

Activate Fund Collaboration Pilot FAQ

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A. The Basics

What is the Activate Fund? The Activate Fund is a \$1.5 million grant fund to support capacity building and collaboration of nonprofits in Southeast Michigan.

Why is the Activate Fund needed? Many of the capacity building programs that exist are available through foundations that may also provide other operating and programmatic support crucial to the mission of community organizations.

The Activate Fund provides funding for capacity and collaborative activity through a neutral intermediary and is not predicated on other grant funding.

Who runs the Activate Fund? Co.act Detroit administers the Activate Fund. Co.act Detroit works with other intermediary partners and cross-sector community leaders from around the region who serve as strategic partners, advisors and external jurors to the fund.

Who funds the Activate Fund? The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (RCWJRF) is the inaugural funder of the Activate Fund.

What is the objective of the Activate Fund? The Activate Fund is a grantmaking strategy to support nonprofit impact in our community that invests in two core areas:

1. Building Nonprofit Capacity to Meet Mission
2. Building Network Capacity for Social Change

What is a Collaboration? Under the Activate Fund, formal collaboration is defined as a relationship between one nonprofit and **another** nonprofit, corporation, or governmental agency(s) that:

1. Changes the way participating organizations do business for the long-term;
2. Has board involvement and endorsement; and
3. Preserves, expands or improves effectiveness of services to constituents

B. Eligibility

Who can apply? Collaboration applications must:

1. Meet the definition of formal collaboration and have the potential to meaningfully preserve, expand or improve effectiveness of services to constituents and/or improve financial health of the nonprofit(s) involved
2. Demonstrate commitment to the success of the collaborative venture among the partners at ED/ Board Chair level
3. Individually include at least one 501c3 registered nonprofit that meets financial criteria.
4. Collectively
 - i. Serve a community in Wayne county. Individually or collectively the group may serve additional counties. Collectively the group may serve one population or zip code within Wayne county.
 - ii. Be working towards a collective mission that they could not accomplish individually without working together.
 - iii. Demonstrate alignment of purpose among the partners.

Financial criteria include: a complete annual independent audit, an annual tax return (990/990 EZ), an active board of directors and an IRS determination letter verifying non-profit status.

New initiatives or non-profits must present equivalent financial documentation such as audited financial statements or a board-approved budget.

Can I apply with a fiscal sponsor? At least one participating organization must be a registered 501c3 in good standing.

Are new collaboratives eligible? New collaboratives are eligible but must be able to demonstrate realistic actionable outcomes within the grant period.

My organization already has a collaboration, can we apply? Yes! Applicants must be able to demonstrate how the collaborative package will help further their collaborative's mission and get them closer to reaching their goals. The Activate Fund is designed to meet organizations where they are along their collaborative journey.

Will a Collaboration Pilot application exclude me from applying to for Activate Fund grants? No. Organizations that meet all eligible criteria may apply for the Nonprofit Fundamentals and Collaboration awards and future Activate Fund grant programs.

C. Application Details

How do I apply? There is a 3-step application process:

1. Attend an information session - at least one member of the collaborative must attend one information session
2. Submit a 1-page Letter of Interest (LOI) - if organizations are interested in applying after the information session they must submit an LOI to activatefundinfo@coactdetroit.org. LOI templates can be found at www.coactdetroit.org
3. Receive invite-only application and submit materials - a select number of collaboratives will be invited to submit a full application.
 - Applications must be submitted online at: www.coactdetroit.org
 - Applications must be submitted in full along with all required financial attachments. Incomplete applications will not be considered and deemed ineligible.
 - A lead applicant must be designated in the application.
 - An invitation for a full application is not a guarantee of award.

Committee review and selection - We expect to receive a highly competitive pool of proposals from across Wayne County. Grant awards are provided on a competitive basis due to limited resources.

When are applications due?

1. Information sessions will be held in March; there are three separate opportunities to attend.
2. LOIs must be submitted by 11:59pm EST March 31st, 2020. We anticipate extending invitations to apply by April 13th, 2020.
3. Full applications are due at **11:59pm EST April 30, 2020.**

Why should I apply? Co.act Detroit will select up to five unique collaboratives to support with a Collaboration Package.

Who should be the lead applicant? Every collaborative must designate one lead applicant who will serve as the point person with Co.act staff. This organization should have the capacity to complete all materials, grant reports and respond to communications. This organization may typically coordinate meeting logistics for the group.

Does the lead applicant need to be a 501c3? No, the lead applicant is not required to be the 501c3 partner as no direct funds will be exchanged between Co.act and participating grantees.

Do I have to create a profile as part of the application process? Yes. Starting a profile gives you access to the application and allows us to follow up with additional information, questions and opportunities. The profile will allow you to simply update your application throughout the application window and receive confirmation of your submission. An email address is required to create a profile.

Can I submit multiple applications? A single organization may submit multiple applications so long as each collaboration involves a unique partner. If two organizations have multiple collaborative ideas, Co.act Detroit asks that the strongest idea be submitted for review.

If I have questions or need help filling out my application, what should I do? Interested applicants can attend information sessions or one-on-one office hours for in-person and virtual assistance. Visit www.coactdetroit.org for schedule more details.

Interested applicants may also contact Co.act Detroit directly:

Co.act Detroit 6568 Woodward, Detroit MI 48202

activatefundinfo@coactdetroit.org

(313) 789-1386

D. Award Details

What do I get if I win? The Collaboration Package includes support for your collaborative's convening needs. Resources include: session pre-planning support, meeting space at Co.act, meeting materials and refreshments, facilitator, note-taker, language translator, photographer/videographer, content capture and graphics including a convening session end product(s).

Will applicants receive money to pay for the services provided? While services offered through the collaboration package have value, there is no money awarded or exchanged directly between Co.act and the grantees.

If I'm awarded, do I have a say regarding who I work with for services? Co.act Detroit will issue a public Request for Proposals (RFP) and retain an active list of technical service providers with demonstrated experience supporting nonprofit capacity building. Grantees are required to use a service provider from Co.act Detroit's approved list. Applicants will have the opportunity to share the public RFP with their network during the open call for submissions.

What is the award period? Awardees must use the Collaboration package by December 31st, 2020.

E. Selection Process

What is the process for selecting Collaboration Pilot grantees? Grant awards are issued on a competitive basis due to limited resources. A diverse committee of community leaders and Co.act staff will review proposals and produce a recommendation for grant awards.

1. **Step 1: LOI Review by Co.act Staff** - submitting collaboratives will have their LOI reviewed by Co.act /Partners, who will invite a select number of collaboratives to fill out a full application.
2. **Step 2: Application Scoring and selection by Review Committee** - the Review Committee will review all applications for eligibility and merit, recommending up to (5) finalists to Co.act for award.
3. **Step 3: Grantee Award Notification by Co.act Detroit** - all applicants will receive a notification whether or not they are selected

How are applications scored? Applicants are scored on four criteria:

1. **Collaboration** - is the collective mission greater than anything any one of the organizations could achieve on their own
2. **Demonstrable and Catalytic Impact** to the collective
3. **Feasibility** to utilize the award within the grant period
4. Alignment with **Co.act Values** and **Approach to Capacity Building**

How long does the selection process take? Our aim is to select grantees by June 2020.

F. Additional Information

What is expected of Activate Fund grantees? All grantees are expected to utilize the Collaboration Package by March 2021. Grantees may be required to sign an agreement that outlines terms and conditions for receiving the award. Grantees are expected to attend events designed to connect them with other grantees and resources. They may also be asked to share their story via media opportunities.

How is applicant information used? Applicant information is shared with Co.act Detroit and Michigan Community Resources to provide direct follow-up on all applications. If Co.act Detroit cannot directly help a nonprofit, we will seek to connect nonprofits with other resources.

Applicant data is used only for the award selection process and providing nonprofit support. Applicant data is not sold.