

CENTERING JOY: CELEBRATING LGBTQIA+ YOUTH AND THEIR ALLIES

Request for Proposals

June 2, 2022



Photo by Raphael Renter on Unsplash

About Us

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is committed to using our power and privilege as a philanthropic institution to advance racial equity in public education. We champion efforts to prioritize community goals that challenge racial inequities and advance excellent, student-centered public education for all New England youth. We are focusing our work strategically on addressing structural racism and white supremacy in our education system, so that all youth have access to an excellent and equitable public education.

Background

Over the last two years, there has been an increase in proposed legislation targeting the LGBTQIA+ community. According to an [NBC News Article](#), “the annual number of anti-LGBTQIA+ bills filed has skyrocketed from 41 bills in 2018 to 238 bills in less than three months at the beginning of 2022”, with many of the bills targeting school policies that directly impact LGBTQIA+ youth.

Several of these bills have attempted to limit transgender and non-binary youth from participating in school athletic teams. Other legislation has sought to block rights of transgender youth to obtain healthcare and identification documents. Ultimately, these bills have a compounding effect that limits the ability of LGBTQIA+ youth to see themselves represented in their school community, curricula, and society at large. Moreover, these bills deny LGBTQIA+ youth the right to live freely, proudly, and joyfully, to self-determine, and to thrive.

The Foundation recognizes the advocacy work LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies have been doing as they fight back against this legislation while navigating the uncertainties that COVID-19, structural racism, and economic turmoil have brought to their schools and neighborhoods. The hours they have spent leading, planning, researching, surveying, mobilizing, organizing, and demonstrating have brought about real change. Just one example of success, as reported by [Glad](#), was the New Hampshire House vote in March 2022 that rejected HB 1180, which sought to allow the exclusion of transgender students from school sports teams. LGBTQIA+ youth in New England have stood strong and have so much to be proud of.

We know that the past couple of years has taken a toll on youth—the strain on mental health, exhaustion, isolation, hopelessness, and more. For LGBTQIA+ youth the toll has been even greater. In 2020, The Trevor Project released [a polling report](#) on how COVID-19 has impacted LGBTQIA+ youth. The report found that “LGBTQ and trans and nonbinary youth are significantly more likely than straight/cis youth to exhibit symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or both.”

It is with this in mind that the Foundation offers this Request for Proposals, which seeks to support projects that center joy and provide space for LGBTQIA+ youth to take a deep breath, to celebrate, to rejuvenate, to connect with allies, to experience solace and community, to belong and be affirmed in their full humanity, and to build a vision for the future.

Funding Priorities and Examples

The Foundation will support projects that focus on uplifting LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies. The following are some examples of projects that will be considered for funding. This is not an exhaustive list but is meant to provide a picture of the types of projects the Foundation seeks to support. Please read the Criteria and Eligibility sections carefully for more details. **Requests should not exceed \$20,000.**

- Planning and executing joyful events, retreats, or short-term programs
- Building relationships and solidarity with other organizations and/or communities of youth
- Cross-identity (racial, cultural, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) dialogues
- Short-term peer support and/or healing groups
- Space for students to learn self-agency
- Space for youth to learn where they can get help/assistance, i.e.: a resource center, wraparound supports
- Youth-led community service or change projects

Proposal

Please respond briefly to the following on the application portal. There is a 2,000-character limit for the response to each question (see portal access instructions in the Submission section below).

1. Briefly describe the youth you serve (include some demographics) and what is happening locally. What is helping your work? What is hindering your work?
2. Please share how your organization is **rooted within the LGBTQIA+ community, how it connects to public education, and why it is in a position to lead this project. How does the proposed work align with the mission of your organization?**
3. Describe the project. What would this funding specifically be used for and **what do you hope to accomplish? How were youth involved in the project development? How will they be involved in the implementation?**
4. If the requested amount is less than the total budget, briefly explain how the remaining budget needs will be met.

Criteria for Selection

- Proposal aligns with the priorities of the Fund.
- Grant request must respond to a time-sensitive need, unanticipated event, or urgent challenge in communities. *This grant is not intended to support ongoing programs and projects.*
- Organizations have an established focus on providing support for LGBTQIA+ and/or BIPOC youth and/or resources for educational success.
- Organizations serving LGBTQIA+, BIPOC youth will be prioritized.
- Organizations serving low-income communities will be prioritized.
- Youth serving in leadership roles of the project development and implementation will be compensated for their time.
- Projects should be completed by March 31, 2023. Given the timing of the RFP release, projects that start in September 2022 are welcome.

Rapid response funding will not support the following requests:

- Requests from school districts (individual public schools, including public charter schools are eligible), institutions of higher education, individuals, or religious groups
- Capital campaigns
- Scholarships or fellowship programs
- Debt reduction or cash reserves
- Building construction or renovation
- Operating support or on-going programs. However, staff time to manage a short-term project is an allowable expense if the project is outside the staff person's established responsibilities.

Eligibility

- This RFP is limited to community-based organizations and public schools. Districts and higher education institutions are not eligible.
- The project takes place within New England (MA, RI, NH, VT, ME, or CT).
- Organizations must be directly serving youth enrolled in K-12 public schools.
- The Foundation funds 501(c)3 educational organizations that fall under the tax designation 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) and have an education focus, as evidenced in their articles of incorporation. Due to the Foundation's tax status, private foundations (described in section 509 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code) and supporting

organizations (described in section 509 (a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are NOT eligible grantees.

- Organizations that received a previous Rapid Response Fund grant are eligible if the project that was funded has been completed and, per the grant agreement, a brief final report has been received by the Foundation.

Additional Information

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The deadline for proposals is Thursday, July 21, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. EDT, or until the limited pool of resources is exhausted. Please check our [website](#) to make sure funds are still available. The Foundation aims to review proposals, and if selected, disburse funds within three weeks of receiving the proposal.

If you need assistance submitting a proposal or have questions about your eligibility, please contact Stephanie Cheney at scheney@nmeffoundation.org.

Proposal Submission Directions

Applications will be accepted using our [online application portal](#). Sign up for an account if you are a new user or log-in if you have used our system this year. Once you are logged in, navigate to the “Grants Opportunities” tab and select the “Rapid Response Fund – Centering Joy: Celebrating LGBTQIA+ Youth and their Allies” opportunity to start your application.