



Neighborhood Development Fund

2024-25 Capacity-Building Grant Program

Request for Proposals

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Rhode Island office hereby invites proposals from non-profit, Community-Based Organizations having the development of affordable housing as a primary line of business to participate in our *Neighborhood Development Fund* (NDF) capacity-building grant program for the 2024-25 grant cycle. LISC will consider proposals requesting up to \$125,000 in funding. This is a competitive program and LISC cannot guarantee that all applicants achieving threshold eligibility will receive a funding award.

About the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Working with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. LISC is a comprehensive community development enterprise, working holistically across sectors to address the interconnected factors that drive inequality of opportunity, and focused on Empowerment, Transformation, Capacity Support, and Systems Change. LISC aims to:

- Empower people so that more of us can contribute to and take advantage of economic growth.
- Transform places experiencing distress and underinvestment.
- Support the capacity of enterprises building robust economies and communities.
- Drive systems change by working to address institutional challenges and injustices.

All programmatic activity undertaken by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation- including our *Neighborhood Development Fund* capacity-building grant program- is aligned with these mission goals.

The NDF Capacity-Building Grant Program

Rhode Island's Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are the entities through which our neighborhoods combat adversity, adapt to and rebuild from shocks, and access opportunity. CBOs are the entities through which the diverse yet complementary elements of neighborhood vitality are identified, encouraged, and created.

An ample supply of safe, decent, and affordable housing is foundational to neighborhood vitality. Accordingly, LISC has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in neighborhoods across Rhode Island to improve the quality of our housing stock, to repurpose vacant lots as sites for new units, and to give derelict buildings new purpose. However, while foundational, better housing is only one of many elements necessary for a community to thrive. Thriving communities also offer access to healthy foods,

decent schools, safe and well maintained parks, a clean environment, technology interconnection, robust transportation options, responsive government, and living-wage jobs. For housing markets to work, these and other elements of community vitality must also work. And just as Rhode Island's CBOs have been instrumental in improving the housing markets within LISC's communities of focus, so too are these CBOs called upon to assemble the other elements of vitality delineated above.

LISC is committed to assisting our CBOs in their efforts to answer these calls, to build the internal capacity necessary to identify areas of community need, to craft and vet interventions to address these needs, and to pursue the effective implementation of these interventions once crafted. LISC does so through our *Neighborhood Development Fund* capacity-building grant program.

For the 2024-25 NDF capacity-building grant cycle, we seek proposals focused on one or more of the following capacity-building areas:

- *Internal Capacity-Building* (i.e. hiring and/or augmenting specialized staff and/or implementing technology to leverage, extend, or expand organizational core competencies).
- *Planning Capacity-Building* (i.e. launching and/or extending efforts to identify unmet community needs and /or to vet potential strategies to address those needs).
- *Programmatic Capacity-Building* (i.e. creating and/or scaling community interventions and the collaborations, partnerships, and innovations necessary to implement those interventions).
- *External Equity-Building* (i.e. recognizing the imperative to promote equity across our footprint, LISC affirmatively states our desire to support strategies which foster inclusiveness by empowering historically underinvested communities).
- *Internal Equity-Building* (i.e. LISC affirmatively states our desire to support strategies to create or extend CBO workforce diversity within an equitable and inclusive workplace).

Through narrative response and by using the application templates provided in this RFP, applying CBOs will articulate a self-evaluation of current organizational capacity, propose a set of capacity-building activities to be pursued with NDF funding, and identify specific strategies to be employed to implement those strategies. Applying CBOs will also identify outcomes to be measured and will report quarterly on those outcomes.

NDF Program Requirements / Limits

Applicants should keep the following in mind when developing their respective proposals:

- The NDF capacity-building grant program application process is competitive and funding cannot be guaranteed to all CBOs demonstrating threshold eligibility.
- NDF capacity-building grant requests cannot exceed 25% of an applicant's total proposed operating budget in the year(s) covered by the grant term (7/1/24 through 6/30/25).
- Allowable uses of awarded funds include:
 - Staff salaries and benefits (no more than 75% of any one salary)
 - Staff development and travel related to staff development
 - Operating expenses including but not limited to: utilities, rent, office supplies and/or equipment

- Subject to a formal procurement process, funds may be used to retain consultants to improve the efficiency of business/administrative systems, effectiveness of financial/asset management strategies, or to increase the scope of programs.
- Other related activities may be considered.

NDF Capacity-Building Program Eligibility Criteria

Entities applying for NDF Program funding must meet all of the following threshold criteria to be eligible for funding consideration. All applicants:

- Must be a 501(c)3 non-profit incorporated in the state of Rhode Island that engages in community development activities primarily within an identified geographic area of operation;
- Should have as a primary line of business the development and/or preservation of affordable housing;
- Must be a community-controlled organization with at least 51% of the Board of Directors being community residents, business/civic leaders, or other stakeholders within the CBO's service area;
- Must conduct an annual audit through an independent certified public accountant and or auditing firm;
- Must not currently be in default on any LISC transaction;
- Must demonstrate compliance with LISC's solvency thresholds for Grantees;
- (For returning applicants) Must have previously demonstrated a commitment to NDF program compliance including timely submissions of requested information and active engagement in training, technical assistance, and public policy analyses.

Additionally, in order to be considered for funding, all applicants must:

- Agree to provide all requested financial materials;
- Agree to convene representative staff and board members to meet with Rhode Island LISC staff and members of the NDF Steering Committee for NDF application review.
- Agree to work with Rhode Island LISC to establish independent evaluations of the organization's overall operating capacity (as requested);

LISC reserves the right to request additional information from all organizations that are selected to participate in the *Neighborhood Development Fund* capacity-building grant program.

2024-25 NDF Capacity-Building Program Application / Award Process

CBOs planning to apply for a 2024-25 NDF award will be required to complete and submit to LISC the full set of application documents *in the format requested*. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and may be returned to the applicant for revision / correction at LISC's sole discretion.

ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL TO JOGRADY@LISC.ORG AND RHALL@LISC.ORG NO LATER THAN 9AM APRIL 15, 2024

The set of required application documents includes the following:

- *2024-25 NDF Application Form and Checklist* (**please use the Application Form and Checklist provided by LISC**)
- *Application Narrative*, including:
 - A discussion of your organization’s history, current programs, current geographic service area, challenges / opportunities faced, and eligibility justification. **(1-2 pages)**
 - An explanation of your *Schedule of Selected Capacity-Building Activities*, specifically: How these activities will strengthen your organization and how increased capacity in the selected areas will allow your organization to better respond to challenges and opportunities. **(1-2 pages)**
 - **FOR PREVIOUS NDF GRANTEES:** If any capacity-building activities identified were selected in previous NDF rounds, please explain why the goal recurs and describe any factors indicating an improved ability to meet the selected goal this year.
 - A description of your organization’s fundraising strategy including anticipated impacts if the organization is not awarded NDF funds and, conversely, what an award of NDF funding this round would mean to the organization’s ability to leverage other resources. **(~1 page)**
 - A description of any anticipated obstacles to advancing the real estate development projects identified in your *2024-25 Real Estate Development Pipeline*. **(~1 page)**.
- *Real Estate Development Pipeline* (**using provided LISC template**)
- *24-Month Organizational Cash-Flow* projection (**using provided LISC template**)
- *Schedule of Selected Capacity-Building Activities* (**using provided LISC template**)
- Current Board of Directors List (w/ Term Limits, Affiliations, and Demographic information)
- Current Organizational Chart and brief Bios of key staff w/ corresponding Job Descriptions
- Audited Financial Statements from the last 3 Fiscal Years.
- An organizational Operating Budget for the Current Fiscal Year.

All application materials submitted in response to this RFP will be forwarded to the NDF Steering Committee which is the body responsible for NDF program funding decisions. After an initial review of all applications received, the Committee will schedule “in-person” discussions with all applicants that have met the threshold eligibility criteria detailed above. For the 2024-25 NDF grant cycle, “in-person” discussions may be conducted virtually.

The NDF Steering Committee, after reviewing all application documents and analyzing any relevant additional information gleaned from the “in-person” discussion process, will make 2024-25 NDF capacity-building program grant awards based on the availability of funds and on the extent to which the applying CBO:

- Prioritizes comprehensive community development activities as part of a broader revitalization strategy within the CBO’s geography of focus;
- Has a track-record of successfully completing previous development projects and /or delivering quality community programming;

- Demonstrates organizational fiscal health and stability;
- Demonstrates a commitment to sustained affordable housing and real estate production and continual capacity improvement;
- Values an active relationship with LISC.

KEY DATES / RFP PROCESS SCHEDULE

2024-25 NDF Capacity-Building Grant Timeline	
<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
Release of RFP	Monday, March 11th
Informational Conference Call	Friday, March 29th (10AM)
Responses Due to LISC	Monday, April 15 th (9AM)
Applicant In-Person Discussions	Wks of April 29, May 6, 13, 20
Announcement of Awards	Friday, June 21st
Start of Grant Term	July 1, 2024
End of Grant Term	June 30, 2025

ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL TO JOGRADY@LISC.ORG AND CCing RHALL@LISC.ORG NO LATER THAN 9AM, MONDAY APRIL 15, 2024