

Alexandria Resilience Fund 2023 Capacity Building Frequently Asked Questions

About the Grants

ACT launched the Alexandria Resilience Fund in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past three years, the Fund has awarded nearly \$1.3M in grants to Alexandria nonprofits. With the remaining funds, we will be offering capacity building grants that support a just and equitable Alexandria and strengthen organizational resilience. To learn more about the Fund's commitment to racial equity, visit: <https://www.actforalexandria.org/initiatives/t/alexandria-resilience-fund/>

Capacity building grant priorities include:

- Community Engagement
- Fund Development Planning
- Racial Equity
- Strategic Planning

Requests up to \$20,000 will be accepted and we anticipate making 6-7 awards. Applications open on September 26 and close on October 17.

Grant Application FAQs

What is a capacity building grant?

- A capacity building grant is designed to help a nonprofit develop competencies, strategies, systems, and structures to improve organizational effectiveness.
- The aim of a capacity building grant is to strengthen an organization to grow its impact and accomplish its mission and goals.
- These grants are meant to aid development at a structural level, they are not intended to cover general operating expenses nor provide on-going programmatic support.
- When capacity building is successful, it strengthens a nonprofit's ability to deliver on its mission over time, thereby enhancing the nonprofit's ability to have a positive impact on lives and communities.

What are the capacity building priorities for the Alexandria Resilience Fund?

- ACT will fund projects focused on community engagement, fund development planning, racial equity and strategic planning. Your organization must select ONE priority and can only submit ONE application for funding.

What is trust-based philanthropy?

- The trust-based philanthropy movement is reimagining the role funders can have in building a more just and equitable society. The goal is to create mutual accountability between funders and nonprofits. We want to change the power dynamics and structural barriers that can often get in the way of nonprofits achieving their intended impact.

- We believe our philanthropy will be more strategic, rewarding and impactful when we approach our relationships with nonprofit partners from a place of trust and collaboration rather than compliance and control.
- The trust-based framework encompasses [6 practices](#). While we are not in a place to practice all of them right now, our proposed grant process aims to simplify and streamline paperwork by taking a more relational approach which will ultimately save time for the nonprofit and help us gain a deeper understanding of the work through deeper and more interactive relationships with nonprofits.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Organizations must have a 501c3 or be fiscally sponsored by a 501c3
- Organizations must serve Alexandria
- If the organization serves the broader region or isn't solely focused on Alexandria, the capacity building request must demonstrate how the grant will strengthen operations and programs and services for Alexandrians

What are you seeking in a successful applicant?

- Clearly articulates how the organization has contributed to the substantive improvement in well-being for individuals and/or families in Alexandria during the pandemic and through pandemic recovery
- Demonstrates trusted relationships with individuals and/or families in Alexandria who have been part of historically marginalized communities
- Actively working to address racial equity issues and dismantling systemic racism both externally and internally within the organization

Below is a checklist to help organizations determine if they should apply:

My organization...

- Serves the geographic area of Alexandria – City of and Fairfax County Alexandria
- Serves communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic
- Actively addresses racial equity externally and internally within the organization
- Can demonstrate deep, trusted relationships with historically marginalized communities
- Will use funding solely for strategic planning, fund development planning, community engagement, or a racial equity capacity building project
- Is a 501c3 or fiscally sponsored by a 501c3 organization
- Will expend grant funds during the period of January – December 2024
- Agrees to share the impact and learnings from the capacity building grant by February 2025 in the form of a written report, conversation, or video format as selected by the nonprofit
- Will participate in one grantee convening in 2024 and one in 2025 to encourage nonprofit learning and connection

What is the grant time frame?

- The grant period will be January – December 2024. Grant LOIs are available beginning September 26 and the deadline to apply is October 17.

What is the grant timeline?

- LOI application opens/information session – September 26
- Office Hours – September 29 – 10-11am, October 4 – 4-5pm and October 12 – 11-noon
- LOI Application deadline – October 17 at 11:59pm – late applications will not be accepted
- Grant Review Committee meets – Mid-November
- Notification of next round advancement – November 17
- Applicant conversations – December 6 – 12
- Grant award notifications – December 18

How do I apply?

- Visit Foundant, ACT’s grant management system: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=actforalexandria>. Organizations must create an account to apply for a grant. The application will be live on September 26.
- Organizations can submit their LOI in their preferred language and it will be translated by ACT for the review process.

How much funding is available, how much can I apply for and how many grants do you anticipate awarding?

- ACT will invest \$125,000 in capacity building grants. Organizations can request up to \$20,000. We anticipate 6-7 awardees. Please note this will be a very competitive grant process.

How often does ACT offer capacity building grants?

- ACT will be offering capacity building grants in 2023 through the Alexandria Resilience Fund, pause capacity building grantmaking in 2024 and resume in 2025.

What is racial equity*?

- Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicts one’s life outcomes. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. Racial equity is both a process and an outcome. As a process, we apply a racial equity lens when those most directly impacted by structural racism are meaningfully involved in creating, implementing, and evaluating the policies and practices that affect their lives. As an outcome, racial equity is when we achieve equal outcomes across all Alexandria racial groups.

What is systemic racism*?

- This is an interlocking and reciprocal relationship between the individual, institutional and structural levels which function as a system of racism. These various levels of racism operate together in a lockstep model and function together as a whole system. These levels are:
 - Individual (within interactions between people)
 - Institutional (within institutions and systems of power)
 - Structural or societal (among institutions and across society)

Where can I find additional resources on racial equity?

- City of Alexandria Race & Social Equity Office - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Equity>
- Meyer Foundation Racial Equity Toolkit - <https://meyerfoundation.org/racial-equity-toolkit/>
- *Additional glossary of terms – <https://www.alexandriava.gov/equity/race-and-social-equity-definitions> and <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

What if I have additional questions?

- Please email grants@actforalexandria.org or call 703-739-7778 to make an appointment or you can reach us during our designated office hours: September 29 between 1-2pm, October 4 between 4-5pm and October 12 between 11am – noon by calling 703-739-7778.

Resilience Workshop FAQs

What professional development workshops are being offered and by whom?

- The three workshops will be offered by Heather Jelks of Nautilus Coaching & Consulting. Heather has over 20 years of experience in organization and leadership development, with a background in leadership coaching, facilitation, conflict resolution, and training design and delivery. Heather introduces her clients to leadership concepts and best practices that deepen resilience, wisdom, and well-being. She is an experienced teacher for the Search Inside Yourself leadership program, a science-based mindfulness curriculum that originated at Google and is designed to cultivate emotional intelligence. Her clients include both emerging and experienced leaders and their teams in business, education, health care, federal government, and the nonprofit sector.
- **Effective Teaming, November 16 – 9am – 1pm.** To learn more and to register: <https://effectiveteaming2024.eventbrite.com>
- **Adaptive Resilience, January 24, 31 and February 7 – 10am – noon.** To learn more and to register: <https://adaptiveresilience2024.eventbrite.com>
- **Search Inside Yourself – Mid-May,** details to be announced in early 2024