



The Greater Clark Foundation

AMBITION FOR A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Funding Opportunity: Building Trust and Belonging

About the Greater Clark Foundation

The Greater Clark Foundation’s mission is to make the Clark County, Kentucky, region one of the best places in the country to live, work and play. We envision a community that is unrelenting in its pursuit of excellence, and strong in all assets that define a sense of place – civic engagement, economic development, education, health, well-being, and quality of life. Our foundation plays the important role of catalyst, champion, and promoter to ensure that ours is a vital and resilient community, where each of us belongs.

GCF is a grantmaking foundation that makes targeted and diverse investments in our community. These grants range in size. Smaller grants, such as those of the *What’s Your Ambition?!* program, encourage individuals to make their dreams of community change a reality. We also pair larger organizational investments with these smaller grants to create a culture of “bright spots” where those within the community as well as those visiting and considering relocation can “see the possible.” This year, GCF will make grants that build, repair, and restore trust, dignity, and respect in our community.

We commit to fostering collaboration, establishing partnerships, and working across borders and with many types of organizations to rethink tomorrow and create solutions that position the Greater Clark County Region as a place of opportunity. GCF encourages and supports new approaches. We believe that initiative and courage to view things from fresh and different perspectives empower our community.

The Challenge

Civic engagement is a core pillar of GCF’s work. A functioning society requires civic engagement and determines the strength of our public institutions. Community decisions benefit from meaningful resident engagement. Civic infrastructure flourishes when it is participatory, strategic, and future-oriented. Trust is the critical ingredient that links participation and meaningful engagement, both between and among community institutions and the people they serve.

Trust in public institutions has been eroding at an accelerated pace for the past several years. A decline in trust has been part of the national narrative for some time, and GCF’s own research shows that trust is weak in our local community. There is a lack of trust between institutions and residents, as well as lack of trust among community members. This grants program will plant seeds of healing to regrow trust. Over the long-term, we seek to mend the divides between communities and institutions and to bring people together across differences, real and perceived. We will work together, with our community, to increase our sense of belonging and trust. Together, we will strengthen civic infrastructure and ensure

that all members of our community thrive. This funding opportunity is just one of many small steps our community can take to strengthen connections and relationships.

For more information on how trust, inclusion, and belonging contribute to healthy communities, please see the resource list at the end of this funding opportunity.

About the Building Trust and Belonging Grants

The Building Trust and Belonging (BTB) funding opportunity is a pilot project to engage people and organizations in the effort to foster strong community ties and build back trust in each other that may have been lost over the years, or that may never have been meaningfully cultivated. These grants will be successful if more residents are involved in ensuring people experience dignity and respect. *BTB* is an opportunity to expand the conversation and action around trust and belonging, and what it means to be a resident of the Greater Clark Region. *BTB* will catalyze community leaders and residents who are passionate about improving our quality of life and relationships.

- If you have an idea for how to build community trust and belonging, *BTB* is for you.
- Trust building is a complex process of stepping outside of ourselves, learning from others, and building empathy. Are you ready to expand your horizons to include others from the Greater Clark Region and build a common vision for our civic community?
- Will you help your neighbors feel that they are welcome and belong and strengthen trust across our community?

Grantmaking Objectives

The following objectives will guide this initiative. The *BTB* grants will:

- Create small grant initiatives and community campaigns that aim to increase a sense of belonging, restore trust in each other and organizations, and bring together individuals, religious entities, nonprofits, and local governments.
- Demonstrate the possible through transformative actions by dedicated leaders partnering with organizations to make a difference in neighborhoods and communities in the Foundation's service region.
- Provide grant funding to stimulate a community identity that is trustworthy, inclusive, and resilient.
 - GCF will provide grants up to \$7,500 for projects led by community members.
 - GCF will provide grants up to \$20,000 for projects led by qualified nonprofit, religious, or government organizations.
- Positively impact a portion of the region's residents, going beyond the constituents of the lead organization.
- Document learnings and results from the project.
- Participate in five learning sessions with other grant recipients.
- Complete individual projects/grants within the nine-month grant term; and
- Report to GCF, and, when requested, assist GCF in publicizing how grant funds were used and what the project accomplished for the public.

Application Process

Each application must answer the following questions:

- What is your idea to build trust, belonging, and inclusion in Clark, Powell, and/or Estill Counties?
- What inspired this project? Was there a moment, a relationship, or a barrier you observed that sparked your interest?
- How will the project build trust and belonging?
- How might this project lead to stronger civic engagement or inclusion in community decision making?
- How will you define success for this project? What are the indicators of success for the project, and in the broader community? And why is this important?
- What types of non-financial support would help this project achieve its goals?
- Who will you be working with on this project? For all partners, please include letters of support and a brief history behind the partnership (if applicable).
- If the project includes multiple partners, how will the funds be divided?

The application should also include:

- The requested grant amount,
- A project budget and request for fiscal sponsor if needed (*if you are not already a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, you will need a fiscal sponsor*), and
- The timeline for execution.

Criteria for Applying for a BTB Grant

All BTB grant applicants must meet the following conditions:

- The applicant must be a qualified nonprofit, religious institution, or local governmental entity in good standing with applicable state and federal authorities. Grant funds must be used for charitable purposes consistent with the goals of this funding opportunity. Grant funds may not be used for religious or political purposes.
- If you have an idea for a project but are not a qualified applicant as described above, GCF may be able to assist you with a qualified fiscal agent who will serve as the applicant/recipient of funds on your behalf. Please contact us for a pre-application consult before you apply by emailing bjones@clarkambition.org.
- Grants involving two or more groups must have a joint application with letters of support from each person or organization.
- Passionate project leader(s) is crucial for this request. The application must clearly define how the project will benefit the community, what those benefits will be, why they are needed, and how both applicants are working together.
- The main benefit of the project must be to build trust, inclusion, and/or belonging among people living in, working in, or visiting this region.
- The project period for this grant is nine months. All grantees will be awarded funds on the same cycle and agree to participate in a cohort learning experience, in addition to the project award.
- Funds provided by GCF must be used within nine months. The recipient(s) must report to GCF on how the funds were used and the results of the effort.

- If requested, the grant recipient(s) will assist GCF with publicizing results of each project within 90 days after grant completion.
- While the grantee does not need to be based in Clark, Powell, or Estill County, the grant project and impact must include and benefit one or more of those counties.

Submission and Review Process

- Applications will be submitted electronically via [GCF's grantee portal](https://gcf.givingdata.com/portal/campaign/BTB) at <https://gcf.givingdata.com/portal/campaign/BTB>;
- GCF will offer optional events to support applications, including a pre-application webinar on October 3rd from 1:00-2:00pm ET and coaching sessions (dates to be announced);
 - To register for the pre-application webinar, please use the following link: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYlcuygqTsoH91DCyzLeP85cZeAsvLWO-K0>
- GCF staff will participate in the application review process based on the focus of each grant request;
- For grant requests submitted by qualified nonprofit, religious, or government organizations, GCF may request a site visit and/or interview; and
- Final grant decisions will be made by GCF by December 31, 2023. The grant period will be from January 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024.

Learning and Evaluation Requirements

Through this grant program, GCF is striving to learn about building trust within, among, and between communities (and/or institutions) and hopes to investigate the following questions:

- How do communities foster a welcoming and inclusive spirit?
- What activities succeed in increasing our community's sense of belonging and trust?
- What actions undermine community trust and belonging?
- How do we build trust and/or restore diminished trust between communities and institutions?
- Do efforts to build trust ultimately strengthen our civic infrastructure? How will we know this and how will we measure it?
- In addition, GCF will assess if there is capacity for longer-term/multi-year, targeted and intensive interventions to build inclusion, belonging, and trust. This pilot cohort will help GCF determine how/if a more robust funding pool could be utilized.

In addition to each grantee's unique learning requirements, all grantees will be expected to complete the following learning and evaluation requirements:

- Submit a final report that includes a financial report and a narrative report, answering the following questions:
 - Did this project lead to a demonstrable increase in trust or belonging in our community? Why or why not? Describe what worked and what didn't work? What aspects of trust and/or belonging were most critical to this project? How did you measure/assess?
 - Could this project be expanded to bring together more people or different communities? How? What would be the opportunities and challenges of doing this?

- Did this project lead to stronger civic engagement or inclusion in community decision making (e.g. public participation)? If it did not, what could be done differently?
- Participation in five grantee cohort meetings. Specific dates will be announced, with meetings expected in January, April, June, August, and October.

Example Impacts from a BTB Grant

The following are examples of impact that may inspire your own project ideas.

- Increased intergenerational social interactions and social cohesion leads to fewer seniors feeling isolated and to more young people feeling cared for.
- Organizations at an impasse on polarizing issues use mediators or community builders for conflict resolution to work with the community to find a path forward.
- Leadership programs and other capacity-building programs embed principles of belonging, trust, and inclusion into their curriculum.
- An evangelical church and an LGBTQ group form a dialogue group that fosters greater understanding and trust.
- Community institutions like law enforcement or first responders see themselves on the frontlines of the social isolation epidemic and find creative ways to use their agencies to facilitate expanded access to mental health or other social support services.
- Community listening sessions between institutions and community residents lead to creative or innovative strategies being used to address challenges facing our community.
- More people attend public meetings and feel comfortable respectfully addressing officials and board members during public comment periods AND public officials can hear these comments as invitations and opportunities, rather than criticisms.
- New and unique partnerships bring people together across divergent ideologies or backgrounds, generate a shared identity and agenda, and support collective action in the community.

BTB Grant Types NOT Supported

- Grants that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against any specific groups of people.
- Grants that promote a religious or political point of view.
- Grants that intentionally or unintentionally seek to convert people to a political or religious point of view.
- Grants that involve multiple groups but do not include letters of support from those groups.
- Grants for general operating support or to cover budget shortfalls.
- Grants for event sponsorships or other non-programmatic fundraising efforts.
- Grants that fill a funding gap for an ongoing project.
- Broad, unfocused requests; or
- Requests that cannot be completed within nine months or require more than \$20,000 from GCF.

Resources on Trust, Belonging, and Inclusion

[*Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community*](#), Office of the U.S. Surgeon General (2023)

[*The Hidden Tribes of America*](#), More in Common (2022)

[*Civic Virus: Why Polarization is a Misdiagnosis*](#), Rich Harwood (2022)

[*Civic Engagement is a Social Determinant of Health*](#), Eileen Salinsky, Grantmakers in Health (2022)

[*Two Stories of Distrust in America*](#), More in Common (2021)

[*America Is Having a Moral Convulsion*](#), David Brooks (2020)

[*American Fabric: Identity and Belonging*](#), More in Common (2020)

[*Faith and Healthy Democracy Report Explores How American Evangelical Christians Might Contribute to Healing Divides*](#), Sharif Azami, Fetzer Institute (2019)

[*Understanding Trust to Strengthen Democracy*](#), Democracy Fund (2017)

The Greater Clark Foundation is a catalyst, champion and promoter to ensure that ours is a vibrant and resilient community. The Foundation invests its resources where it can have a fundamental impact: civic and economic vitality; educational attainment; and health, well-being, and quality of life.