



You are invited to submit a proposal to conduct research and analysis to develop criteria and recommendations for identifying potential target states for the Ford Foundation's U.S. grant-making efforts.

Introduction and Context

The Ford Foundation recently completed a comprehensive review that led to the formation of seven Thematic Areas (TAs) that organize our work in the U.S. and globally. The TAs are not designed as silos; they are entry points for work in each region where Ford works and they are meant to be harnessed and combined in specific contexts and conditions. Our seven Thematic Areas continue to hone their focus, including which geographies they might target and how overlapping priorities in places can contribute to building social justice infrastructure. More detail on the Thematic Areas can be found in Appendix A.

Our recent review included consideration of how the Ford Foundation's various activities in the U.S. could compose a more coherent strategy. Given our long history of work in both cities and states, how could we better align our place-based grant-making? In other words, individual program officers support different pieces of social justice infrastructure in states, but could we work differently and more effectively build that ecosystem?

Given the magnitude of the problems we seek to address, we are especially interested in high-leverage opportunities, where multiple TAs could focus their efforts, such as set of states that could build broader momentum at the national level. At the same time, we recognize that this will require new ways of working within Ford and that the structure and existing ways of working may not allow for the type of collaboration we imagine is necessary.

Key Concepts and Questions

As the foundation has re-aligned itself to focus more squarely on inequality and developed new tools and approaches to support Thematic Areas, a number of key concepts and questions animate this invitation for proposals:



- What is the relationship between issue reforms and the building of durable civic infrastructure? How do we identify the types of campaigns that not only improve policy but also strengthen organizations and ecosystems at the same time?
- How do we weigh the theory of scaling through replication of models across places against scaling through the building of momentum through states?
- What are the long terms trends (demographic shifts, ecological developments, etc.) that we should keep in mind when weighing today's battlegrounds against less contested and resourced places that may be more consequential in the decades ahead?
- What might operationalizing cross Thematic Area efforts look like? And how do we weigh the costs and benefits of collaboration?
- What factors should we weigh as we make decisions about pursuing short-term wins versus more fundamental (and slower) social change in places where progressive approaches to inequality have not yet had much traction?

These questions offer a glimpse into the many considerations and conversations underway at Ford. We hope the proposed consulting support will expand on this list and generate key strategic questions that should guide our inquiry.

We ask that those interested in provide us with a sense of the strategic questions they would seek to answer, a proposed methodology, timeline, and budget. We hope that this process could be completed in 4 months' time (but are open to a different timeline corresponding to the submitted proposal), will include an analysis of opportunities in key states (taking into account Ford's existing investments), and will also factor in both opportunities and challenges to cross-collaboration within Ford. We hope the final product will provide several strong choices for where we might invest, what kinds of social change might be possible, where the social justice infrastructure in that place is already strong and where it could use further support, and how our investment might fit within a larger landscape of work.



Possible Stages of Work

The successful consultant(s) will build on their submission and develop a detailed plan of engagement together with the Ford Foundation. We encourage creativity in approach and offer the following loose structure simply as a starting point to be adapted and reshaped as needed.

Stage One: Developing recommendations for Thematic Areas

- Discuss and brainstorm a detailed approach to the consulting work with a small, cross TA team that will serve as ongoing point of contact.
- Interview internal program staff in Thematic Areas and members of relevant working groups, like Detroit, New York, New Orleans, and the Southern Scan group.
- Interview external stakeholders, review literature, and/or assess relevant funding collaboratives.
- Present initial findings for review and reaction.

Stage Two: Developing cross TA recommendations

- Identify implications for Thematic Areas and relevant working groups, suggestions for implementation, and pathways for operationalizing.
- Present findings for a round of feedback from internal stakeholders.
- Final full report/presentation and accessible summary available for broader distribution. The consultant(s) may be asked to present the report on two to three occasions.

NOTE: There are a number of follow-on activities and needs that might emerge from this consulting project (e.g., developing assessment tools, visualization/dashboards, etc.) that could become resources not only for Ford, but for external stakeholders as well, in addition to on-going consultation as we shift from an exploratory phase in 2016 to more significant and longer term investments in 2017. If appropriate, this consultancy may lead to further collaboration.



FORDFOUNDATION

Proposal Submission

Please provide a proposal of no more than seven pages that outlines the strategic questions that would guide your approach to this work, ideas for methodology and design, key benchmarks and deliverables, and the estimated budget (fee and expenses).

Please include *curricula vitae* of the key individual(s) who will execute this project, two to three references, and two samples of relevant work. These documents should be emailed to Ethan Frey at e.frey@fordfoundation.org on or by **September 9, 2016**.

Any questions about the scope of the review or the proposal process should be directed to Ethan Frey (e.frey@fordfoundation.org) or Jee Kim (j.kim@fordfoundation.org).



Appendix A: Ford's Thematic Areas

Civic Engagement and Government focuses on three main problems. First, the rules of the game of political participation do not create a level playing field. There are too many barriers, often deliberate, to having everyone's voice and vote count. Second, most people do not experience government as responsive, accountable, or able to help solve their biggest problems. Public policies need to better serve the public interest. Third, the ways in which government raises and spends money too often fail to serve broader public interests. Moreover, the fact that budgets and taxes can be highly technical and hidden from public view makes it difficult to scrutinize what's going on, spurring further disengagement. Taken together, these dynamics create a vicious downward spiral of distrust and disengagement. CEG seeks to reverse this through three lines of work (LOWs):

- Participation and representative government (i.e., voting rights and money in politics)
- Fairer taxes and budgets
- Powerful engagement and responsive policies

Creativity and Free Expression play a central role in weaving the fabric of a just society—a society in which exclusion and inequality can never stand unchallenged. It is through the stories we tell—about ourselves and our communities, how we imagine the future, and how we understand the changes around us—that we make meaning of our world and expand our empathy with others. These stories can also challenge stereotypes and received wisdom and upset the roots of inequality. Indeed, cultural change often precedes transformations in other spheres, heralding and making space for new social, political, and economic thinking. CFE deploys two lines of work:

- Social justice storytelling
- 21st century arts infrastructure

Equitable Development requires resources, both natural and human, to power social and economic progress. But the rules of the game of development—especially those



concerning community revitalization and the control and use of land and other natural resources—too often magnify economic, social, and political inequality. As a result, progress can be a two-sided coin. Urbanization, for example, is often associated with economic growth, expanded political participation, and greater cultural tolerance. But the tensions that come with rapid urbanization and uneven development make it difficult to ensure access to opportunity and a decent standard of living for all. Ensuring that future generations can live in just, prosperous communities and benefit from a sustainable environment will require a collective commitment to confronting inequality. Two LOWs animate this Thematic Area:

- Just cities and regions
- Natural resources and climate change

Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice builds on the progress of the past 50 years, where powerful legal and policy changes—together with evolving public attitudes—have greatly advanced the rights of women and of racial, caste, and ethnic groups. Still, discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and indigenous or migrant status persists in application of the law, in cultural practices, and in the routines of everyday life. While governments acknowledge their responsibility to all people, in practice their policies can reflect long-standing prejudices. In some places, government's obligation to protect citizens is used as a rationale to suppress the rights, liberties, and opportunities of groups that already face discrimination. For women and girls, tensions between aspiration and reality are particularly acute. This Thematic Area is composed of the following lines of work:

- Freedom and dignity: reducing mass incarceration and criminalization
- Rights of women and girls: reproductive and gender justice

In Inclusive Economies, opportunities abound, standards of living increase for all, and prosperity is widely shared. But we are far from realizing this vision. Economic inequality is pervasive, and in recent decades, it has grown dramatically worldwide and undercut growth and it is not inevitable. It is strongly influenced by the rules of the game: public policies and business models that affect how well economies function and how



they allocate opportunities and rewards. Some of the most important rules shape the nature of work, social protection, and the allocation of investment capital. In wealthy economies like that of the U.S., the erosion of labor standards (such as a decent minimum wage), an inadequate and outdated safety net, and the increasingly precarious nature of work—with millions of people working part time or without contracts and benefits—have contributed significantly to inequality. Meanwhile, in developing countries, billions of people still lack access to basic rights, meaningful livelihoods, technologies, and markets. Two LOWs underpin this Thematic Area:

- Quality work and economic security
- Impact investing

Internet Freedom works to ensure that the profound benefits of the internet are more equally shared. Too many people—particularly those who have been historically excluded or marginalized—are unable to access and influence digital platforms. As technology continues to reshape relationships between citizens, governments, and corporations, struggles to control the Internet are intensifying around the world. Globally, governments and private corporations effectively control access to and functions of the Internet. Ubiquitous data collection and automated decision making raise serious concerns about privacy and equality in jobs, criminal justice, housing, health, education, civic engagement, finance, and expression. To ensure that the Internet develops to meet the needs of the public, we need effective, technically sophisticated, diverse, and globally distributed organizations working to advance stronger, more inclusive Internet policy.

Internet Freedom's two LOWs are:

- Digital rights and access
- Technology for the public interest

Youth Opportunity and Learning understands young people as potential forces for progress and positive social change in their families, communities, and the world. Yet too many of them face daunting obstacles in obtaining the opportunities they need to develop their full potential. Prevailing attitudes often dismiss and devalue young people, and with limited power, they face challenges in making their needs known and their voices heard.



Despite global progress in improving access to primary education, the needs of older youth have largely gone unaddressed. In their teens and 20s, youth make important decisions about education, work, health, and civic engagement that shape their own futures and those of the societies in which they live. Institutions and the culture at large must support young people's transition from school to work and facilitate their participation in civic life. This Thematic Area is composed of the following LOWs:

- Pathways for youth success
- Next generation leadership