



John Rex  
Endowment

*advancing positive change for children*

---

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):**  
STRATEGIC COLLABORATION IMPACT AWARD

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

## STRATEGIC COLLABORATION IMPACT AWARD

### MISSION

The John Rex Endowment's mission is to strengthen organizations that center racial equity and justice to improve the social emotional health of children living in Wake County.

### FUNDING PURPOSE

To support the creation of authentic collaboration amongst community organizations led by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other People of Color (BILPOC), in order to affect change in issues that impact children's social emotional health, especially those that have been made most marginalized in Wake County. The intent of these funds is solely for collaborative planning and strategizing efforts and not for individual organizational needs.

### GRANT TERMS

The John Rex Endowment will award \$450,000 over three years split between 2-3 organizations in each collaborative with a tiered funding tranche structure. The opportunity will start with \$100,000 in year one, increase to \$150,000 in year two, and cap at \$200,000 for year three.

### Questions?

Contact [Gladys Hairston](#), Director of Learning, Research, and Evaluation  
[gladys@johnrexendowment.org](mailto:gladys@johnrexendowment.org)

### Key Dates in the 2023 Application Process

<b>Thursday, January 19, 2023</b>	RFP Launch
<b>Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 11 AM EST</b>	Informational Webinar #1 ( <a href="#">Register here</a> )
<b>Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at 3 PM EST</b>	Informational Webinar #2 ( <a href="#">Register here</a> )
<b>Thursday, February 16, 2023, by 11:59 PM EST</b>	Letters of Intent (LOIs) due
<b>Thursday, February 23, 2023</b>	John Rex Endowment notifies LOI applicants and invites full applications for consideration
<b>March 6 – 17, 2023</b>	Application conversations/presentations
<b>No later than Friday, April 14</b>	Applicants are notified if the submission is advancing for review by the Board of Directors
<b>Week of May 14, 2023</b>	Applicants are notified of the funding decision
<b>June 1, 2023</b>	Grant start date

---

## OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

John Rex Endowment's mission is to strengthen organizations that center racial equity and justice to improve the social emotional health of children living in Wake County. This mission marks a transition period for the Endowment. We are making changes to our grantmaking based on our understanding of racial equity and justice in philanthropy. As we continue to build our capacity to lead with a racial equity lens, we must address any issues related to children's social emotional health with an intentional focus: the health and wellness outcomes of those made most marginalized by structural racism.

We believe that by strategically investing in this way, we can move closer to the ultimate goals of achieving better social emotional health and well-being for all children in Wake County—Black, Indigenous, Latinx, other People of Color (BILPOC), and white.

We know that funding for collaborative efforts is difficult to come by, and it is particularly scarce for BILPOC-led organizations due to long-term racial biases in philanthropy. We have heard about the impacts of inequitable funding from both the local nonprofit and funder communities. Working collaboratively can be challenging under the best of circumstances.

### **The John Rex Endowment recognizes the barriers that exist in the field:**

- Political barriers to navigate in Wake County regarding racial equity work, which has led to organizational dissolvment, especially for BILPOC-led organizations.
- Organizations led by BILPOC do not have, nor are they invited to, collective action tables, which is necessary for equitable impact.
- Organizations led by BILPOC oftentimes do not have the same access to resources and funding designated for capacity building as other organizations that are historically prioritized for opportunities.
- Due to the fact that historically BILPOC-led organizations have been underinvested by philanthropy, the impact has caused communities to seek ways to collectively deal with this trauma, including building trusting partnerships within the community.

While there is no magic wand to fully correct these practices and inequities, the Endowment has made an intentional choice to prioritize organizations with BILPOC leadership for this funding opportunity. We believe by investing in BILPOC-led organizations, and by supporting authentic collaborations between these organizations, we can affect change in issues that impact children's social emotional health.

Prior to this funding opportunity, we hosted several outreach activities and workshops that promoted networking and strategic collaboration amongst BILPOC-led community organizations.

---

**These workshops were developed with the intent of:**

- 1) Sustaining spiritual, physical, and mental health,
- 2) Preparing for collaboration,
- 3) Working through the barriers of what gets in the way of collaboration, and
- 4) An introduction to strategic planning for this initiative.

These activities will prime partnerships ready to apply for the Strategic Collaborative Impact Award.

## **AWARD GOAL**

The goal of the Strategic Collaborative Impact Award is to help collaboratives explore and build upon their strengths and to identify areas for growth.

The John Rex Endowment will award three-year \$450,000 grants split between 2-3 organizations in each collaborative with a tiered funding structure to strengthen 1) strategic planning, 2) pilot planning, and 3) implementation for the pilot project. The opportunity will start with \$100,000 in year one, increase to \$150,000 in year two, and cap at \$200,000 for year three.

### **Core values that drive this Impact Award:**

- **Improving Social Emotional Health of Children:** Our mission is to strengthen organizations that center racial equity and justice to improve the social emotional health of children living in Wake County.
- **Racial Justice:** We are committed to bringing awareness to, and funding different types of, racial justice work.
- **Relationship Building:** We understand that it is imperative to seek full participation and guidance from those who have experienced (and are proximate to) the inequities we are working to address, which must be recognized, respected, and implemented.
- **Advocacy and Collaboration:** We recognize that Black and Brown populations have historically suffered from systemic, discriminatory practices that have contributed to reduced access to social capital. We work strategically to use our position of privilege in philanthropy to address these issues.

---

## ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The John Rex Endowment is providing grants to collaboratives composed of representatives from multiple organizations.

The Endowment defines strategic collaboration as an agreement for cooperation among two or more independent bodies to work together toward a common goal.

Collaborating organizations must designate a representative applicant to take the lead in the application process. For funding consideration, the collaborative needs to have the following characteristics:

- Be a grassroots organization based in Wake County (the Endowment defines “grassroots” as having originated to mobilize leadership at a community-based level; the lead agency may not be a government agency).
- Advocate for children’s social emotional health, with an intentional emphasis on the impacts on BILPOC children (age 0 to 18).
- Be implementing or striving for policy and/or system-level improvement strategies at the municipal and/or county level.
- Have been in operation for at least three (3) years; and
- Have 501(c)(3) status or a designated fiscal sponsor, and fiscal sponsors must have 501(c)(3) status or be a government agency or college/university. (The fiscal sponsor does not need to be a member of the collaborative. A fiscal sponsorship Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] is required. In the selection of a fiscal sponsor, determine if they have the capacity to manage a grant of the size being requested. See [Using Fiscal Sponsors.](#))

Priority consideration will be given to BILPOC-led grassroots organizations that have shared lived experiences relevant to the populations they serve.

Applicants will be asked to provide information about how they identify as one of these priority populations.

When referencing BILPOC-led, we are lifting organizational leadership (Executive Director, President, CEO, etc.) who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or other People of Color. This opportunity prioritizes BILPOC leadership because of the deep historical inequities and lack of resources these populations have experienced through structural racism, cultural erasure, and discrimination.

- Grant awards will not be made to, or on behalf of, individuals.
- Applications from regional or statewide coalitions are not eligible.

---

## WHAT WE WILL FUND

### 1) Strategic Planning - Year 1: \$100,000

- **Identify shared goals, populations, and stakeholders**
  - Racial Justice Feasibility Study: What is the history of the place we are aiming to do work in?
  - How did we all arrive at this work?
  - Prime grantees' boards around impact award for buy-in
- **Identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities as a collective**
  - What assets in the community are we building on?
  - How is the socio-political landscape changing in the places you work?
- **Identify shared project or initiative**
  - Invite organizations at the end of a “discovery phase” to reassess their original project idea. What would you do differently after understanding the cohort's strengths and opportunities?
- **Delineate roles and responsibilities**
  - What assets do you have that best position you for this role?

### 2) Pilot Planning - Year 2: \$150,000

- **Agreed upon joint goals and timelines**
  - These goals can be inclusive of their individual missions, but partners should create a unique joint goal that they could not achieve individually.
- **Developed implementation plan**
  - Collaboratives should use implementation templates to be developed by consultants in Year 1.
- **Final pilot project**
  - The pilot project should build on the work done in years 1 and 2 and test the assumptions made about impact. The project will be funded for 12 months, but the plan should include sustainability considerations.

### 3) Implementation of Pilot Project - Year 3: \$200,000

- **Execution towards shared outcomes**
  - Resource development
    - ◆ People, places, knowledge
  - Project/program management
    - ◆ All activities and processes needed
- **Assess opportunities and challenges**
  - Identify the positives and negatives of the program
    - ◆ Evaluation tools, reporting assessments, and communication with grantee partners
- **Technical assistance and training**
  - Ongoing advisor support
    - ◆ Outside of the designated consultant named below, grantees will have an ongoing advisor to provide quarterly training and consultation around the implementation of their strategic plan.

---

## DESIGNATED CONSULTANT

As a recipient of this award, JRE will provide a list of vetted consultants specifically for strategic collaborative planning purposes for each collaborative partner to choose from. Alternatively, each collaborative will have the opportunity to select a strategic planning consultant of their choice.

- The consultants will attend a training to ensure they are in alignment with the purpose of the planning process and JRE's philosophy and values on racial justice and equity.
- Each collaborative will be able to work with their respective consultant specifically around strategic planning.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

John Rex Endowment uses an online grant application and management system. If you have previously set up an account for your organization, you may use that account for this submission as well. First-time users of the system will need to create an account in order to **apply online**.

Please see the **guidelines and tips for using our online grant management system**.

## STEP 1: LETTER OF INTENT

Sign into John Rex Endowment's online grant management system. Locate, complete, and submit the LOI form.

- **Returning Users:** If you have previously set up an account for your organization, you may use that account for this submission as well.
- **First-Time Users:** Please create a user account to access our online management system.

*Interested in reviewing the LOI questions before applying?*

*No problem! Potential applicants are welcome to sign in or create an account to access the LOI form.*

## STEP 2: APPLICATION

We will invite applicants to submit a full application or send a notice that the LOI is declined Thursday, February 23, 2023. The application process will include questions about your proposed work, along with a detailed budget.

## STEP 3: BOARD OF DIRECTORS REVIEW AND AWARD DECISION

- Applications are reviewed by the Endowment's Grants Review Committee, which decides which applications proceed to the Board of Directors. We will share each applicant's status following the committee's review in April.
- The Committee then makes recommendations to the Board of Directors for award consideration and approval. We will share each applicant's status following the board meeting in May.

## OUR PARTNERSHIP

John Rex Endowment seeks to cultivate a trusting and equal relationship with our grant-funded collaborative partners. The Endowment staff will host a Kickoff Meeting with grant-funded collaborative leadership and staff (if applicable) at the beginning of the grant term. Periodic check-in touchpoints will also be scheduled with the Endowment staff. For subsequent grant years, the collaborative will submit interim reflection reports after years 1 and 2. As needed, other meetings may be initiated by the grant-funded partner or the Endowment.

## SHARED DEFINITIONS

- 1) **Children's Social Emotional Health:** Is related to a child's ability to understand their own feelings and emotions, as well as the feelings and emotions of others. It is essential as they learn empathy and establish and maintain social relationships.
- 2) **Racial Equity:** Acknowledges the unfair distribution of pain and suffering to those who have been denied access. It focuses on the prevention of harm and the redistribution of benefits—**providing collective access to those who have barriers within current systems. (Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens: A Practical Guide)**
- 3) **Racial Justice:** Includes racial equity but adds dimensions of power building and transformation. Racial justice calls for change and the removal of barriers. It focuses on the building of new systems and gives power to disenfranchised people to change the fundamental rules of society. **(Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens: A Practical Guide)**
- 4) **Impact Award:** In this context, a grant award explicitly granted for collaboration as a means to achieve impact.
- 5) **Strategic Collaboration:** An agreement for cooperation among two or more independent bodies to work together toward a common goal.
- 6) **Strategic Planning:** An organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. **Strategic Planning Basics**
- 7) **Pilot Program:** A short-term experiment that helps an organization learn how a large-scale project might work in practice.

Please see our **Glossary** for more details and other descriptions the John Rex Endowment uses in our work.

### Questions about this RFP?

Please Contact **Gladys Hairston**, Director of Learning, Research, and Evaluation.  
[gladys@johnrexendowment.org](mailto:gladys@johnrexendowment.org)