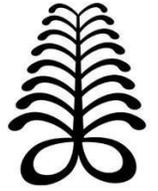


The Aya Initiative

Request for Proposals

2023



OVERVIEW

Guided by the collective wisdom of an advisory group, the Prince Charitable Trusts' Aya Initiative seeks to support Black-led and Black-serving organizations that are actively engaging Chicago neighborhoods/communities and the people who thrive in them around nature and the environment. The advisory group is composed of eight community members who personally and professionally embody and make real the goals of this Initiative. In the spirit of West African wisdom, Aya (the fern) symbolizes endurance and resourcefulness. We want to contribute to organizations and their staff that are committed to and nourished by nature and the environment; and whose work is aligned with at least one of the following strategic focus areas:

- **Healing the Village:** We seek to encourage Black people to engage in self-care/soul-care practices and acquire lifelong skills while moving their bodies in and around nature. *Potential activities include but are not limited to: archery, biking, bird watching, camping, fishing, floral arrangement, hiking, ice skating, kayaking, ceremony, running clubs, outside sports, sailing, and skiing.*
- **Strengthening the Village:** We seek to support activities that help Black-led and Black-serving environmental organizations and their staff to connect with opportunities, learn new things that can be shared, remain resilient, and realize their short- and long-term goals. *Potential activities include but are not limited to: seeking training or other capacity-building opportunities, hosting workshops, technology upgrades, mentorship, fundraising, intentional collaborations and learning cohorts.*
- **Amplifying Village Voices:** We seek to foster dialogue, build bridges between Black and Brown communities, shape, uplift, and advance our narratives/porch stories, hold our own accountable, and advance or advocate for policy changes. *Potential activities include but are not limited to: joint gatherings, informal conversations, signing and translations, advocacy and activism, social media efforts and strategies, print and broadcast journalism, partnerships between individuals and organizations, intergenerational dialogues, and policy or community organizing campaigns.*
- **Fostering Village Creativity/Imagination:** We seek to celebrate endeavors that envision a future in which water, land, and air nourish instead of harm Black neighborhoods and people, transforms and transmutes past environmental trauma, and encourages the practice of environmental stewardship across the diaspora. *Potential activities include but are not limited to: research innovative ways to increase urban agriculture, performance, art installations, comic books, graphic novels with a special intersectional focus on Afrofuturism¹, photography exhibits, curriculum development.*

¹ Defined by the Webster Dictionary as, "a movement in literature, music, art, etc., featuring futuristic or science fiction themes which incorporate elements of Black history and culture."

DEFINITIONS

Black People/Blackness

Black people are not monolithic and represent a broad and diverse spectrum of physiological, geographical, cultural, and political traits and histories. We define Black and Blackness (the state of being Black) in overlapping ways: (1) the mix of physiological, geographical and cultural traits that defines Black people as people of African descent, many of whom were moved to specific regions in the world through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (including continental Africans, African Americans, Afro- Caribbeans, Afro-Latinos and people of mixed ancestry who identify as being Black); (2) Black or Blackness is a political and historical reality of shared colonization and oppression at the hands of Europeans and Anglo-Americans and the resistance to this subjugation. Blackness is a political construct of survival and resistance against racialized oppression.²

Black-led

Organizations with a Black Executive Director and a predominantly Black board, staff leadership and constituents — if relevant. “Black-led” is about the demographic makeup and racial identity of the leadership.³

Black-serving

Those that serve individuals from predominantly Black communities or whose total number of program participants are predominately Black.

Built/Natural Environment

Everything that surrounds us, but also includes the built environment. This includes natural resources and healthy safe spaces that are accessible both indoors and outdoors.

Nature

All three-dimensional things that encompass the very essence of our beings. It existed before us and will hopefully exist in perpetuity. It is urban, gardens, trees, rivers, lakes, beaches, bees, butterflies, birds, parks, forest preserves, trails, air, water, mountains, prairies, marshes, wetlands, dirt, abiotic, biotic, and historical.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Types of support: Funding can support the main mission of your organization if you are in the environment or nature arena, or new or existing programs that align with one of the four focus areas listed above.

Grant term and grant amounts: Grants are for one year. An organization may only submit one request for funding per year. Grants can range in amounts of \$2,500 to \$7,500.

² Black Social Change Funders Network. (2017). *The Case for Funding Black-led Social Change*.

³ Ibid.

Eligible applicants: Organizations that are Black-led and Black-serving, responsive to and rooted in a Chicago community, and whose work aligns with at least one of the four focus areas are eligible to apply. Previous and current fiscal year organizational budgets must be less than \$850,000. If your organization does not have its own 501(c)3, please provide information for your fiscal sponsor.

Please note: Current Aya Initiative grantees are eligible to apply for another grant; however, please know that this is a competitive process and renewed funding cannot be guaranteed. Grant recipients in Prince Charitable Trusts' other grants programs are not eligible to apply.

HOW TO APPLY

Step 1: Please create a GOapply account by following the link below or visiting the Prince Charitable Trusts' website (princetrusts.org): goapply2.akoyago.com/prince. You will need an EIN (TAX ID) number, yours or your fiscal sponsor's, to register. Also, please note that if you previously created an account in eGrant you will need to create a new one for GOapply.

Step 2: Gather the following documents as you will need them to either answer a question or to upload them with your application in GOapply:

- Current organizational budget (revenue and expenses)
- Previous year organizational budget (revenue and expenses)
- Program budget (revenue and expenses) if applicable
- A photo that captures the essence of your organization or its programs (jpeg)

Step 3: In GOapply, please be prepared to answer the following questions:

Organization Information

Organization's address, phone number, and website (optional)

Facebook, optional

Twitter, optional

Instagram, optional

LinkedIn, optional

Name and contact information for the organization's Executive Director/CEO

What is the organization's anticipated revenue for the current fiscal year?

What are the organization's anticipated expenses for the current fiscal year?

If this grant will be used solely for a program, what are the anticipated revenue and expenses for the program?

Grant Contact Information

Name, title, phone number, and email address for the person who is the primary contact for this grant proposal.

Request for support

Are you seeking general operating support or program support?

Select the focus area that best aligns with your organization or the project you are applying for: Healing the Village, Strengthening the Village, Amplifying Village Voices, Fostering Village Creativity/Imagination --see Overview Section of the RFP for more details about each focus area. Also, please explain how the focus area aligns with your mission/programs?

What is the grant amount you are seeking?

In the online portal, in a separate pdf (3 pages or less), or in a video (no longer than 5 minutes), please provide your answers to the following questions:

- Tell us about your organization (your mission, history, and programs). If you are applying for support of a specific program/project, please describe
- How is your organization Black-led and Black-serving?
- How will this grant benefit the audience/constituencies your organization serves?
- What are you hoping this grant will help your organization accomplish?

| TIMELINE | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | DATE |
| | February 10, 2023 |
| Information session | <i>February 22, 2023, 2pm</i> Information Session Registration Link |
| Office Hours | <i>March 6, 2023, 3pm – 5pm & March 9, 2023, 10am - 12pm</i> Link to Schedule Office Hours |
| Application submission deadline | March 13, 2023, at 5pm |
| Funding decision notification | Late April 2023 |
| Grants distributed | May 2023 |
| Grant Reports Due | April 2024 |

Questions? Please email them to aya@princetrusts.org