



BLACK EMPOWERMENT WORKS

2022 | REVIEWER INFORMATION



United Way
of Greater Cincinnati

A LETTER FROM THE CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE



Dear friends,

With the support of United Way, we were charged with the task of creating grants that invest in promising community-based, Black-led ideas that aligned with United Way's focus on poverty.

We value Black people and our own self-efficacy to combat poverty in our own communities.

Collectively we are educators, artists, veterans, innovators, community organizers, analysts, lovers, parents and friends. We are infinite in our roles and titles. We are rich in both our histories and melanin, sweet with our passion, and powerful in our present to transcend our conditions. We are the champions of ancestors who grew roses in concrete. We as champions, and more importantly as Black people, are nothing short of excellence...we are melan-ificent!

When black people come together, we are ready, hopeful, energized and most importantly powerful beyond measure. It is with great pride that we, the Champions, invite you to participate in the Black Empowerment Works journey with us!

Signed,

Champions of Change, Class 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LETTER FROM THE CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE.....	2
WHAT IS BLACK EMPOWERMENT WORKS?	4
WHY DOES BLACK EMPOWERMENT WORKS EXIST?	4
WHAT ARE WE LOOKING TO FUND?	4
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A REVIEWER?.....	5
WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A GOOD REVIEWER?	5
WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A REVIEWER?	6
RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS.....	7
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SERVING AS A REVIEWER?.....	7
HOW DO YOU APPLY TO BE A REVIEWER?	7
HAVE QUESTIONS? CONNECT WITH US!.....	7
APPLICATION QUESTIONS.....	8

WHAT IS BLACK EMPOWERMENT WORKS?

Black Empowerment Works promotes Black self-determination, social mobility and economic prosperity by resourcing and funding grassroots/community-based, Black-led ideas, programs and projects. It is an equity-focused grant program addressing poverty and racial disparities in Greater Cincinnati. In addition to providing access to funding, Black Empowerment Works seeks to build networks of Black social changemakers, provide access to capacity building support, and provide platforms for leaders to share their expertise.

Born out of the findings of the Black-led Social Change Cincinnati report and fully designed by a group of community leaders (2019-2020 Champions of Change), Black Empowerment Works is one of many ways United Way is acting upon the need for increased intentionality to provide more equitable outcomes.

WHY DOES BLACK EMPOWERMENT WORKS EXIST?

Simply put, too many Black families and individuals in our region are struggling and too few Black-led ideas (and by extension, Black leaders) receive funding and resources to address it.

We believe in creating a community where everyone has an opportunity to thrive. Poverty undermines that opportunity for more than 600,000 people in our region. While poverty is pervasive, Black people experience poverty at higher rates than other racial groups. At the same time, we have seen an underinvestment in solutions and ideas that are led by Black people and rooted in communities. We are committed to doing our part to change that.

While we know that solely investing in more community-based, Black-led ideas will not eradicate poverty – especially at the expense of addressing systems that perpetuate inequity – we believe that by making these investments, we can:

- Bring a greater diversity of solutions and thought leadership into our organization's work.
- Gain a better understanding of the unique strengths, opportunities and challenges within communities.
- Collaborate on strategies that reduce disparities in outcomes.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING TO FUND?

Each year, we seek to fund a diverse portfolio of work, representing different focus areas, organizational structures and communities.

This grant opportunity is open to nonprofit organizations, for-profits/social enterprises, community coalitions and groups, and individuals who meet the eligibility requirements. Applicants may submit only one application per year, with request amounts ranging from \$2,500 to \$25,000.

Applications must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- **Black leadership and labor**, defined in this program as a majority of decision-makers (60% of leadership team and 50% of Board, if applicable) identify as Black. The idea/program seeking funding intentionally contributes to advancing the well-being of Black folks.

- **Grassroots/Community-based**, defined as being rooted in or owned by the community, building change from the ground up. The work is developed or informed by those most connected to or affected by the issue being addressed.
- **Community benefit**, defined as working to address an identified community need, opportunity or challenge. The work contributes to the vitality of the community rather than benefiting any private individual, group or business.
- **Actionable**, defined as the work being far enough along in development and/or execution that if provided with funding through this cycle, it would be able to produce measurable results by September 2023.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A REVIEWER?

In the Black Empowerment Works program, community members make the investment decisions. Reviewers are part of a diverse team who will work together to determine what work receives funding this year.

Reviewers will work in small teams of three to five, reading a subset (approximately 10) of the applications submitted. Through written application reviews and conversations with grant applicants, they will work to identify applicants in their pool they would like to fund. Final funding decisions will be made following the assessment of information collected from all review teams.

Beyond believing in the mission of Black Empowerment Works, reviewers are expected to:

- Make the best decisions with the information they have, addressing bias as it shows up.
- Be knowledgeable of the grant criteria.
- Maintain the highest level of confidentiality regarding applicant information, disclosing any conflicts of interest.

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A GOOD REVIEWER?

We seek to bring together a diverse and engaged reviewer panel with representation across age, race/ethnicity, gender, geography, experience and perspective. No prior experience is required! All reviewers will receive training to prepare for the opportunity.

In general, we are looking for people who are:

- Active listeners, empathetic and relatable.
- Active in their communities (however you define them, and preferably in support of Black people).
- Passionate about and/or connected to the mission of advancing the well-being of Black people.
- Able to commit to fully participating in the process, including completing trainings, application reviews and meetings. Program window: June 20-Aug. 24.

We will select 30 to 40 community reviewers, depending on the volume of applications. You do not have to identify as Black to apply to be a reviewer, though we will seek our selected reviewer panel to be majority Black. Depending on the volume of people who apply to be reviewers, we may not be able to accept everyone. Reviewers will be notified of selection no later than June 15.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A REVIEWER?

Being a reviewer includes a commitment of time and resources. All reviewers will participate in training, written application reviews, discussions with fellow reviewers, and grant applicant/reviewer conversations.

2022 BLACK EMPOWERMENT WORKS REVIEWER SCHEDULE + TIME COMMITMENT		
DESCRIPTION	ACTIVE DATES	TOTAL ESTIMATED HOURS
<p>Self-Paced Training: A series of training modules to prepare reviewers for the experience, including topics such as addressing bias, assessing applications, and radical candor.</p>	June 20 – July 6	5 hours
<p>Live Reviewer Training: During this training, you will get to meet with your small review team and learn more details about the reviewer experience.</p>	July 11, 12 – 2 p.m. or July 12, 6 – 8 p.m.	2 hours
<p>Grant Application Review: Independent review and evaluation of written grant applications. Self-paced.</p>	July 13 – 26	10 hours
<p>Small Team Meeting #1: First meeting with your small review team to discuss applications reviewed and identify questions for conversations with grant applicants.</p>	<p>One of the following dates/times: July 27, 12 – 1:30 p.m. July 27, 5:30 – 7 p.m. July 28, 12 – 1:30 p.m. July 28, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.</p>	1.5 hours
<p>Grant Applicant Conversations: Video calls with grant applicants to learn more about their work, answer questions from the application review.</p>	August 1- 12	7 hours
<p>Small Team Meeting #2: Final meeting with your small review team to determine funding recommendations.</p>	<p>One of the following dates/times: August 15, 12 – 1:30 p.m. August 15, 5:30 – 7 p.m. August 16, 12 – 1:30 p.m. August 16, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.</p>	1.5 hours
<p>Large Group Final Funding Recommendations Meeting: All reviewers come together to make final funding decisions based on scenarios presented. Celebrate a job well-done!</p>	August 22, time TBD	1 hour
TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME COMMITMENT:		28 HOURS

Optional Activity:

Participation in a BEW Reviewer Meet & Greet on June 24 at 6 p.m.



United Way
of Greater Cincinnati

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Beyond time, the primary resource requirements are around technology. The written application reviews, meetings and conversations will all take place virtually. We ask that reviewers have:

- Access to a computer (with a camera, preferred)
- Strong internet connection
- Ability to participate in virtual meetings.

If you need any support with meeting these requirements, there is space to indicate such in the application. Doing so does not disqualify you from serving as a reviewer.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SERVING AS A REVIEWER?

We believe taking part in this process has several benefits, namely:

- Learning about Black-led, grassroots work happening in Greater Cincinnati.
- Connecting with other community members passionate about resourcing and funding Black work.
- Accessing professional development resources, including the VIA Character Strengths assessment and training on radical candor (provided by Mayerson Academy).
- Ongoing opportunities to engage in Black Empowerment Works.

All reviewers will receive a certificate of completion for their service.

HOW DO YOU APPLY TO BE A REVIEWER?

Complete an application by visiting [this site](#). Deadline to apply is June 8 at 11:59 p.m.

Note: The application system does not allow you to save as you go. It may take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes to complete the application. We recommend looking at the APPLICATION QUESTIONS in advance and preparing your responses.

Should you run into any issues while applying, contact us at black-led@uwgc.org or at 513-762-7233.

HAVE QUESTIONS? CONNECT WITH US!

There are several ways to connect with us to get more information:

- **Attend one of our information sessions:** Find registration and/or a recording on our website [here](#).
- **Send us an email** at black-led@uwgc.org
- **Give us a call** at 513-762-7233. Leave a voicemail if we don't answer, and we'll get back to you within 24 hours.
- **Schedule a Question Session** for dedicated 1:1 time to talk through any questions you may have. Link to schedule [here](#).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

NOTE: PAPER APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. PLEASE VISIT [THIS LINK](#) TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION.

1. First and last name
2. Your Pronouns
 - a. She, Her, Hers
 - b. He, Him, His
 - c. They, Them Theirs
 - d. Ze, Hir, Hirs
 - e. Ze, Zir, Zirs
 - f. Prefer to Self-Describe
3. What's your home ZIP code? We want to track geographic diversity.
4. Best phone number to reach you?
5. Best email address?
6. Tell us about you: Why do you want to be a Black Empowerment Works reviewer? What do you believe you would bring to the process (e.g., experiences, skills) and what do you hope to get out of the process?
7. What does "community" mean to you? Which communities (geographic, group or otherwise) do you consider yourself a part of, and how do you give back/contribute your gifts and talents to support that community or communities?
8. Black Empowerment Works is a program of our Black-led Social Change initiative, which aims to build power and positive outcomes within the Black community by investing in Black leaders. When you think about the mission of building power and positive outcomes within the Black community, what would you like to see more of? What's currently working?
9. To you, what are two of the greatest issues facing our Greater Cincinnati community that have impacted you, either directly or indirectly? What do you think it would take to solve those challenges?
10. Do you have **expertise/experience** in any of the following areas? Check all that apply.
 - a. Family Engagement
 - b. Quality Early Child Care and Education
 - c. Academic and Social-Emotional Skill Building
 - d. Career Preparation/Post-Secondary Education and Training
 - e. Basic Needs and Housing
 - f. Financial Empowerment and Asset Building
 - g. Employment and Career Pathways
 - h. Building Healthy Behaviors: Physical and/or Mental Health, Addressing Trauma
 - i. System Change, Mobilizing and Movement Building
 - j. Community and Social Connectedness
 - k. Always Confidence Fund focus areas: tackling society barriers on period stigma and gender inequality; supporting confidence of puberty-aged people with periods; period product and education access.
 - l. None of the above
11. Do you have **passion/interest** in any of the following areas? Check all that apply.
 - a. Family Engagement
 - b. Quality Early Child Care and Education

- c. Academic and Social-Emotional Skill Building
- d. Career Preparation/Post-Secondary Education and Training
- e. Basic Needs and Housing
- f. Financial Empowerment and Asset Building
- g. Employment and Career Pathways
- h. Building Healthy Behaviors: Physical and/or Mental Health, Addressing Trauma
- i. System Change, Mobilizing and Movement Building
- j. Community and Social Connectedness
- k. Always Confidence Fund focus areas: tackling society barriers on period stigma and gender inequality; supporting confidence of puberty-aged people with periods; period product and education access.
- l. None of the above

12. All reviewers will be required to take part in self-guided training during the weeks of June 20-July 6. This training will be done virtually and takes an estimated five (5) hours to complete. Will you be able to complete this training?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe (When selecting "Maybe" or "No", you'll receive a follow up question to describe)

13. All reviewers will be required to take part in a live training. Which of the following training dates/times works for you? Select all that apply.

- a. July 11, Noon-2 p.m.
- b. July 11, 6-8 p.m.
- c. July 12, Noon-2 p.m.
- d. July 12, 6-8 p.m.
- e. None of the above.

14. One part of the decision-making process is reviewing written applications. The applications will be accessed and reviewed online through a designated platform. Do you have access to a computer and internet to review applications?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe (When selecting "Maybe" or "No", you'll receive a follow up question to describe)

15. Do you feel comfortable using technology and/or are you open to learning?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe (When selecting "Maybe" or "No", you'll receive a follow up question to describe)

16. Reviewers can expect to spend approximately 10 hours between July 13-26 reading and assessing written grant applications, plus an additional five hours conducting Grant Applicant/Reviewer conversation between Aug. 1-12, which would occur virtually. Do you have any concerns about your ability/availability to meet these requirements as a reviewer?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- c. Maybe (When selecting "Yes" or "Maybe", you'll receive a follow up question to describe)
17. Reviewers can expect to meet with their small review team on July 27 or 28 for an initial meeting, and Aug. 15 or 16 for a final recommendation meeting. Which of the following options works best for you for the **initial small team meeting**? Check all that apply.
- July 27, Noon-1:30 p.m.
 - July 27, 5:30-7 p.m.
 - July 28, Noon-1:30 p.m.
 - July 28, 5:30-7 p.m.
 - None of the above
18. Reviewers can expect to meet with their small review team on July 27 or 28 for an initial meeting, and Aug. 15 or 16 for a final recommendation meeting. Which of the following options works best for you for the **final team meeting**? Check all that apply
- Aug. 15, Noon-1:30 p.m.
 - Aug. 15, 5:30-7 p.m.
 - Aug. 16, Noon-1:30 p.m.
 - Aug. 16, 5:30-7 p.m.
 - None of the above
19. Will you need any support in meeting the reviewer commitments?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe (When selecting "Yes" or "Maybe", you'll receive a follow up question to describe).
20. Gender identity/expression
- Female
 - Male
 - Non-binary/Third Gender
 - Prefer to self-describe (please describe)
 - Prefer not to say
21. Age
- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| a. Under 18 | e. 41-55 |
| b. 18-24 | f. 56-70 |
| c. 25-30 | g. 71+ |
| d. 31-40 | |
22. Race/Ethnicity. Select All that apply
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| a. African American or Black | f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander |
| b. American Indian or Alaskan Native | g. Caucasian or White |
| c. Arab or Middle Eastern | h. Two or more races |
| d. Asian | i. Prefer to self-describe |
| e. Hispanic or Latino | j. Prefer not to say |
23. Do you have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act?
- Yes
 - No

- c. Prefer not to say
24. Do you identify as a military veteran or service member?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to say
25. What is your highest level of education completed?
- a. Some high school, no diploma
 - b. High school diploma or equivalent
 - c. Some college
 - d. College degree
 - e. Advanced Degree
 - f. I prefer not to say
 - g. Other
26. What's your level of experience with grants/grant processes? Select all that apply.
- a. I have applied for grants before
 - b. I have reviewed grant applications before
 - c. I have helped to create grant processes
 - d. I have no prior grant experience
 - e. I prefer not to say
27. Which option best describes you?
- a. I am a more introverted person who processes information internally.
 - b. I am a more extroverted person who processes information externally.