



Liberty Fund Call for Letters of Inquiry

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

In 1883, the poet Emma Lazarus penned this sonnet to raise funds to erect the Statue of Liberty, which became an icon for a nation offering safe harbor for freedom-seeking immigrants. Consistent with this verse, New York is a city open to people of all backgrounds no matter their race or ethnicity, creed or gender, the number of pennies in their pockets, or whom they love.

Since 1924, The New York Community Trust (The Trust) has funded the nonprofits that make our city a vital and secure place for all New Yorkers. Our grants, along with those of our colleague foundations, have supported efforts to win marriage equality for gay and lesbian New Yorkers, protect the reproductive rights of women, fight hate crimes, provide legal help for the City's immigrants, combat Islamophobia, and reform the juvenile justice system. Nationally, our grants have helped promote environmental justice while addressing climate change, ensuring environmental health, and protecting habitat. In the coming days, months, and years, The Trust will continue to make grants to nonprofits working in New York City consistent with the priorities and procedures described on our website at www.nycommunitytrust.org.

But in the wake of a bitter and divisive election, many New Yorkers find themselves living in greater fear of hate crimes, deportation, discrimination, arrest, and poverty. The New York Community Trust has joined with the New York Foundation to preserve critical constitutional and social protections for the residents of our City in this moment of change. Together, we have created the Liberty Fund to protect and improve the City's support for *all* those who seek acceptance of their values, a sense of possibility and hope, and economic opportunity. Because change is sometimes sudden and unpredictable, the fund will emphasize rapid response efforts that are time sensitive. The Trust's ongoing grants program is broad enough to continue to support non-time-sensitive issues.

Request for Letters of Inquiry (LOIs)

The Fund is starting a first round of review and grantmaking and requests descriptions of time-sensitive projects designed to preserve hard-fought protections for New Yorkers in the weeks and months ahead, that fall into the following categories:

- Preventing and addressing discrimination, including hate crimes, by race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Protecting immigrant rights;
- Boosting health insurance enrollment to establish continued coverage;

- Providing mental health and emotional support to affected individuals and communities; and
- Meeting other unexpected and time-sensitive needs.

Grants will be made in February 2017 for activities through the end of 2017. Grants are expected to range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. (The latter amount is for multi-agency coalitions.) The Project activities may include legal services (including impact litigation), policy monitoring, advocacy and organizing, lobbying, investigative journalism, and compelling storytelling (including the arts) to illustrate the promise and impact of communities that are just and open to all. Priority will be given to projects that involve or build coalitions and address issues that call for immediate action. We encourage small community organizations that are engaged in any of these activities to apply. Letters of inquiry may not exceed three pages, single spaced, and should include a concise description of:

- 1) the organization(s) involved, including the lead organization's EIN number;
- 2) the problem to be addressed and why it requires an urgent response, including which of the five categories above is relevant;
- 3) goal(s) of the project;
- 4) activities that would be undertaken during the first nine months of 2017 to achieve those goals; and
- 5) a brief project budget and amount requested.

Letters of inquiry can be submitted by uploading them [here](#) beginning on December 20, 2016 through January 13, 2017. Requests will be reviewed on a rolling basis and applicants will be notified by email whether the proposed project is of interest to the fund. If so, there will be limited additional information that will be required.

The LOI Portal will open again in early March for a second round of time-sensitive grants, as the federal government begins acting on plans to repeal and/or replace the Affordable Care Act, amend other major safety net programs, e.g., Medicaid and SNAP (food stamps), or environmental laws and regulations.