



**Omaha Community  
Foundation**

# FUND FOR OMAHA

**2023 OVERVIEW & GIVING GUIDE**

# Fund for Omaha

Through the Fund for Omaha, the Omaha Community Foundation is dedicated to supporting organizations at the forefront of racial equity and social justice work in our community. We actively invest in organizations leading these efforts, empowering grassroots nonprofits to build their capacity and supporting advocacy initiatives that aim to bring about systemic change in communities of color.

The grant program's mission extends beyond financial support - we're committed to fostering connections within and across communities, uniting us in our shared commitment to equity and justice. Together, we can ensure that people of color have equitable access to opportunities throughout our community.

**\$2.5M**

requested by 110 applicants

**\$402,500**

awarded to 18 local nonprofits in 2023

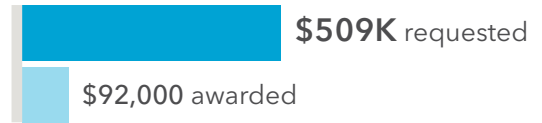


## PRIORITY AREAS

Funding priorities focus on the following six areas with an overarching emphasis on racial equity and social justice. Requests far outpaced available grant funding.

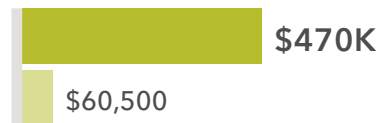
### Arts & Culture

Providing equitable access to the tools and resources needed to engage the community in arts and cultural programming.



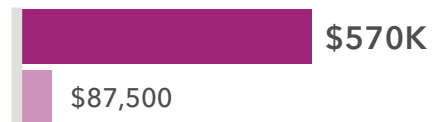
### Economic Opportunity

Expanding access to job opportunities and equitable pay in our community.



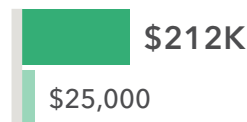
### Health

Enabling access or removing barriers to quality healthcare, mental health, and nutrition.



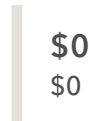
### Neighborhoods

Ensuring safe and affordable housing, paths to homeownership, and public spaces suitable for social connection.



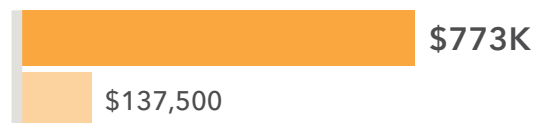
### Transportation

Advocating for and supporting expanded options for reliable and efficient transportation to areas with the most jobs.

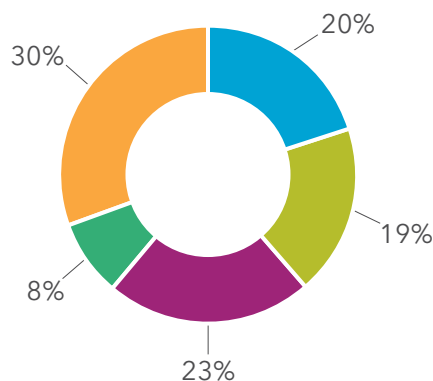


### Vibrant Communities

Amplifying voices of those least often heard.



Total grant requests by priority area



# Advancing racial equity

In a highly competitive grant cycle, the Fund for Omaha awarded a total of **\$402,500 to 18 nonprofits**, representing just 16% of this year's applicants. Their work strongly aligns with the grant program's mission and priority areas, particularly in advancing community-based racial equity.

## 1. A Mother's Love

A pregnancy support agency built on empowering the birthing community by providing access to full spectrum doula services, basic life skills training, health/wellness, case management, childbirth education, and community outreach.

## 2. Access Period

Provides free period products to anyone that needs them in Nebraska. Through partnerships with community organizations and schools, they are working to create a Nebraska where no one is held back from participating fully in life because they lack access to affordable menstrual products.

## 3. Black & Pink National

An organization dedicated to liberating LGBTQIA2S+ people and people living with HIV/AIDS who are affected by the criminal punishment system through advocacy, support, and organizing.

## 4. Bluebird Cultural Initiative

Provides enriching community programs to foster appreciation for the cultural beliefs and practices of the Great Plains Native American people, preserving their heritage and inspiring future generations.

## 5. Carole's House of Hope

Offers transitional living for young women and mothers who have aged out of foster care or become homeless. Their home-like environment and innovative programs address the mental health needs of up to 60 BIPOC residents ages 19-26.

## 6. Heartland Workers Center

Enhances the long-term self-sufficiency and growth of immigrant and underrepresented communities, aiming to create a more equitable leadership landscape in Nebraska. They assist community members in improving their English proficiency, navigating complex systems, and self-advocating within various markets while addressing their immediate needs.

## 7. Intercultural Senior Center

Welcomes seniors from around the world and enhances their dignity, quality of life, as well as their physical and mental well-being through education, access to healthcare and social services, and cultural enrichment.

## 8. Latino Center of the Midlands

Founded over 50 years ago as a small community center, the Latino Center of the Midlands has grown into a thriving hub of education, wellness, and opportunity. The center supports the vibrant South Omaha community through mentoring, internships, adult education, preventative health services, and civic engagement.

## 9. Learning For ALL

Offers free ESL, GED, ABE, one-on-one tutoring, life skills, job readiness, career preparedness, financial literacy, and computer literacy instruction, both in-person and online, to residents, immigrants, and refugees ages 18 and older. Participants come from diverse backgrounds across the globe and represent low-income, historically underserved populations.

## 10. MAYS Foundation

Supports community initiatives that provide services to youth and help them develop the skills and talents necessary to become productive, contributing members of their community. Their primary focus is on reaching youth who may not have access to the resources needed for success.

## 11. Nebraska Tribes Addressing Violence Coalition

A tribal coalition working to raise awareness and promote prevention of intimate partner violence against Native Americans and tribal communities in Nebraska through training, education, technical assistance, and support.

## 12. Nebraska Writers Collective

Fosters personal empowerment and community building in the Midwest through creative writing and performance poetry. The organization works with young writers, adult writers, and writers of all ages experiencing incarceration.

## 13. Q.U.E.E.N.S. Butterfly House

On a Quest to Understand, Educate, and Empower Noble Sistahs – the underserved, formerly incarcerated woman population – by providing supportive housing, job readiness, and personal development to becoming the best version of themselves.

## 14. Refugee Women Rising

A women-led nonprofit working in partnership for social change, co-creating opportunities for women from around the world to reach their full potential. They recognize and uplift the innate human dignity of refugee women and their families as they integrate into new livelihoods.

## 15. RISE

Works to break generational cycles of incarceration by delivering a six-month evidence-based program in Nebraska prisons and post-release services and programs in the community for justice-involved people and their families.

## 16. The House of Afros, Capes & Curls

Connects community members from different cultural backgrounds, fostering empathy through role play and open dialogue while celebrating Black creativity, innovation, and excellence using games, science fiction, and fantasy.

## 17. University of Nebraska Foundation

The Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) assists Latino communities in Nebraska and beyond in successfully engaging in the region's political, economic, and social life. OLLAS is also dedicated to enhancing UNO's institutional capacities and academic initiatives to improve our understanding of Latino/Latin American cultures.

## 18. World Speaks

Envisions a world where the voiceless are heard, the marginalized are included, and the vulnerable are safe. Their main objective is to leverage language learning as a tool to promote a more culturally aware and diverse Omaha.



# How funding decisions are made

Fund for Omaha focuses on organizations with a general operating budget up to \$5 million. Applicants can request up to \$25,000 for operating support. Investments are focused on organizations doing strong and promising work within the priority areas.

## GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

### STEP 01

Our staff reviews and scores applications. They check for alignment with priority areas, strength of the project, financial management, and infrastructure.

### STEP 02

As needed, we reach out to applicants with follow-up questions to clarify any concerns.

### STEP 03

We develop a list of potential investments and share the proposal with an external review committee made up of community members.

### STEP 04

The external committee individually reviews and scores proposals, then meets as a group to discuss recommendations and select grant recipients.

### Guiding Questions

We support local nonprofits that are working to ensure equitable access to opportunity throughout our community. With this in mind, funding decisions are made with the following considerations:

#### Equitable Access

Does the nonprofit provide an opportunity for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) to thrive, especially those whose voices are least heard?

#### Cultural Awareness

Does the nonprofit demonstrate an understanding of the many cultures represented in the fabric of our community?

#### Authentic Engagement

Does the nonprofit prioritize BIPOC lived experience in the development, deployment, and facilitation of efforts to impact the community?

#### Capacity Building

Does the grant increase the nonprofit's reach and bolster its efforts in the above three ways?



## 2023 FINALISTS

# Recognizing excellence

Here, we highlight the 22 nonprofits that reached the finalist stage but, due to limited funds, did not receive a grant this cycle. Whether you're a fundholder seeking impactful organizations, a nonprofit exploring collaborations, or a community member interested in local initiatives, this list provides valuable insights.

**AFRICAN CULTURE CONNECTION** educates and connects communities in Nebraska and neighboring regions to African culture and heritage through a dynamic curriculum led by teaching and performing artists. Collaborating with Omaha Public Schools, African Culture Connection supports Nebraska's Fine Arts Education standards, sharing the rich essence of Africa.

**ANASTASIS THEATRE CO.** uses theater to amplify the voices of community members deeply affected by justice, economic, and social systems, giving them a platform to share their stories and influence community narratives, ultimately empowering them to lead in building a more just community.

**CANOPY SOUTH** exists to connect, convene, and collaborate with a community of doers, with the goal of establishing strong roots of social, educational, and racial equity in South Omaha neighborhoods disconnected from equitable access to opportunity. They focus on high-quality mixed-income housing, comprehensive community wellness resources, and a cradle-to-career education pipeline.

**CENTER FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT** provides community-based behavioral healthcare services and education programs to individuals, families, and groups, with a focus on addressing disparities in service utilization within the Black community.



African Culture Connection

**CENTRO LATINO OF IOWA** is a Latino-led nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for the local Latino community through community outreach, development, engagement, and heritage. They focus on advocacy, education, workforce development, leadership, civic participation, and cultural competency.

**CODE BLACK TECH** has a mission to remove barriers that prevent people of color from entering a tech career, diversify the tech field in Nebraska and Iowa, and help businesses become more competitive by providing trained tech workers at minimal cost.

**EL MUSEO LATINO** shares the history, traditions, and culture of the countries and people of Mexico and Central and South America through authentic Latin American cultural experiences. The museum provides direct support for local artists, increases the visibility of Latino art forms, and fosters an appreciation of art.

**EPIC FOR GIRLS** researches, advocates for, and funds innovative and long-lasting solutions that address inequities in sports for girls of color.

**GIRLS INC. OF OMAHA** prepares girls for the world and prepares the world for girls. Girls Inc.'s holistic after-school and summer programs, along with an all-girl, pro-girl environment, support girls in learning, developing leadership skills, and taking risks. They are committed to amplifying girls' voices and advocating for racial and gender equity.

**GREAT PLAINS BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM** has a mission to preserve, educate, and exhibit the contributions and achievements of African Americans with an emphasis on the Great Plains region, as well as provide a space to learn, explore, reflect, and remember Black history.

**IMAGINE OMAHA** exists to close the racial wealth gap in Omaha. They serve adults ages 18-38 and provide a range of counseling and support services delivered by certified life coaches, along with DEI and life coaching consultation for local businesses.

**INCOMMON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** alleviates poverty at a root level by uniting and strengthening vulnerable neighborhoods. They partner with neighbors to empower these communities, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to grow up in a safe, thriving, and opportunity-rich environment. They achieve this mission through workforce and leadership development, neighborhood improvement projects, and housing support.

**LA FUENTE BUSINESS CENTER** assists low-income immigrant and refugee families in the Omaha metro area in achieving financial stability through entrepreneurship. They employ a unique cultural approach to financial education and business training, which reduces entry-level barriers to small business ownership.



**LATINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

exists to cultivate an environment that fosters economic growth and enhances the quality of life for the Latino community in Omaha. Their goal is to create conditions for economic growth, increase tourism, and pay homage to culture and historical preservation.

**METRO AREA CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR**

**THE HOMELESS (MACCH)** is a collective impact organization that coordinates resources, planning, and services to prevent and end homelessness across Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties.

**MIDLANDS AFRICAN CHAMBER** empowers, connects, and champions businesses in the African and African American communities, with a strong emphasis on networking, resource mobilization, training, and fostering a supportive ecosystem to promote thriving businesses within Black communities in Nebraska.

**NEBRASKA APPLESEED** fights for justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans. Appleseed takes a multi-strategy approach using policy change, legal advocacy, and community organizing to solve systemic issues including poverty and economic inequality, racial inequities, children's welfare, health care, and immigrant rights and inclusion.

**ONE OMAHA** empowers people where they live with education, training, and engagement to develop thriving neighborhoods. Their impact builds human, technical, and conceptual skills to sustain civic and community efforts to achieve a resident-led vision for neighborhoods throughout Omaha.

**PROJECT HOUSEWORKS** enhances lives and strengthens communities through the preservation of quality affordable housing. They provide critical home modifications and repairs for seniors, and a Home Affordability Program. They also offer free furnace maintenance and mobilize volunteers for community home painting.

**THE UNION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART**

strengthens the cultural and social landscape of our community by using the arts as a vehicle to inspire positive social change. The Union provides support for emerging artists, a gallery for innovative artwork, co-op studios, youth arts engagement, diverse performing arts, a community garden, and initiatives for neighborhood art projects in North Omaha.

**TOUCH OF GOLD** is a nonprofit maternal wellness organization focused on improving health outcomes in Black communities. Their goal is the elimination of the preventable causes of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. They provide education, advocacy, and direct support to families across the Omaha metro area.

**TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE** brings together in permanent residency a synagogue, church, mosque, and interfaith center on one 38-acre campus in Omaha. They cultivate inclusive environments to advance interfaith relationships and understanding through educational and relational programs, advocacy actions, and thought leadership.

*For more information about the Fund for Omaha, contact Program Manager Laura Contreras at [laura@omahafoundation.org](mailto:laura@omahafoundation.org).*

# Fundholders maximize the power of giving

Having a fund at the Omaha Community Foundation provides you with a dynamic tool to support causes you care about and meet community needs. Here are ways to help.

1

## **Give to the Fund for Omaha**

Our community is stronger and more connected when we embrace diversity, acknowledge areas of racial inequity and injustice, and invest in organizations leading the way. Support this work by donating to the Fund for Omaha at [omahafoundation.org/donate](https://omahafoundation.org/donate).

2

## **Recognize and uplift finalists**

Each year, we receive more grant requests than we can fully fund. Here's where you come in. Consider supporting the outstanding nonprofits that reached the finalist stage but did not receive a grant due to limited funds. Your support not only acknowledges their excellence but also invests in their ability to provide programs and services.

3

## **Amplify the impact of grant recipients**

While applicants can request up to \$25,000 for operating support, this amount is just a fraction of what it takes to effectively run a nonprofit. By supporting grant recipients, you're contributing to their sustained success.

---

**OPEN A FUND:** A Donor Advised Fund is our most popular fund option. It is a philanthropic vehicle that allows individuals, families, or organizations to contribute funds to an account, receive an immediate tax deduction, and recommend grants from the fund to support charitable causes and nonprofits of their choice over time. We offer expertise, guidance, and administrative support, simplifying the giving process. Learn more at [omahafoundation.org/open](https://omahafoundation.org/open).

# Nonprofit grant opportunities

The Omaha Community Foundation serves as a vital resource and collaborator with local nonprofits, providing a diverse array of grant opportunities year-round. Grant applications are accepted annually during the following dates, closing at 11:59 p.m. on the last day of each application period.

## JANUARY 1 - MARCH 1

*These five resident-led grant programs are a part of our Community Interest Funds. Anyone can donate at [omahafoundation.org/donate/ClF](http://omahafoundation.org/donate/ClF).*

- ▶ **African American Unity Fund**  
Focuses on arts and culture, basic human needs, community development, health and wellness, and capacity building.
- ▶ **Futuro Latino Fund**  
Arts and culture, capacity building, community and economic development, civic engagement, health and wellness, youth, families, and women.
- ▶ **LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund**  
Workforce development, healthcare accessibility, justice system involvement, public leadership, safe shelter, and homelessness prevention.
- ▶ **Refugee Community Grant Fund**  
Family stabilization and youth support services, education and culture, physical and mental health, and fostering belonging and inclusion.
- ▶ **Omaha Neighborhood Grants**  
Empowering local residents to lead initiatives and projects in their own neighborhoods, fostering active citizenship and community building in Omaha.

## JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 5

- ▶ **Omaha Venture Group Grants**  
Focuses on four areas: arts and culture; education and workforce; health; and civic engagement, neighborhoods, and safety.

## JUNE 1 - JULY 15

*Established by OCF donors, Field of Interest Funds support specific areas.*

- ▶ **Creche Childhood Education Fund**  
Early childhood education.
- ▶ **Jetton Charitable Fund**  
Youth access to art, history, and natural sciences.
- ▶ **Richard A. Shaw Fund**  
History, natural sciences, and outdoor education.

## JULY 1 - AUGUST 1

- ▶ **Building Healthy Futures Fund**  
For programs within Omaha Public Schools that provide access to healthcare for children.
- ▶ **Fund for Omaha**  
Advancing racial equity and social justice.



# Omaha Community Foundation

Growing good, together.

The Omaha Community Foundation strengthens our community by building connections between people, ideas, and funding.

By developing a deep knowledge of local needs and the nonprofit organizations that are working on solutions, the team at OCF has established itself as a valued resource and a catalyst for good.

1120 S. 101st Street  
Suite 320  
Omaha, NE 68124  
402-342-3458  
[omahafoundation.org](http://omahafoundation.org)