

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

# IMPACT GRANTS

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## About the Baton Rouge Area Foundation

Among the largest community foundations in the country, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation has sought to improve the quality of life in greater Baton Rouge and across south Louisiana since 1964.

The Foundation pursues its mission by serving donors to build the assets that drive initiatives and solutions, supporting local nonprofits to ensure overall impact and sustainability, engaging community leaders to develop appropriate responses to emerging opportunities and challenges, and by partnering with others to leverage collective resources and create the capacity to be a stimulus of positive regional change.

## About The Opportunity Agenda and Opportunity Data Project

### The Opportunity Data Project

In 2022, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation launched a strategic planning process to better understand community needs. This led to the creation of the Opportunity Agenda – identifying six focus areas to expand access to opportunity across the region.

To support this work, the Foundation partnered with Common Good Labs to launch the Opportunity Data Project, an innovative initiative that leverages data science to pinpoint where philanthropic and social efforts can have the greatest impact. Building on the results of that research, BRAF has introduced two data-informed strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of our community's most pressing issues – one focused on kindergarten readiness and the other on improving community safety.

### Kindergarten Readiness

BRAF's Kindergarten Readiness Initiative aims to improve early kindergarten readiness outcomes in East Baton Rouge Parish. This strategy is informed by the Foundation's Early Childhood Education briefing and shaped by qualitative data and input from early childhood partners and stakeholders across the parish.

The initiative aims to implement data-driven strategies to deepen system-wide collaboration, promote awareness of early childhood education, and advocate for sustainable funding. It focuses on addressing gaps and supporting parents and caregivers to prepare young children for kindergarten. By improving public pre-k programs, creating an early childhood coordinating entity, expanding newborn visitation initiatives, and engaging families and the community, we strive to achieve kindergarten readiness for all young children.

### Community Safety

Our community safety efforts are based on a systems change approach and driven by data and community insight. In collaboration with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System and the District Attorney, we have amassed a comprehensive dataset spanning over 15 years of data on educational outcomes and links to violence among local children aged four to 18.

Through our analysis, we found that many of these individuals were raised within the public school system in Baton Rouge, but did not graduate high school. Growing up in neighborhoods affected by

poverty and a lack of opportunities, these young men face significant challenges that hinder their future. These factors not only shaped their paths but also highlighted the urgent need for collective action. We recognize that certain signs of disengagement in students, such as low readiness for kindergarten, chronic absenteeism, behavioral incidents, inability to read or perform math at basic levels, can indicate a need for additional support.

In response to these findings, our Impact Grants Program will fund initiatives aligned with our core focus areas. These encompass youth development, education and enrichment programs, mentorship, mental health support, substance abuse prevention, violence prevention and intervention, community well-being and support, safety and advocacy, and economic empowerment. Our aim is to address the root causes of violence through evidence-based interventions such as summer tutoring programs, emotional and mental health supports, and workforce opportunities for at-risk populations. By investing in prevention programs during early childhood, elementary and middle school years, we seek to reduce the long-term costs of violence and foster a safer, more resilient community.

## About the Grant Opportunity

The Foundation is pleased to announce a competitive pilot grant opportunity for local nonprofits working in the early childhood education or community safety sectors. This funding opportunity is being issued in response to recent findings from our [Opportunity Data Project](#) and seeks to address some of the challenges and areas for greatest impact highlighted within those briefings. We are now accepting Letters of Intent for one-time grants ranging from \$5,000 - \$25,000. Recommended areas of focus are detailed below:

## Focus Areas

Organizations, projects and programs can include, but are not limited to the following focus areas:

### EARLY CHILDHOOD (BIRTH TO FIVE):

#### Access to Quality Early Learning

- Support to expand access to high-quality early childhood education programs, particularly for low-income and underserved families

#### Early Childhood Care Health, Development and Well-Being

- Support for holistic development and well-being of young children, including social, emotional, cognitive and physical development programs

#### Early Childhood Workforce Capacity Building and Support

- Supporting the recruitment, training, and retention of early childhood educators
- Professional development and credentialing programs
- Advocacy for improved compensation for early childhood educators
- Upskilling and specialized training opportunities
- Emergency financial support for ECE teachers

#### Curriculum & Instructional Support

- Enhancing evidence-based curricula
- Procurement of instructional materials
- Implementation of innovative teaching strategies to improve learning outcomes

#### Facilities & Infrastructure

- Upgrading and expanding early learning facilities
- Classroom renovations and safety improvements
- Program site expansion

#### Community Inclusivity

- Inclusive all-ability programs
- Dual language programs

### **Parental and Caregiver Support Programs**

- Comprehensive support for parents and caregivers
- Financial assistance, including supplemental or emergency funds, and tuition scholarships
- Social, emotional, and mental health assistance
- Essential life skills training and tools for family success
- Healthcare home visiting programs

### **Health & Developmental Screenings**

- Early identification and intervention for developmental delays, disabilities, and health-related barriers to learning
- Therapy and educational support

### **Transition to Kindergarten**

- Programs that ease the transition from early learning settings to kindergarten, ensuring children are ready for school success

### **Innovative Models & Research**

- Pilot programs and research initiatives that explore new approaches to improving early childhood education outcomes

### **Advocacy & Policy Change**

- Supporting efforts to influence policy and funding decisions that enhance early childhood education at the local and state levels

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY:**

### **Youth Development and Support**

- Education and enrichment programs
- Mentorship and mental health support
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention

### **Violence Prevention and Intervention**

- Prevention programs for at-risk youth
- Community-based violence interventions
- Gun violence reduction strategies
- Domestic and family violence prevention
- School and campus safety programs
- Cultural and arts-based violence prevention

### **Community Well-Being and Support**

- Reentry and recidivism reduction programs
- Mental health and trauma-informed care programs
- Violence advocacy and response efforts
- Domestic and sexual violence advocacy services

**Safety and Advocacy**

- Neighborhood and environmental design strategies
- Law enforcement and community relations initiatives
- Policy advocacy and systems change
- Emergency response and crisis intervention teams

**Economic Empowerment and Crisis Support**

- Workforce and economic opportunities for at-risk populations

## Application Process

The goal of this effort is to distribute funds both efficiently and effectively; to that end, the Impact Grants application process will consist of two phases:

**Phase 1:** Letter of Intent (LOI), submitted through an online form.

**Phase 2:** Full Application, by invitation only

## Letter of Intent

Organizations interested in applying should complete the LOI form detailing their organization's history, operations, and the intended program or project for support. A copy of the questions included on the LOI can be found [here](#) for consideration. Once you are ready to submit, the official LOI submission form can be accessed at the link below.

[Letter of Intent Link](#)

The window for LOI submissions will be May 2, 2025 – May 30, 2025. All LOIs must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT on May 30, 2025, for consideration to be invited to submit a full application. After completion, we recommend downloading your responses for record keeping.

Following the completion of the LOI period, the Foundation will conduct a thorough review process to evaluate the submissions. Organizations that best meet the evaluation criteria will be invited to submit a full application. Please note that we will not accept applications submitted via email; all LOIs must be received through the above linked form to be eligible for consideration.

## Important Dates

- **May 2 – 30, 2025:** Letter of Intent window
- **June 2025:** Invitations to apply distributed to selected organizations
- **July 2025:** Full application submission window opens/Impact Grants Application webinar
- **August 2025:** Grant recipient selection
- **September/October 2025:** Fund distribution

## Eligibility

Organizations must meet certain requirements detailed below:

### ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

- Organizations must be a registered 501(c)(3) organization or a public agency, such as a school district or library.
- Organizations must be in good standing under state and federal IRS guidelines.
- Organizations should have a demonstrated history, commitment, and track record in one or more areas identified within the grant focus areas.
- Organizations must have been operational for at least two years.

### ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREAS

Applications will be considered for:

- Organizations with established programs and services within the Capital Region
- Organizations looking to expand their programs into the Capital Region

The Capital Region for this grant opportunity is defined as:

- Ascension Parish
- East Baton Rouge Parish
- East Feliciana Parish
- Iberville Parish
- Livingston Parish
- Pointe Coupee Parish
- West Baton Rouge Parish
- West Feliciana Parish

### ELIGIBLE USES

Eligible fund uses include:

- **Unrestricted Funding Support** – provides organizations with the funding needed to cover operational costs and overhead, ensuring that their fundamental functions can thrive in support of their larger mission.
- **Project Support** – provides funding that specifically aids in the implementation of new or existing initiatives. This could include a wide range of projects aligned to the identified funding areas.
- **Capital Costs Assistance** – provides funding support for facility or infrastructure needs that directly contribute to the provision of programs and services and benefits the organization's mission overall.



## PROJECT AND PROGRAM AREAS

### Community Safety:

Programs and services focused on violence intervention or prevention are eligible to apply. Projects and programs can include but are not limited to:

- Youth development and support
- Violence prevention and intervention
- Community well-being and support
- Safety and advocacy
- Economic empowerment and crisis support

### Early Childhood (birth to five):

Programs and services for children, parents, families, and caregivers are also eligible to apply

Projects and programs can include but are not limited to:

- Access to quality early learning
- Early childhood care health, development and well-being
- Early childhood workforce capacity building and support
- Curriculum and instructional support
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Community inclusivity
- Parental and caregiver support programs
- Health and developmental screenings
- Transition to kindergarten
- Innovative models and research
- Advocacy and policy change

Detailed examples for each of these are outlined on pages 3-5 in this document.

## RESTRICTIONS

- The Baton Rouge Area Foundation does not make grants to individuals, private business ventures or partisan political organizations.
- At this time, we are not offering multi-year opportunities.

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

If selected for an award, a report will be due one year from the distribution of funds. The report will request information about the use of funds, program or organization impact, and challenges faced. We welcome the inclusion of digital collateral, multimedia resources, and other materials to add context and qualitative insights.

## Evaluation Criteria

LOI responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Proof of organizational existence for at least two years, reflecting dedication and sustainability
- Demonstrated collaboration within the community
- A clearly outlined mission or purpose
- Alignment of proposed projects with our funding areas to maximize impact
- Consistency of the population being served with the organization's mission, ensuring targeted and meaningful support
- Geographic location within BRAF's service parishes, emphasizing the importance of local community engagement
- Display of a well-structured organization and project budget, highlighting transparency and financial prudence

## Contact Information

For inquiries, please contact [grants@braf.org](mailto:grants@braf.org).

## FAQs

**1. We have submitted grants to increase our funding but are waiting to hear back from them. Will this impact whether our program is seen as sustainable?**

Your pursuit of additional funding opportunities demonstrates your commitment to sustainability. We understand the time it takes to await responses from multiple funding sources. If you can outline a proactive strategy for financial sustainability beyond grant funding, the status of pending applications will not negatively impact the assessment of your program's sustainability.

**2. There are community partners that we would like to work with but have not been able to formalize anything. Will that prevent us from receiving the grant?**

For this grant opportunity, it is important to demonstrate collaboration and partnership with other organizations in the Capital Region.

**3. How long do I have to spend the allocated funds?**

If awarded, funds should be expended within one year from the date of funding. If for some reason the organization is having difficulty expending funds or anticipates that this may be a challenge, they are welcome to reach out to Foundation staff prior to the one-year reporting period.

**4. What are the reporting requirements?**

If selected for an award, a report will be due one year from the distribution of funds. The report will request information about the use of funds, program or organization impact, and challenges faced. We welcome the inclusion of digital collateral, multimedia resources, and other materials to add context and qualitative insights.

**5. Is my organization eligible?**

For consideration, organizations must have 501(c)(3) status or be a public agency, such as school districts or libraries. 501(c)(3) organizations must comply with State and Federal regulations and maintain good standing.

**Early Childhood:** 501(c)(3) organizations offering programs and services for children, parents, families, and caregivers are eligible to apply.

**Community Safety:** 501(c)(3) organizations providing programs and services focused on violence intervention or prevention are eligible to apply.

**6. Programs and services should benefit populations within the Capital Region. The Capital Region as defined by BRAF includes:**

- Ascension Parish
- East Baton Rouge Parish
- East Feliciana Parish
- Iberville Parish
- Livingston Parish
- Pointe Coupee Parish
- West Baton Rouge Parish
- West Feliciana Parish

**7. My organization is relatively new. Would we be eligible to apply?**

For this funding opportunity, we are asking that organizations be in existence for at least two years to be considered eligible.

**8. Are you funding pilot projects or new initiatives?**

Yes.

**9. My organization provides programs and services in both early childhood development and community safety. Can we receive funding for both?**

We are thrilled to hear how your organization supports both of these areas. If your application is funded, we would take this into consideration in determining the appropriate amount of funding given the scope and scale of the work you do and the populations you serve.

**10. My organization is interested in expanding to one or more of the parishes identified in the Capital Region. Are we considered eligible?**

Yes.

**11. This is a new initiative, so we have not yet identified goals or outcomes.**

We understand that new initiatives take time to develop and define clear objectives. If there are draft goals, or other documentation you have created to measure impact and progress, please include it.

**12. What if we are not measuring impact or tracking community involvement?**

For this grant opportunity, demonstrating a commitment to continuous learning and program improvements in response to community needs is vital. While community involvement is valued, and we appreciate your engagement efforts, tracking this involvement is equally important. We encourage you to begin measuring and tracking community engagement as it can offer valuable insights and drive the ongoing development and impact of your organization's initiatives or programs.

**13. 100% of our programs serve economically disadvantaged families. Is that considered equitable and inclusive?**

Your focus on supporting marginalized communities aligns with our collective goal of creating a more equitable and inclusive Baton Rouge. We value and celebrate your dedication to addressing the needs of those most in need within our community.

**14. We have a small staff. Will that prevent us from receiving the grant?**

We value the passion, dedication, and creativity of all organizations, regardless of size. The size of your staff will not negatively impact your eligibility for the grant; however, it is important that there is existing capacity to launch and maintain this initiative.