

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Statement Of Need

Approximately 15,000 Jews in Cincinnati are not served by current Jewish opportunities or institutions. Because many of these individuals and families are not in positions of influence and decision-making in Cincinnati's formal Jewish community, current policies and programs may not reflect their actual needs and desires. This means that our traditional methods for building strong Jewish communities are currently leaving many people out.

General Background and Context

The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati

The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati (TJF) is a private grantmaking foundation with a broad mandate to strengthen the Cincinnati Jewish Community. TJF invests approximately \$20 million per year to support operations, programs, and initiatives that further Jewish education, deepen Jewish engagement, and address unmet social service needs in the local Jewish Community.

In 2019, the Cincinnati Jewish Community Study found that nearly half of Jewish adults seek more connection to Jewish community but experience **barriers** to participating in traditional Jewish institutions. TJF saw these findings as an opportunity to experiment with current and future funding priorities as part of a portfolio which includes the support of existing institutions. In part, this has led to the creation of Reflect Cincy, which integrates people from underrepresented demographics into TJF's decision-making process. The Creative Team of Reflect Cincy is responsible for designing a request for proposals (RFP), reviewing proposals, and making recommendations to the trustees.

Target Audience

Reflect Cincy grant funding will support initiatives that serve individuals and families who feel disconnected from current Jewish institutions and fall within the following segments, which were determined by analysis of the community study:

- Young adults without children
- Interfaith families with children
- Families with children ages 0-5

The term "underrepresented segments" refers to the overlap between those who feel currently disconnected from Jewish institutions and who fall within the three demographic groups above.

Reflect Cincy funding is intended to address unmet needs for one or more of the underrepresented segments. An applicant's target audience may expand beyond the segments if it includes or intersects with one or more of the three segments. We recognize and embrace the intersections between the three segments and other parts of the community, which may include historically marginalized groups.

Goals

Our long-term goal is to create an open, inclusive and diverse Jew-ish¹ organizational and communal culture that creates pathways for people to find meaning and connection.

TJF is committed to making investments that place Jews who are reflective of underrepresented segments in positions of influence and decision-making. TJF believes that these changes will create more compelling ways for these individuals to form Jew-ish connections. Funded initiatives are intended to be designed by and for the target audience, without expectations for traditional engagement or revenue generation. Please refer to the [“Impact” section](#) on the Reflect Cincy website for more information on TJF’s goals for Reflect Cincy.

What We Fund

Reflect Cincy grant funding supports initiatives that address the unmet needs of underrepresented segments. Funded initiatives will demonstrate how stakeholders are positioned to have influence in their process and include one or more these segments. Funded initiatives will be distinctive (show change—a new approach or an adaptation of something existing) and complementary to the existing landscape. These initiatives may include:

- **Programs or services that benefit the target audience directly:** Distinctive models for connecting people to Jew-ish practices, culture, beliefs, and communities in Cincinnati that address at least one of the following areas:
 - Fewer barriers for participation in Jew-ish life
 - Connections between one’s Jew-ishness and personal interests
 - Closer relationships between and among Jews and their peers
 - Other ways to support greater engagement with underrepresented segments
- **Structural initiatives or processes that benefit the target audience indirectly:** Experimental initiatives that incorporate structural shifts in an organization’s culture, which may include new hiring protocols, policies, assessments, training, or leadership opportunities.

Eligibility

Any individual or organization is eligible for funding. Applicants that are not affiliated with an existing non-profit are required to seek umbrella support from an existing institution for tax purposes (fiscal sponsorship) by the application step. We encourage applicants seeking a fiscal sponsor to connect with our team to explore possible partnerships with other entities. Individuals may submit an Emerging Idea without a secured fiscal sponsor but should give ample time before the January 14 deadline to discuss with [Kim Newstadt](#) before making their submission. Non-local initiatives are eligible and must either hire or partner with a local individual or organization.

Applicants may apply for a grant term of 1 year or 2 years. Applicants may apply for up to \$40,000 with most grants awarded in the \$15,000-\$30,000 range. Upon review of the Emerging Idea submissions (step 1 in the application process), the Reflect Cincy team may suggest that a request of significant scope submit a full application for up to \$100,000 (step 2 in the application process).

The spirit of these grants is experimental rather than evergreen. Grants may be eligible for renewed funding, but this is not guaranteed. Funding must be tied to a particular program, initiative or process; grants will not be made for unrestricted funding. Preference will be given to initiatives that emphasize experimentation, and include a program, initiative, or process as part of their scope.

¹ The term “Jew-ish” refers to people with Jewish roots but varying levels of religious practice or belief, communal affiliation, or personal identity.

Resources for How to Apply

[Emerging Idea Questions](#)

[Criteria and Application Questions](#)

[Process and Timeline](#)

[Grantee Experience - What to Expect](#)

References and Further Readings

- [2019 Cincinnati Jewish Community Study](#), Brandeis University
- [Barriers to Connection](#), Brandeis University
- [Emerging Values and Aspirations of Reflect Cincy Segments](#)
- [TJF Strategic Visioning Focus Group Memo](#), Rosov Consulting
- [FSG: The Water of Systems Change](#)