



FAMILIES LEAD CALIFORNIA REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

I. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF GRANTMAKING INITIATIVE

The Heising-Simons Foundation announces a funding opportunity for community-based organizations in California that support parents¹ to be leaders. This initiative, Families Lead California, recognizes that parents know what their children need to thrive, and it is through their leadership that systems will become accountable and responsive to diverse families.

Centering equity in our grantmaking has become even more urgent as communities respond to the compounding effects of a global pandemic, economic recession, and continuing racial injustice, all of which disproportionately affect BIPOC communities (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). In education and early childhood, the landscape has shifted dramatically and quickly, requiring families to transform homes into classrooms and themselves into home-based educators, navigating technology, employment, and health concerns.

In these circumstances, it is critical to cultivate and sustain support networks for families that value their leadership and build their influence and power to lead their children's learning and influence systems and policy change. We recognize that, while this moment presents daunting challenges, it also presents opportunities to rebuild and reimagine education and early childhood systems in partnership with families.

The Foundation will offer multi-year grants to family engagement and leadership organizations; and convene grantee meetings to deepen learning, connection, and strategy to advance mutual goals. Funding will be unrestricted where possible. The frequency and content of meetings will be co-designed with grantees.

II. ENVISIONED IMPACT

The Heising-Simons Foundation views family engagement and leadership as core strategies to advance equity and community empowerment. We recognize that parent engagement, leadership, and organizing occurs across a continuum: from engaging with their children's at-home learning to shaping programs, to influencing policies and systems². Applicants from all places in that continuum are encouraged to apply. We believe the shared goal of celebrating and strengthening parent leadership in at-home and in-community learning opportunities and elevating parent voice in policy and systems change is advanced when organizations within the sector have opportunities to learn from each other and identify common goals. The goal of this grantmaking initiative is to support organizations that strengthen the pipeline of diverse parent leaders and build their power to influence system and policy

¹ We use the word "parent" to describe any adult serving as a primary caregiver to a child.

² Center for the Study of Social Policy (2017). "Ripples of Transformation: Families Leading Change in Early Childhood Systems," Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy. Available at: <https://cssp.org/resource/firstfive-engagementtoolkit-5/>

changes that reflect the priorities of families. At the end of the three-year initiative, we envision connections between powerful community-based organizations that have utilized the Initiative's flexible funding and organizational development opportunities to:

- Strengthen organizational effectiveness and sustainability
- Co-create a network based on expanded parent voice and leadership
- Share and design strategies to support family leadership in their homes and communities and to build parents' power to participate in creating systemic and policy change

III. FUNDING LEVELS

Approximately 9-12 grants will be awarded, ranging from \$150,000 to not more than \$300,000 over three years. Organizational size and plans over the three-year grant term will be considerations in determining award size.

IV. PRIORITIES FOR SELECTION

Priorities for the selection of grantees will reflect the Foundation's commitment to California communities that have been marginalized. Successful applicants will be community-based family engagement and leadership organizations that:

- Operate in California,
- Are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or equivalent (includes fiscal sponsors of an eligible project/program),
- Directly work with parents of young children (0-8) to advance equity through family engagement, leadership development, and/or organizing,
- Are rooted in an understanding of the historical and current systemic barriers to opportunity and committed to addressing these barriers,
- Have a demonstrated commitment to working with families to identify issues and priorities and to co-create solutions,
- Have a vision for building parent power to effect practice and policy changes, and
- Are interested in opportunities for learning, capacity building, and collaboration.

Emergent organizations and organizations led by BIPOC are strongly encouraged to apply.

V. RECIPROCAL COMMITMENTS

Grantees will be expected to provide or participate in the following during the 3-year funding period (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024):

1. Annual Report: All grantees will complete a brief, annual report in each of the three grant years, describing the extent to which goals for the previous year were met, as well as key lessons learned and goals for the coming year.

2. Grantee Meetings: All grantees are expected to participate in periodic grantee meetings, with learning goals and meeting format and schedule to be collectively determined during the first meetings.

3. Evaluation: All grantees are expected to participate in an Initiative level evaluation.

The Foundation commits to:

1. Provide facilitation for grantee meetings that reflect participants' needs and priorities,
2. Support the costs of participation in any Initiative level evaluation,
3. Offer opportunities for tailored organizational effectiveness support, and
4. At the end of the grant term, the Foundation anticipates that grantees in good standing will be eligible to apply for renewal funding.

All grant awards and Initiative activities are subject to funding approval by the Foundation.

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME

| Activity | When |
|---|-----------------|
| Request for Application Released | Week of 1/25/21 |
| Applicant Webinar | 2/16/21 |
| Applications Due | 3/2/2021 |
| Notify finalists/schedule interviews | Week of 4/12/21 |
| Finalist Interviews | Week of 4/19/21 |
| Recommendations to Heising-Simons Board | 6/4/21 |
| Grants Announced By | July 2021 |

APPLICATION GUIDELINES/QUESTIONS

● **Organization Profile:**

- Organization or fiscal sponsor name, mailing address, and website (if applicable)
- Year organization founded or fiscally sponsored project initiated
- Executive Director/CEO contact information
- Employer identification number (EIN)
- Annual Budget for 2020-2021
 - Percentage of organization/project budget allocated to family engagement, leadership development, and/or organizing
- Link to most recent Annual Report, if available
- List of three largest funders to the organization/project and amounts from the fiscal year 2019-2020, if applicable
- List of three current organizational partners with contact information
- Please indicate the geographic area served (e.g. city of Sacramento):
 - How would you describe your service area? (Please select the best option)
 - Urban
 - Rural
 - Mixed urban and rural
 - Neighborhood
 - Citywide
 - Countywide

- Regional
- Statewide
- Select demographic information of people served, by percentage (if your organization does not specifically track this data, you can estimate)
 - Race ethnicity
 - % with children ages 0-8
 - Home languages
- The total number of parents engaged annually:
 - Breakdown of participation by type of engagement:
 - Participation in programs or services
 - Participation in formal or informal leadership roles and/or leadership development programming
 - Participation in organizing, advocacy, or other systems/policy change efforts
- Staffing:
 - Total number of staff (FTE) or contractors
 - Number of staff or contractors hired from the community served by the organization/project
- **Narrative** (Responses should be limited to two (2) pages, single-spaced with 12-point font.)
 - How does the organization/project work with parents of young children (ages 0-8) to advance equity through family engagement, leadership development, and/or organizing?
 - How do the organization's/project's family engagement and leadership strategies reflect its understanding of and commitment to addressing historical and current systemic barriers to opportunity?
 - How does the organization/project currently work with families to identify issues and priorities and co-create solutions?
 - Over the next three years, what is the vision for your organization's/project's role in developing parent voice, leadership, and power to address structural inequities families with young children face?

VII. SCORING RUBRIC

| Organization Profile: -- 10 points | | | Score |
|--|--|--|--------------|
| Is the Organizational Profile information complete? | The Profile does not include all of the required information. 0 point | The Profile does include all of the required information. 1-2- points | |
| Does the Organizational Profile indicate that the organization/project is community-based? | There are some indications that the organization/project is community-based. 0-2 points | There are strong indications that the organization/project is community-based. 3-4 points | |
| Does the Organizational Profile information indicate that the organization/project is aligned with the purpose of the Initiative (i.e. is primarily focused on engagement and leadership of families with children 0-8)? | There are some indications that the organization/project is aligned with the Initiative's purpose. 0-2 points | There are strong indications that the organization/project is aligned with the Initiative's purpose. 3-4 points | |
| Total score for Organization Profile | | | |

| Narrative -- 40 points | | | | Score |
|---|---|--|---|--------------|
| How clearly does the organization/project describe its work with parents of young children (ages 0-8) to advance equity through family engagement, leadership development, and/or organizing? | Does not clearly describe family engagement work, target population, or connection to advancing equity. 0 points | Identifies the target population and describes core strategies, but does not clearly describe how the strategies connect to advancing equity. 1-5 points | Clearly describes target population, specific core strategies (family engagement, leadership development, and/or organizing), and connection to advancing equity. 6-10 points | |

| Narrative -- 40 points | | | | Score |
|--|---|---|--|-------|
| How clearly does the organization/project describe its understanding of the historical and current systemic barriers to opportunity and commitment to addressing these barriers? | Does not clearly describe an approach to equity. 0 points | Describes organizational values related to equity, but does not describe specific commitment and /or steps taken to address barriers. 1-5 points | Clearly describes steps taken to address barriers to opportunity, using relevant examples. 6-10 points | |
| How clearly does the organization/project demonstrate its commitment to working with families to identify issues and priorities and to co-create solutions? | Commitment to working collaboratively with families is unclear. 0 points | Describes values related to collaborating with families, but lacks clear examples. 1-5 points | Uses recent examples to clearly describe working with families to identify issues and priorities and co-create solutions. 6-10 points | |
| How clearly does the organization/project articulate a vision for building parent power to effect systemic change over the next three years? | Vision and goals unclear and/or do not address building parents' power to effect systemic change. 0 points | Vision and goals articulated, but are somewhat vague. 1-5 points | Clearly describes vision and goals over the next three years for building parent power to effect systemic change. 6-10 points | |
| Total score for Narrative: | | | | |



VIII. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION

Applications and required documentation must be submitted via the web-based portal link [here](#). Applications are due March 2, 2021, at 5pm Pacific Time.

If you have questions that are not answered in the guidelines, please send them to FamiliesLeadCA@EngageRD.com.

There will be a webinar and Q&A opportunity on February 16, 2021, at 11:00 am. Participation is not required. To register, please [click here](#). FAQs will be posted following the webinar.

As part of the application process, finalists will be asked to participate in a brief interview. Please be prepared for the organization/project leadership team to be available for an interview the week of April 19th, 2021. If your application is selected for an interview, the Executive Director/CEO contact included in the application will be contacted the week of April 12th, 2021.

For the latest updates, please check the [Families Lead California web page](#) at <https://www.hsfoundation.org/programs/education/families-lead-california/>.