



**Philanthropy.  
Open for improvement.**

## Request for Grant Proposals

### II. Collaborative Approaches to Hearing from the People We Seek to Help<sup>1</sup>: RESEARCH

September 4, 2014

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<sup>1</sup> People use a variety of terminology to describe the people we seek to help, including “beneficiary voice” and “ultimate constituents” and “ultimate intended constituents” to describe the end user of their services and resources and how to capture feedback from those end users. For the purpose of mutual understanding in this proposal, we will use the phrase “the people we seek to help” – recognizing that we don’t always reach the people we want to help.

# One of three open calls for proposals

Fund for Shared Insight is looking for nonprofit partners who are interested in helping organizations and foundations be more open to hearing the diverse voices of the people we seek to help and acting upon what we hear (creating and using feedback loops). This is one of three open calls for proposals, the others focus on collaborative approaches to hearing from the people we seek to help: **PRACTICE**; and increasing foundation openness in service of effectiveness.

## Purpose

In today's complex, connected world, we believe openness is a pre-requisite to effectiveness because it enables philanthropy to attract and empower good ideas from any/multiple sources, facilitate faster testing and learning (including faster identification and sharing of what works and what doesn't), improve grantee relationships with funders and among each other, strengthen collaboration and reduce duplication of effort, increase public trust, and build communities of shared learning.

With this request for proposal, we aim to support efforts (existing or new) to help nonprofit organizations and foundations be more open to hearing the voices of the people we seek to help – the students, the trainees, the farmers, and so on. We believe that the people we seek to help are an under-tapped source of wisdom and insight and there is momentum building in the field to create vibrant and systematic feedback loops that we can support to strengthen and grow.

In 2014-2015, we will make approximately \$4.4M in grants for this work including both practice and research activities. The grants will be a minimum of \$300,000 over a one-to three-year grant period to nonprofits working to: **Advance the research base to identify how feedback data may be best collected and whether there may be some perceptual and/or experience data that can serve as leading indicators of change.**

## Background

Fund for Shared Insight ("Shared Insight") is a collaborative effort among funders that pools financial and other resources to make grants to improve philanthropy. Shared Insight emerged from our belief that foundations will be more effective and make an even bigger difference in the world if we are more open – if we share what we are learning and are open to what others want to share with us, including grantees and the people we seek to help.

Shared Insight aims to do this by providing grants to nonprofit organizations to encourage and incorporate feedback from the people we seek to help; understand the connection between

feedback and better results; foster more openness between and among foundations and grantees; and share what we learn.

Fund for Shared Insight is a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Initial funders include the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Ford Foundation, The JPB Foundation, Liquidnet, the Rita Allen Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and we welcome other funders to join this effort, which will unfold over several years.

## Criteria for Funding Proposals

In an effort to be as clear and complete as possible, we will assess proposals received in response to this request for proposals based on the criteria below.

### Threshold Criteria for All Proposals in Year 1

- U.S. 501c3
- Grant from Fund for Shared Insight will be no more than 20% of organization's annual budget in any one year
- Organization has sufficient capacity to execute the proposal, and capacity/plans to measure results

### Additional Considerations for All Proposals in Year 1

- Preference for organizations that are at least two years old (ideally not start-up organizations)
- The overall portfolio of funded work will be more domestically focused in year 1, though some international/global projects may be funded

### Criteria for Reviewing Proposals for RESEARCH

1. Threshold criteria: Previous experience conducting research that includes perceptual data
2. Systematic research about perceptions and experience of services, products, approaches and needs – going beyond measuring people's satisfaction
3. Research that seeks to establish links between people's feedback and outcomes such that timely feedback from the people we seek to help on specific dimensions of their experience can serve as leading indicators of change
4. Plans for research to be shared and translated to use by practitioners and staffed foundations

## **Some examples of the types of activities we are interested in funding:**

- Efforts to advance the research base to identify how feedback data may be best collected
- Efforts to incorporate hearing from the people we seek to help into existing research on program outcomes
- Efforts to look at the relationship between perceptual feedback from the people we seek to help and the outcomes that are achieved down the road

## **Proposal Instructions**

Through Fund for Shared Insight, we will make grants to support efforts by nonprofit organizations that are creating vibrant and systematic feedback loops which will help organizations and foundations be more open to hearing the diverse voices of the people we seek to help. By “vibrant” we mean the feedback loops are interesting to people both in substance and method. By “systematic” we mean feedback information (beyond satisfaction) is collected on a regular basis and ideally can be analyzed against a comparative data set for benchmarking and interpretation.

### **In particular, we are interested in:**

Creating a research base that identifies how feedback data may be best collected and helps better make the case for the role that perceptual data (such as feedback from the people we seek to help) can play as a leading indicator of ultimate outcomes. Research projects could help to determine what kinds of questions across fields might predict if work is on track. It could also aid in the development of a type of net promoter score for social sector work such as human service delivery. Further, a more developed research base may help the field of constituent feedback to gain credibility and visibility.

Through this grant proposal, we are looking to understand the following with regard to advancing the practice of feedback loops:

- What do you hope to accomplish?
- What are your key approaches? (include details)
- How will you know if you are on course to achieving desired outcomes?

**There are four required sections of this proposal<sup>2</sup>:**

1. A completed **proposal cover sheet** (Section A);
2. A **proposal narrative** (Section B);
3. A **measurement and learning worksheet** (Section C); and
4. **Financial and organizational information** (Section D).

**A timeline for the proposal process is as follows:**

Date/Deadline	Activity
Wednesday, October 15, 2014	Proposals must be emailed to Melinda Tuan at <a href="mailto:melinda@fundforsharedinsight.org">melinda@fundforsharedinsight.org</a>
Monday, November 17, 2014	All grant applicants will be notified of the grantmaking decision
Before end of December, 2014	Grant funds released to selected grantees

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<sup>2</sup> This proposal template is customized for General Operating Support grants (not project grants). Some of the items listed here are optional (additional details in the proposal itself). We would be happy to receive (or for you to repurpose) materials you have prepared for another funder if they address the questions/topics in this proposal form. Please contact Melinda Tuan at [melinda@fundforsharedinsight.org](mailto:melinda@fundforsharedinsight.org) anytime with questions you may have about this, or any other elements of the proposal.

## SECTION A: PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Fund for Shared Insight	Collaborative Approaches to Hearing from the People We Seek to Help: RESEARCH
(1) Applicant organization's name	
(2) Organization's address, phone number, general fax number, and website	
(3) Head of organization's name and title	
(4) Primary contact person's name, title, phone number, fax number, and e-mail	
(5) Amount Requested	\$ _____ over _____ year(s)
(6) <i>For multiple year grant requests only:</i> please indicate desired payment schedule	\$ _____ in year one \$ _____ in year two \$ _____ in year three
(7) Annual organizational budget in the first year this grant would be paid	\$ _____
(8) Fiscal Year End Date	
(9) For <i>general operating support grants</i> only: what percentage of your annual <b>operating budget</b> would this grant constitute?	_____ % of operating budget
(10) For <i>project specific grants</i> only: what is the total annual project/program budget for the first year of this grant?  If awarded, what percentage of your budget would this grant constitute?	\$ _____  _____ % of project/program budget
(11) Number of Employees ( <i>include breakdown of full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff members</i> )	
(12) Organizational name and mailing address where check(s) should be sent (if different from (1) and (2) above)	
(13) May we share this proposal with other interested funders?	_____ Yes _____ No
(14) Date Submitted	

We will make the determination as to whether a general operating support grant or project/program grant is most appropriate, based on your proposal. We will make this decision based on how closely aligned your organization's mission and main work are with the purpose of the grant. Where there is high alignment, general support can be given. If the work will be just a single program among many or a project of your organization, then project funding may be most appropriate.

## SECTION B: PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

We are interested in understanding what outcomes you expect from your work and what indicators of progress and intermediate outcomes you will measure to assess your efforts. We do not want completion of this section to be burdensome, so take whatever space you need. Most completed proposals range from five to ten pages for Sections B, C, and D (plus additional attachments as applicable).

1. Please discuss the problem(s) or opportunity(ies) you seek to address through your work (and thus that this grant would support).
2. Please include your logic model within this section of the proposal.

If you haven't written one before, here are the elements to include:

- i. **Outcomes:** What, specifically, will success look like?
  - ii. **Activities:** What will you do to get there?
  - iii. **Logic Model:** Clarify/explain the connections between #i (outcomes) and #ii (activities).
3. What risks do you face in trying to achieve your goals (including external factors or internal ones)? What mitigation strategies do you have in place or ready if needed?
4. Discuss your organization's capacity to execute on the logic model – including your structure, staffing, leadership, track record and any other relevant components of organizational capacity.
5. Discuss your organization's capacity to achieve and track your results.

### Glossary of Terms

**Activities:** The actions your organization will take to achieve its goals

**Outcomes:** Results or changes for individuals, groups, communities, organizations, communities, or systems

**Logic Model:** A description, typically in the form of a flowchart, of how the organization will implement the theory of change that takes the general form of:

Inputs>Activities and Outputs >Intermediate Outcomes>Goals or Ultimate Outcomes

## SECTION C: MEASUREMENT AND LEARNING WORKSHEET

This is called a measurement and learning worksheet because one of our most important goals in supporting your work is to help you measure, reflect on, and learn from your results so that you can continue to focus and improve your impact. Insofar as our grantees are able to do this, so can we as funders. But this requires a different attitude toward measurement and reporting than is typical for foundations and grantees. In this approach, the primary purpose is supporting your improvement in the future, versus only telling us about what happened in the past. We ask for this information in the spirit of inquiry and openness.

This chart should relate directly to question 2 in the Narrative section of the proposal (the logic model); please feel free to copy and paste activities and outcomes from that section. This chart will be used as a means to assess progress towards the goals of the grant. **If you receive a grant, this chart will provide the basis for your interim and final reports.** Typically, the Measurement and Learning Worksheet includes three to five outcomes and three to five activities. Please note any areas in which you currently do not have the data you need to assess progress.

	<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Result (year)</u>	<u>Reflections for the Future</u>
<i>What are your plans?</i>	<i>What will you measure?</i>	<i>What is the status quo?</i>	<i>Where do you hope it will be at the end of the grant? (Or whatever timeline is appropriate.)</i>	<i>What actually happened? (To fill out in a future report; leave blank during proposal)</i>	<i>What did you learn in trying to achieve this target? How will it shape your work going forward?</i>
<b>OUTCOMES</b>					
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>					

## SECTION D: FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

### 1. Financial information

*Required documentation for all proposals:*

- Project Budget Template (if applicable)—If you are applying for a project grant, please fill out the project budget template in addition to sending us your organization's budget. Please use the project budget template available for download on the [Grants](#) web page.
- The organization's IRS determination letter
- The organization's most recent audited financial statements
- An organizational budget, covering:
  - the previous fiscal year (unaudited financial statement)
  - the current (at the time of application) fiscal year that includes year-to-date actual revenues and expenditures
  - projections for each of the fiscal year(s) of the proposed grant period

*Optional documentation:*

- A list of current funders, including foundations and the level of their support

### 2. Organizational information

- An organization chart describing the management and personnel for the organization as a whole and for specific work on the project (the latter if a project grant)
- A list of key personnel with brief biographical information highlighting their roles, relevant experiences, and strengths
- A list of the members of the organization's Board of Directors, including their professional titles, business or other organizational affiliations, and locations
- If relevant, a list of members of the advisory board for the proposed work, including their professional titles, their business or other organizational affiliations, and locations
- If available, the organization's current strategic plan—a plan that sets out a medium- to long-term strategy
- If available, the organization's current operating, business, or work plan—a plan that describes how its resources will be deployed

### 3. References

Please provide two references—funders, other nonprofit collaboration partners, and so forth—who could share additional perspectives on your work.