



**Baltimore City Children and Youth Fund  
Report to Mayor and City Council  
(Report for July 1 – August 31, 2018)  
(Submitted October 9, 2018)**

**Request for Proposals/Community Capacity-Building Sessions**

The Baltimore Children and Youth Fund (BCYF) held two community capacity-building sessions, July 2 and July 7, prior to the close of the Request for Proposals (RFP). More than 200 people attended the July 2 session at Baltimore City Community College. About 100 individuals attended the final session on July 2 at Reginald Lewis High School.

The deadline for applications was July 9. All applications were required to be submitted online. Paper copies were not accepted and the grant application tool immediately closed promptly at 11:59pm. Late submissions were not accepted.

The BCYF planning team scanned all 487 applications for technical eligibility. The following errors disqualified an application:

1. Incomplete application – required fields were left blank
2. For-profit organizations
3. Did not use the required templates (Submissions with templates that appeared similar to the required templates were accepted)

At the completion of the screening process, there were 427 applications eligible for review by the Proposal Review Panel. The Fund took great care to screen in as many applications as possible and allow the Proposal Review Panel to determine the feasibility of each proposal. Proposals were grouped by level, as delineated in the RFP:

- Level 1: \$20,000 or less (81 proposals submitted)
- Level 2: \$21,000 - \$250,000 (339 proposals submitted)
- Level 3: \$251,000 - \$500,000 (67 proposals submitted)

**Proposal Review Panel**

The Proposal Review Panel was onboarded in late June through early July. The panel reconvened on July 12 to receive their assignments and begin the review process. The 24-member panel was divided first by funding level, then into teams of three. Each team read, evaluated and scored the same proposals. The review process was designed to reduce the impact

of outliers – one very generous panelist or one tough evaluator – in the scoring process. Panelists declared potential conflicts of interest prior to scoring proposals and were reassigned applications as necessary.

Scores were based on the rubric that was released with the Request for Proposals. Panelists were able to leave feedback in each section and provide overall feedback on the application in general. At the conclusion of scoring, panelist was asked to determine whether the organization should be fully funded for the requested amount, not funded at all, or partially funded and at what amount.

Panelists read, evaluated and scored proposals at home, as well as at two in person reading days. The BCYF team offered office hours during that time frame and contacted panelists to ask about their progress and answer questions. The team also tracked the panelists' progress through the grant submission tool called Submittable.

### **Grant Finalist Recommendations**

At the completion of the scoring phase, the BCYF planning team ranked the proposals according to scores, by each funding level. Due to the number of proposals submitted, the panel did not discuss every eligible proposal. The top 15-25 scored proposals in each level were discussed and the panel collectively determined which proposals they would recommend funding. However, each cohort was given an opportunity to recommend a proposal that did not score in the top tier. Each of these specific recommendations was also discussed. Panelists were asked to share strengths of the idea or program, challenges, the population served and why they recommended the proposal for funding. The panel also recommended specific technical assistance for some grantees.

After discussion, the panelists in each funding level determined the proposals they recommended for funding, and alternates. The BCYF planning team determined the number of the organizations that could be funded based on the dollars available, resources and bandwidth to manage the portfolio of grantees over the next year, and in keeping with the values and principles of the Fund. The planning team determined that the majority of grantees should come from Level 1 – grassroots organizations, followed by Level 2 due to the number of applications that fell into this funding category.

The selection process was documented through notes, including conversations around the funding of some well-established organizations in Level 2, and the panel's intentional decisions to fund some of these organizations because they served a population(s) that had unmet needs.

The entire panel reconvened on July 31 to review the portfolio as a whole, looking at the geographic distribution, populations served, types of programs (after-school programs, music enrichment, academic support, etc.) and mix of organizations recommended for funding. The panel approved moving 65 finalists to ABC for funding, and a list of alternates should the Fund be able to support a larger portfolio of grantees or a recommended grantee not meet the financial review.

The total grant amounts from the panelists' recommendations fell short of the \$9.6M target in direct grant funding that Associated Black Charities established. The BCYF planning team added

the alternates recommended by the panelists – including all of the alternates from Level 1 and many from Level 2– to achieve the desired funding level. The Fund set aside \$800,000 in technical assistance for grantees, non-awardees and prospective Year 2 applicants in keeping with the values

of the BCYF Task Force. An additional \$400,000 was set aside to help grantees achieve compliance, primarily providing background checks and insurance.

Associated Black Charities then conducted a financial review of each of the grantees. The Financial Reviewers were chosen because they have extensive financial acumen as both corporate and nonprofit financial professionals. Two Certified Public Accountants were designated to oversee and assist the process. Reviewers rated applicant's proposal based on three primary questions (1) Described current funding appropriately. (2) Described sustainability of programming. (3) The organization provided evidence of good financial standing to receive a grant award.

### **Grantee Finalists and Non-awardee Communication**

Grantee finalists were notified of their status by email on August 21 and advised not to disclose their status until they had signed their contract. Notifications were sent to the contact person and email provided in the applications.

The BCYF planning team held a conference call for the finalists on August 22 and repeated the call on August 23 to discuss next steps. The call was recorded and sent via email to all grantee finalists. Organizations were advised they would receive a checklist of tasks they would need to complete to be eligible for a contract.

All non-awardees were notified on August 24. The Fund learned in subsequent conversations that some applicants did not receive their notification email. We identified the following issues:

1. The point of contact for the organization was on vacation and the email was/has been in sitting in an inbox since notifications were released. (The person inquiring may not have been the submitter or listed as the point of contact on the grant).
2. Notifications were sent all at once and some organizations had a firewall that blocked the email completely - it never went to spam. The sender is not informed the email has been blocked and the receiver is unaware of the message.
3. A few email addresses may have been incorrect. One grantee transposed two letters in the email address on the application and the Fund had to find an alternate means of communicating with the organization. Though the Fund identified the problem in that instance, the Fund does not have the bandwidth to check the accuracy of email addresses for all non-awardees.

The Fund advised that if applicants had not received a response to their proposals, to please contact us at [info@bcyfund.org](mailto:info@bcyfund.org) and the Fund would resend the initial time/date-stamped email. The non-awardee letter explains they will have an opportunity to receive feedback from the planning team on their application. More information about this opportunity will be distributed in late September.

### **Next Steps for Grantee Finalists**

The planning team sent grantee finalists a personalized checklist with compliance items required for contracting in late August/early September. All finalists were invited to set up a call with a

member of the BCYF planning team to discuss performance metrics for their program. The metrics will form the basis of each organizations' reporting and evaluation over the next year.

Level 1 organizations were also advised they would be required to attend an in-person, one-on-one session with a member of the BCYF planning team. These meetings were designed to help grassroots organizations, many of whom have never received a grant, complete the action items on their checklist and have a point of contact for questions or to request for assistance. The meetings also allowed the Fund to begin building a relationship with organizations that historically have not had access to traditional grantmaking institutions.

The BCYF planning team will continue moving organizations through the contracting phase in September, with the grant period beginning October 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2019.

As the Fund moves into Phase 2, managing the grantees, the staffing configuration of the BCYF will change. Frontline Solutions' contract expired August 31, 2018. UPD's contract will expire September 30, 2018. Associated Black Charities will be responsible for managing the work through the end of the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Baltimore.

### **Communications Round-Up**

The Fund seeks to be transparent about the status of work, process and implementation and key milestones. Updates are posted to the BCYF website, social media sites and emailed to the more than 4,000 registered subscribers. A compilation of media coverage to date is below:

#### **Media Clips from BCYF**

##### **After 3 years, grants start flowing from Baltimore Youth Fund to nonprofit groups**

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-youth-fund-grants-20180904-story.html>

September 5, 2018

##### **\$10.8 Million Awarded to Baltimore 2018 Youth Fund**

<https://www.afro.com/10-8mm-awarded-to-baltimore-2018-youth-fund/>

September 2, 2018

##### **Baltimore Funding Model Challenges Nonprofit Industrial Complex Practices**

<https://www.colorlines.com/articles/baltimore-funding-model-challenges-nonprofit-industrial-complex-practices>

August 30, 2018

##### **Youth Fund Grant Winners Close to Being Named**

<https://www.afro.com/youth-fund-grant-winners-close-to-being-named/>

August 10, 2018

##### **Baltimore Children and Youth Fund: Community-based grantmaking comes to Baltimore**

<http://pndblog.typepad.com/pndblog/2018/08/community-based-grantmaking-comes-to-baltimore.html>

August 6, 2018

**Who gets a piece of Baltimore's \$12 million youth fund? Grant reviewers sort through \$75 million in requests**

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-youth-fund-applicants-20180731-story.html>

August 6, 2018

**Grant Reviewers to Decide Who Gets Part of the \$12 million Youth Fund**

<http://www.wbaltv.com/article/grant-reviewers-to-decide-who-gets-part-of-dollar12m-children-and-youth-fund/22552704>

July 25, 2018

**Baltimore Community Groups Learn How to Apply for Youth Fund**

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-associated-black-charities-grants-20180707-story.html>

July 7, 2018

**Proposal Review Panel Chosen for \$12 million Baltimore Children and Youth Fund**

<https://thedailyrecord.com/2018/07/02/proposal-review-panel-chosen-for-12m-baltimore-children-and-youth-fund/>

July 2, 2018

**Associated Black Charities to Offer Grant Proposal Help**

<https://thedailyrecord.com/2018/06/25/associated-black-charities-to-offer-grant-proposal-help/>

June 25, 2018

**Baltimore seeks applications for \$12 million youth fund**

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-youth-fund-rfp-20180609-story.html>

June 9, 2018

**Children and Youth Fund – first of two grant informational Q&A sessions scheduled for Monday**

<http://www.bmorenews.com/home/2018/06/08/children-and-youth-fund-first-of-two-grant-informational-qa-sessions-scheduled-for-monday/>

June 8, 2018

**Children and Youth Fund Kicks Off Community Design Sessions**

<http://baltimorecitycouncil.com/content/children-youth-fund-kicks-community-design-process>

June 8, 2018

**City opens RFP for Baltimore Children and Youth Fund**

<https://thedailyrecord.com/2018/06/06/city-opens-rfp-for-baltimore-children-and-youth-fund/>

June 7, 2018