

Building Community Power Fund

Letters of Interest Announcement

This past fall, HealthSpark Foundation launched our 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, which will direct our efforts to advance positive social change in Montgomery County and to build community power – our belief that people should have influence and control over the policies, programs, and practices that affect their lives.

Every day in Montgomery County, community organizations and leaders are working to address and improve civic engagement, racial and social equity, public policies and systems, and social determinants of health and well-being. Our grantmaking, convening, and leadership will stand behind and support their inspirational and essential efforts. Each year, HealthSpark will prioritize strategic initiatives that support transformative leaders, build thriving communities, and achieve opportunities and justice for all.

Our strategic goals—Community Power, Leadership, and Solutions—are designed to advance our updated mission: to achieve healthy, equitable, and hopeful communities throughout Montgomery County.

To support our Community Power goal, we are proud to launch the Building Community Power Fund. Based on the belief that advocacy is a critical lever for achieving health equity, the Building Community Power Fund is dedicated to supporting and growing nonprofit organizations' ability to advocate for more just and equitable policies, practices, and programs that impact the health and wellbeing of Montgomery County residents. The Fund provides grant support to build capacity within nonprofit organizations for advocacy and to enhance existing advocacy efforts centered in Montgomery County that are aligned with HealthSpark's mission, guiding principles, and goals.

Through this Fund, we will support a range of activities such as:

- Board and staff training on allowable and impactful nonprofit advocacy activities;
- Strategic planning activities to incorporate advocacy activities into a nonprofit's mission and services;
- Developing educational materials that will be used for advocacy;
- Building relationships with elected officials and policymakers to support advocacy efforts;
- Engaging or training residents, community partners, peers, and others in advocacy opportunities;
- Training or leadership development for residents of diverse backgrounds to serve on community boards, commissions, or to take part in other civic activities;
- Hosting educational or advocacy events;
- Providing nonpartisan voter education and registration;
- Other activities that support an advocacy strategy defined by the organization.

HealthSpark Foundation is committed to helping nonprofit organizations in Montgomery County embed advocacy into their culture, daily operations, programs, and long-term goals. The Building Community Power Fund aims to empower them to advocate for community needs, raise awareness of key issues impacting the health and wellbeing of residents, and create lasting positive change. By fostering opportunities for advocacy, building necessary resources, and strengthening ongoing activities, we believe in driving impactful outcomes for the community.

Qualities We Value in Applicants

- Organizations with deep roots in the local community
- Engagement with and led by people affected by the issue or challenges they seek to address
- Commitments to racial and social justice, coalitions, and partnerships
- Ability to mobilize and inspire community involvement or action

Grant Funding Details

The 2025 Building Community Power Fund budget is approximately \$140,000. HealthSpark anticipates:

- Awarding grants with a maximum of \$20,000 for a one-year period beginning mid-April.
- Grants may be awarded as general operating support or programmatic (restricted) support.
- Announcing award decisions in early April.

Note: Receiving funding from this grant program does not disqualify an applicant from receiving other funding from HealthSpark through other grant programs.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Instructions

We are now accepting Letters of Intent (LOIs) for the Building Community Power Fund. The deadline for submitting LOIs is Friday, January 17, 2025. After reviewing all submissions, a limited number of selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. All applicants will be notified by January 31, 2025.

What to Include in Your LOI:

Please include the following information in your LOI:

- Organization Mission and Overview – A brief description of your organization, including your mission, the community you serve, and the services provided. (If this information is available on your website or a brochure, you can just link to the appropriate website pages or attach a copy of the brochure instead).
- Project Summary – A concise overview of the activities that will be supported.
- Alignment with the Building Community Power Fund – A brief explanation of how your project or your ongoing activities align with the goals and priorities of the Building Community Power Fund.
 - **Please answer either of the following questions:** How is community power reflected in your work? Or how do you want it to show up in your work?
- Contact Information – The name, title, organization/affiliation, email, and phone number of the primary contact person for the LOI.

LOI Length and Submission:

- Please keep your LOI to about one page.
- Submit your LOI as an attached PDF via email to Akshara Vivekananthan, Program Officer at avivekananthan@healthspark.org.

Eligibility Requirements

- Projects must serve Montgomery County residents; applicants must have a 501(c)(3), or have a fiscal intermediary/sponsorship relationship, or be a religious organization, or part of Montgomery County government.
- Organizations that are not Montgomery County-based (i.e., statewide or national organizations) should clearly demonstrate their connections and work to Montgomery County, the relationships with organizations in Montgomery County, and the connection to and understanding of Montgomery County residents and their needs. Grants awarded to these regional, statewide, or national groups will be in the form of a restricted grant to take place in Montgomery County, where work is centered.

Questions

We truly welcome phone calls about this program before applying! If you have any questions or are thinking about applying to the Building Community Power Fund, please contact Akshara Vivekananthan, Program Officer at avivekananthan@healthspark.org.

About HealthSpark Foundation

HealthSpark Foundation is a private, independent foundation serving Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. We are guided by principles of courage, justice, integrity, and hope. We vision transformative leaders, thriving communities, and opportunity and justice for all, and our mission is to achieve healthy, equitable, and hopeful communities throughout Montgomery County. Learn more at www.healthspark.org.