

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

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 – which identified 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 data-informed strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of our community's most pressing issues. Links to relevant briefings can be found below.

Early Childhood Education

Early learning plays a critical role in a child's long-term success. This report explores the conditions that influence learning and development in the earliest years, examining why many children in East Baton Rouge Parish fall behind and what supports can help create stronger educational outcomes.

Healthy Families

This briefing looks at the social, economic and environmental conditions that influence health outcomes and life expectancy. It offers a roadmap for helping families live longer, healthier lives by addressing factors that shape health beyond the doctor's office.

Economic Prosperity

Residents of East Baton Rouge Parish experience abnormally high rates of poverty. This briefing explores ways our community can help support families across the region move up one rung on the economic ladder, enabling future generations to be better off than today.

While not the explicit focus of this grant round, the Opportunity Data Project also explores [The Geography of Opportunity](#), [K-12 Education](#), [Community Safety](#), and [Disrupting Violent Crime](#).

We cannot do this work alone. This competitive round of Impact Grants seeks to supplement the work of BRAF, empowering your nonprofit to also work in advancing the collaborations and activities that improve quality of life and access to opportunity across the capital region.

About the Grant Opportunity

The Foundation is pleased to announce a competitive 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:

- Up to \$25,000: Organizations applying under a single funding area
- Up to \$50,000: Organizations whose work meaningfully aligns with two or more funding areas (early childhood, economic prosperity and healthy families)

Focus Areas

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD (BIRTH TO FIVE):

Early Learning Access, Navigation, and Parental Support

- Simplifying access to early learning | Reducing barriers by supporting families in identifying childcare options, completing enrollment, securing subsidies, and connecting to Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K programs.
- Enhancing affordability | Expanding access by alleviating financial burden through subsidies, scholarships, and flexible tuition models.
- Expanding community-based options | Increasing the availability of care through micro-centers and home-based providers that are responsive to local community needs.
- Integrated family support | Delivering coordinated services through co-located hubs that enable families to efficiently access resources, referrals, and comprehensive support.
- Strengthening family connections | Fostering supportive networks that connect families with peers and trusted community members, promoting engagement and shared learning.

HEALTHY FAMILIES:

Maternal and Infant Health

- Nurse-Family partnerships and home visiting programs that provide in-home or community-based support, education, and care coordination for expectant parents and families with young children.
- Doula and midwifery services that offer prenatal, childbirth, and postpartum support to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.
- Perinatal and postnatal mental health supports that provide screening, counseling, and care for individuals during pregnancy and after childbirth.

Healthcare Access and Well-being

- School-based and mobile health units that deliver physical, mental, and behavioral health services to youth in accessible and convenient settings.
- Community centers and youth hubs that provide safe, accessible spaces for youth to participate

in enrichment activities, access support services, and connect with peers and mentors.

- Youth mental and behavioral health programs that offer screening, counseling, crisis intervention, and prevention services to support young people in managing mental health and behavioral challenges.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

Access to Capital and Small Business Support

- Childcare business incubators and microloan programs that support providers in becoming licensed, building business capacity, accessing startup funding, sharing administrative services (such as billing, enrollment, or payroll), and securing flexible financing for equipment, facility needs, or business expansion.
- Business support and funding programs for small businesses and self-employed individuals, including technical assistance, microgrants, no-interest loans, and emergency or growth capital to address immediate financial needs and enable long-term success.

Career Preparation, Workforce Development, and Entrepreneurship

- Pre-apprenticeship and career preparation programs that equip participants with technical skills, workplace readiness competencies (such as communication, reliability, and teamwork), and career exposure to support successful transitions into apprenticeships or employment.
- Entrepreneurship, apprenticeship, and internship programs that provide hands-on work experience, mentorship, and business training for youth in priority geographic areas.

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 July 7, 2026 – July 24, 2026. All LOIs must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT on July 24, 2026 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

- **July 7 – 24, 2026:** Letter of Intent window
- **September 2026:** Invitations to apply distributed to selected organizations
- **September – October 2026:** Full application submission window opens
- **November 2026:** Grant recipient selection
- **December 2026 – January 2027:** Distribution of funds

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.

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.

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.

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. What does it mean to align with multiple focus areas?

Your work aligns with multiple focus areas if it meaningfully contributes to outcomes in more than one area (e.g., a program that supports both early childhood development and family economic stability). Applicants should clearly describe how their program addresses each area.

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.