



## **Overview of FORGE Grant and Application Process**

### **Funding opportunity:**

8 grants of \$65,000.00, one year, unrestricted  
Up to 8 grants of \$1000 to interview finalists

### **Important Dates:**

January 13-February 10, 2025: Online application open  
March 10, 2025: First round decisions communicated to applicants  
March 2025: Second round interviews (virtual)  
April 25, 2025: Final funding decisions communicated to finalists

All FORGE (Fund for Racial and Gender Equity) grants are one-year, unrestricted funds (can be used however the grantee partner sees fit). As WFSA unlocks additional years of funding, we intend to prioritize renewing these grants prior to bringing in additional grantee partners.

The grants are designed to support an organization's existing ways of working, not intended to encourage unwanted or unsustainable change in either operations or programming. The application and evaluation process are intended to be low barrier, transparent, and flexible.

### **This FORGE grant is designed to accomplish 3 outcomes:**

- 1) **ACCESS and OUTREACH:** Grants are accessible and reach orgs outside of the mainstream nonprofit sector (e.g. leaders who experience barriers to accessing institutional funding, organizations that are led by and serve BIWOC communities, organizations with smaller budgets, organizations that are more newly established).
- 2) **SECTOR SHIFTING:** WFSA's grant process creates a shift in power where the community makes the decisions about how and where resources move and grantmakers facilitate movement of those resources. Grantees/applicants and grantmakers are partners in creating impact and collectively challenge the charity orientation by building, testing, and publicizing a Trust-Based Philanthropy model for Arizona grantmakers to build on.

- 3) TRUST and VALUE: Applicants and grantees feel trusted, supported, and genuinely seen throughout the grantmaking process. WFSA staff and board are proud and supportive of the committee's decisions and process.

The FORGE grant was designed by current WFSA grantee partners, and all funding decisions will be made by a committee of community members with lived experience serving in or being served by organizations that fit this grantee profile:

### **Grantee Requirements and Priorities**

- Organization holds a 501(c)3 status designated by the US Internal Revenue Service or are fiscally sponsored by an entity who holds this status
  - If not a 501(c)3, you must be fiscally sponsored before finishing the application
- Organization's work is based in Arizona
- Organization's local annual budget is under \$1,000,000 (excluding fiscal sponsor agents)
- 50% or more of the organization's leadership (Directors, Executives, and Board) are BIWOC (Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color)
- 50% or more of the organization's population served is BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- For larger organizations and those that are affiliated with national/international umbrella orgs (i.e. a chapter of a larger brand):
  - Prioritize those who do not get significant funding from their national org
  - WFSA will consider funding a place-based expansion of their work if there is significant local community leadership
- Fund will prioritize organizations that leverage systems change and asset-based thinking, regardless of the type of services they provide to community.
- Grants cannot be used to support candidate-specific electoral work. Issue-based organizing and advocacy can be supported through this fund.

### **Application Process**

Funding decisions will be made based on a two-step process. The first step is an online application, which will be open from January 13-February 10, 2025. During the open application period, WFSA will host two informational webinars and virtual office hours to support prospective applicants during the open application phase.

Online applications will be reviewed by members of the FORGE Community Review Committee. After applications have been independently scored, the committee will meet to identify up to 16 organizations to invite for an interview. Notifications of first round decisions will be communicated to applicants via email on or around March 10, 2025.

Interviews will be hosted remotely via Zoom or Microsoft Teams and will take place in March 2025. All interview questions will be sent to the organization's contact person in advance of the interview. Each applicant will be invited to meet virtually with three committee members for one hour, and interviews will be recorded and shared with FORGE Community Review Committee members. Committee members will offer a qualitative assessment and funding recommendation after each interview. The full committee will convene in April to discuss finalists and determine funding allocations. Final funding

decisions will be communicated by email on or before April 25, 2025. All finalists who are not selected for a FORGE grant will receive a \$1000 grant to compensate them for their time and effort during the application process.

The full application and interview questions, as well as the scoring rubric are below.

# Online Application Questions – Round 1

## Section 1: Organizational Information

- 1) Leadership Demographics: What percentage of your organization’s leadership (director-level and above, executives, and board members) are Black women, Indigenous women, and/or women of color? Note: WFSA defines women as all women, women-identifying, persons assigned female at birth, and gender-expansive people. Please estimate.
- 2) BIPOC population served: What percentage of the people your organization serves identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color? Please estimate.
- 3) Gender Demographics served: What percentage of the people your organization serves are women, girls, and/or gender-expansive people? Please estimate.
- 4) What were your organization's total annual expenses for the 2023 fiscal year? > \$1M , \$750K - \$1M , \$500K - \$749K , \$250K - \$499K , \$100K - \$249K , \$0 - \$99K
- 5) Please describe when and how your organization was founded.
- 6) How is your organization’s work resourced? Please provide a general breakdown of your major funding sources: National grantmakers, Arizona grantmakers, Individual donors, Fee for Service, Investments, Other
- 7) Are you an affiliate of a national organization? If yes, what percentage of your operating budget comes from your national offices?
- 8) Would this application have been more accessible to you in any other language? If yes, please list the language(s) below:

## Section 2: Short Answer (1-3 sentences):

1. Mission: What does your organization do?
2. Community Served: What community(ies) does your organization serve and why? Where in Arizona does your organization operate your programs?

The following section can be answered via:

- 1) Written response
- 2) Video or audio file
- 3) Upload an existing document

## Section 3: Long Answer (500 words suggested):

1. Impact: What is the impact that your organization makes in the community(ies) you serve? How do you know if your work is having the intended effect?
2. Organizational Approach and Capacity: How does your organization plan and execute your work? How many employees (number of full-time and part-time positions, please list separately) do you have on staff? Describe the skills, capacity, and knowledge of the team responsible for executing the organization’s work. How does your organization involve the community(ies) you serve in shaping the work of the organization?

## **Interview/Panel Conversation Questions – Round 2**

1. What values guide your organization and how do you leverage them in your work?
2. How does the current political climate in Arizona affect your work?
3. What are the current barriers to your organization being well resourced?
4. 1-2 additional questions specific to that organization

## Application Scoring Rubric

Online Application Questions (Total may be over 30)

Category	0pt	1pt	2pts	3pts	4pts	5pts
BIWOC Leadership	< 50%	50% - 59%	60% - 69%	70% - 79%	80% – 89%	90% +
BIPOC Community Served	< 50%	50% - 59%	60% - 69%	70% - 79%	80% – 89%	90% +
Women/Gender Expansive Folks Served	< 50%	50% - 59%	60% - 69%	70% - 79%	80% – 89%	90% +
Annual Budget	> \$1M	\$750K - \$1M	\$500K - \$749K	\$250K - \$499K	\$100K - \$249K	\$0 - \$99K
% Budget from AZ funders	> 90%+	80% – 89%	70% - 79%	60% - 69%	50% - 59%	< 50%
Years Established	> 8 years	7-8 years	6-7 years	4-5 years	1-3 years	Less than a year
Application Language Accessibility	+1 for each additional language					
National Affiliation	+2 points for no national affiliation. +1 point for less than 25% of budget coming from national affiliation.					
<b>Total /30</b>						

**Additional Unscored Question: Budget breakdown**

1. Percent of budget from: National grantmakers, Arizona grantmakers, Individual donors, Fee for Service, Investments, Other (please describe)



**Short Answer Questions**

1. Community Served: What community(ies) does the organization serve and why? Where in Arizona does the organization operate their programs? Note that geography is not being scored.

0	Organization does not have a clear focus on their community or the needs they are serving.
1	Organization has minimal clarity on or is not embedded in the community they wish to serve.
2	Organization can somewhat identify and has a basic understanding of the needs of the community they are serving.
3	Organization can clearly identify and understands the needs of the community they are serving and holds relationships within the community.
4	Organization has a deep understanding of who they serve and the needs of the community and are embedded in the community.
5	Organization clearly defines who they serve and why that community is their priority and are deeply embedded in the community.

**Short Answer Total:** /5

**Additional Unscored Question:** Mission: What does your organization do?

**Long Answer Questions**

1. Impact: What is the impact that the organization is already making? How do they know if their work is having the intended effect?

0	Desired impact is unclear and/or has no methods or track record to support learning.
2	Stated impact has no support from metrics and mechanisms for learning and continual growth. It is unclear how their work leads to improving BIPOC community need(s). The vision is unclear or underdeveloped.
4	Stated impact has very little support from metrics and mechanisms for learning and continual growth. Their work indirectly addresses and makes incremental improvements to BIPOC community need(s). There is a vision but not a clear plan about the steps necessary to execute the vision.



6	Stated impact has minimal support from metrics and mechanisms for learning and continual growth. Their work directly addresses and makes moderate improvement to BIPOC community need(s). There is a well-defined vision with a clear plan about the steps necessary to execute the vision.
8	Stated impact has support from metrics and mechanisms for learning and continual growth. Their work directly addresses and makes moderate improvement to BIPOC community need(s). There is a well-defined vision with a clear and feasible plan about the steps necessary to execute the vision.
10	Stated impact is rooted in clear and reliable metrics and mechanisms for learning and continual growth. Their work directly addresses and makes substantive improvement to clearly stated BIPOC community need(s). There is a well-defined vision with a clear and feasible plan about the steps necessary to execute the vision.

2. Organizational Approach and Capacity: How does the organization conceive of and execute their work? Does the team have the skills, capacity, and knowledge sufficient to execute the organization’s work? How does your organization involve the community(ies) they serve in shaping the work of the organization?

0	Organizational approach is unclear or undefined. Insufficient information about org’s ability to carry out the work. Community is not informing or engaged in the organization decision-making process and does not engage in feedback loops with the organization.
2	Organizational approach is misaligned with their mission and how they understand the needs of their community. Interventions are individualistic and embedded in a charity model. Staff do not have the skills, capacity, and/or knowledge needed to do the work. There are no established ways in which community is engaged in organizational decision-making or feedback.
4	Organizational approach somewhat aligns with their mission and how they understand the needs of their community. Interventions indicate a willingness to engage in systems change and challenging the charity model but are not grounded in these mindsets. It is unclear if the organization is able to accomplish work with their existing leadership and staff’s skills, capacity, and knowledge. Community is seldom engaged in organizational decision-making and rarely is given the opportunity to provide feedback to the organization.
6	Organizational approach aligns with their mission and how they understand the needs of their community. Interventions indicate a willingness to engage in systems change and challenging the charity model but are not grounded in these mindsets. The organization is able to accomplish work with their existing leadership and staff’s skills, capacity, and knowledge. Community plays a role in informing the organization’s decision-making process and engages in passive and/or infrequent feedback gathering with community members.

8	Organizational approach supports their mission and how they understand the needs of their community. Interventions are in conversation with systems change and indirectly challenge the charity model. Staff appear excited about the work. Organization can clearly accomplish the work with their existing leadership and staff who generally exhibit the depth of skills, capacity, and knowledge needed to do the work and continue the organization’s success. Community members are generally engaged in the work and help inform some decisions made by the organization. Community is able to provide feedback to the organization; however, there is no formal or explicit process for acting on that feedback.
10	Organizational approach clearly stems from their mission and how they understand the needs of their community. Interventions are embedded in systems change and directly challenge the charity model. Staff deeply care about the work. Organization is overqualified to accomplish work with their existing leadership and staff who exhibit the depth of skills, capacity, and knowledge needed to expand on the organization’s success. Community members are deeply engaged in shaping the work and help inform decisions made by the organization. There is an explicit process for community to provide feedback to the organization, and the organization has an ongoing practice of acting on that feedback.

**Long Answer Total: /20**

1. Overall assessment: how well does this organization’s work align with the criteria of the grant and the needs of the community(ies) they serve?

0	Organization does not center BIPOC community needs and/or does not align with the criteria of this grant.
2	Organization has an understanding of BIPOC community needs but does not center them. The organization’s work is not well-defined, and the approach does not match their stated goals or aspirations.
4	Organization understands BIPOC community needs but does not center them. The organization’s work is slightly defined but needs additional clarity. Organization may or may not have an approach to match their stated goals or aspirations.
6	Organization understands BIPOC community needs and is making active efforts to center them, but is not quite there yet. The organization’s work is defined and their approach appears to match their stated goals and aspirations.
8	Organization clearly understands BIPOC community needs and is centering their work around those needs. Organizational work is improving lives/opportunities of the BIPOC community. The organization’s work is defined and rooted in community needs. Their approach matches the original purpose.

10	Organization works to fill critical gaps within the community for BIPOC. Intentional (not incidental) improvement to lives/opportunities of BIPOC in community. The origin of the organization's work is explicitly rooted in well-defined community need and their approach clearly matches the original purpose.
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**Overall Assessment: /10**