

Management Improvement Fund

Overview – What are we doing?

The Management Improvement Fund, a special project of The Saint Paul Foundation, provides grants to nonprofit organizations operating in, or serving a substantial portion of their clients in Ramsey, Dakota and Washington counties. This Fund makes grants to nonprofit organizations to finance the cost of consultation or technical assistance to improve organizational capacity and management capabilities to better serve the community. The staff of The Saint Paul Foundation provides assistance to potential grant applicants to help them define needs appropriate for funding and works closely with grant recipients to monitor their progress on their projects.

Since 1985, The Saint Paul Foundation has provided more than 343 Management Improvement Fund grants totaling more than \$3 million to nonprofit organizations serving the East Metro area.

Partners – Who are we doing it with?

Funding Collaborative: F. R. Bigelow Foundation, Mardag Foundation, Travelers, The Saint Paul Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and individuals.

Challenges/Issues – Why are we doing it?

- The needs of nonprofit organizations vary widely due to the type, age and size of organizations as well as external factors influencing the nonprofit environment. Because of these differences, Management Improvement Fund grants offset the expenses of a variety of capacity-building activities, including organizational assessments, strategic planning, board development and program evaluation.
- Many nonprofit organizations struggle financially to raise enough revenue for their programs to serve low-income individuals and families and don't have the financial resources to pay for much needed professional consultation and technical services. Management Improvement Fund grants to nonprofit organizations help them stay strong and healthy, paying dividends to the communities they serve.

Results – How are we doing?

- **Youth Service Bureau, Inc., a nonprofit that works with young people in Washington County, leveraged a \$15,000 grant to develop program-specific work plans and integrate them with the agency's strategic plan. The assessment process helped Youth Service Bureau decide to expand its services to serve more youth.**
- **Latino Economic Development Center focuses on the development of Latino entrepreneurs and has been instrumental in key community projects like Mercado Central and Plaza Latina. An \$8,500 grant helped the agency develop a three-year strategic plan and strengthen its board of directors by recruiting individuals with business acumen.**
- **East Side Learning Center provides at-risk children with one-on-one reading help from community and business volunteers. The organization received a \$12,000 grant to provide training for board and staff and to develop a board manual and orientation program. The grant also funded financial planning that will guide the Learning Center as it explores program expansion.**

For more information, contact:
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Activities Funded

The Management Improvement Fund makes grants for technical assistance and consultation to help improve the capacity and management of nonprofit organizations. Examples of these activities include:

- Organizational assessment
- Strategic planning
- Organizational restructuring / merger / dissolution
- Collaboration between groups and organizations
- Program evaluation
- Board development / governance
- Human resources / personnel
- Financial planning management

Other activities vital to the development of nonprofits and community groups also are considered. Examples:

- Addressing diversity in the workplace
- Planning and implementing culturally relevant services
- Leadership development / skill building / training and mentoring for staff, board members and volunteers
- Innovative approaches for groups working together to better serve the community
- Addressing racism and racial disparities with an explicit use of a racial equity lens.

Consultant Selection

Applicants may select the consultants, subject to the approval of The Saint Paul Foundation. All applicants are encouraged to thoroughly assess their needs and to solicit multiple bids. Please note that Management Improvement Fund applicants **must** include the written proposal / bid from the prospective consultant(s).

Evaluation

At the end of the project, grantees must submit a final report describing the project and assessing the extent to which its intended outcomes were achieved and the intended activities completed.

Grant Payments

Before funds are granted, the Foundation must receive a technical assistance work plan signed by the consultant and organization that meets the approval of a Foundation program officer.

Grant payments are made on a reimbursement basis, as the grantee submits copies of invoices for work performed. In submitting an invoice, the grantee verifies its accuracy and that the work has been completed satisfactorily. Typically, grantees receive payment within two weeks of submitting an invoice. Grantees are responsible for paying the consultant.

Before You Apply

All interested applicants are required to call Jerry Timian, program officer, at 651.325.4286 before applying to ensure that the Fund fits your needs.

Eligible Expenses

The primary use of a Management Improvement Fund grant is to pay for consultation fees or training expenses. A limited amount of funds may be allocated to expenses related to the successful completion of the technical assistance project including interpreters, stipends, childcare, transportation, mentors and staff time.

Matching Guidelines

A percentage of matching funds is recommended based on an organization's budget. Generally, larger organizations are asked to secure more matching funds than those with smaller budgets.

Annual operating budget matching guidelines:

- **\$0—\$1 million**
No match required
- **\$1 million—\$2.5 million**
25% of project budget
- **+ \$2.5 million**
50% of project budget

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Funding Criteria

Organizations and groups applying for a Management Improvement Fund grant are reviewed with the following criteria in mind:

- They must serve a significant number of low-income persons.
- They are in strong need of the technical assistance or consultation.
- They are not likely to undertake the effort without financial assistance from the Fund.
- The technical assistance / consultation is likely to have a significant impact on them.
- They are motivated to undertake the consultation / technical assistance.
- They have the time and staff capabilities to commit to the consultation and to implement changes.
- Their environment is conducive to working with a consultant, including stable leadership, board consensus on desired outcomes and the absence of imminent organizational crises.

Application Procedures

Please visit www.saintpaulfoundation.org/grants/how_to_apply_for_a_grant/ for application forms and further instructions.

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