer the five questions below.)

1. Is this a planning grant request or a piloting grant request? Describe the challenge you seek to address, the people who will benefit and how, and the geographic scope of the concept.
2. Describe your innovative solution. How does this solution contribute to ensuring the longer-term resiliency of your services and those of your collaborators?
3. How is your organization and/or collaborative effort (nonprofit, private and/or public sector partners) positioned to facilitate this solution? (Describe assets such as length of relationships, strength of networks, insights, availability of data and capacity to analyze it.)
4. Identify partners who have committed to collaborating in the design and development of the solution you propose, including people affected by the issue you intend to address (Human-centered design principles. Some combination of cross-sector engagement—Public, private, nonprofit at minimum on planning team.)
5. What type (e.g., consulting, TA) and level (\$ amount) of support would you need to move forward with developing your idea from this concept into a full proposal?

Submissions should take into account the following **guiding principles**:

- Racial Equity ([Link](#))
- Equity for Vulnerable Populations ([Link](#))
Equity is: Just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

(Guiding Principles Continued)

- Regional Approach—Where Applicable
 - Alignment with Social Determinants of Health—Where Applicable ([Link](#))
 - Trauma-Informed Care Principles ([Link 1](#) | [Link 2](#))
 - Inclusion of Human-Centered Design ([Link 1](#) | [Link 2](#))
 - Nonprofit-Led Cross-Sector Collaboration (Some combination of cross-sector engagement—Public, private, nonprofit at minimum on planning team.)
 - Leading to Systems Change ([Link](#))
 - Public Policy Component—Where Applicable
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Timeline

Phase 1: RFI Announced. RFI responses reviewed and planning/piloting grant selections made in August.

- June
 - RFI released through the nonprofit networks on Thursday, June 18, 2020.
 - Additional information about RFI available through two optional webinars:
 - Wednesday, June 24, 2020, from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM (Registration required: Click [here](#) for the link.)
 - Friday, June 26, 2020, from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM (Registration required: Click [here](#) for the link.)
- July
 - RFI due Friday, July 31, 2020, at 3:00 PM. (Applications must be submitted via the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo portal: Click [here](#) for the link.)
- August/September
 - Planning/piloting grant decisions made by late August/early September.

Phase 2: Selected Concepts Move to Full Proposal Development

- October
 - Full-proposals due by the end of October—Date to be confirmed upon grant award.

Phase 3: Implementation Grants Awarded

- November/December
 - Full proposals reviewed and implementation grants selected and awarded based on merit and funding capacity.
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Contact

For questions regarding the RFI application process, please contact Sira Faye at siraf@cfgb.org.