



UPDATED AS OF APRIL 1, 2020

## **Better Together Fund Application Process**

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*If you want to go fast, go alone.*

*If you want to go far, go together.*

*-African Proverb*

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## INTRODUCTION

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### About the Better Together Fund

Better Together Fund is a pilot program to encourage and support nonprofits to explore formal, long-term collaborations as a way to maximize impact.

We see formal collaboration as a relationship between one nonprofit and another nonprofit, corporation or governmental agency that:

- changes the way participating organizations do business for the long-term;
- has board involvement and endorsement; and
- preserves, expands or improves efficiency or services to constituents.

### What We Provide

1. Encouragement for nonprofit leaders to explore a range of formal collaborations with other nonprofits or key strategic partners rooted in maximum impact with minimal overlap, including but not limited to:

- strategic alliances
- back-office consolidation
- long-term programmatic joint ventures
- mergers

2. A repository of tools, research and best practices that arm nonprofits with why and how to formally collaborate;

3. Grant funding from \$3,000 to \$600,000 to pay for costs associated with exploring, designing and/or implementing a formal collaboration. Grants cover staff, facilitator, consultant time and resources associated with feasibility assessment, planning, implementation and successful collaboration.

4. Better Together Fund aims to stretch these grants by matchmaking grant seekers with pro-bono or reduced-rate facilitators, consultants and professional service providers.

### Types of Support

Better Together Fund's grant types designed to meet organizations where they are. Each funding request will be considered independently, as opposed to being part of a formal continuum from readiness assessment and feasibility to planning to implementation. It is anticipated that after conducting thorough exploratory work, some collaborative projects will not proceed to implementation based upon the exploration findings.

## Eligibility

Applicants must be in pursuit of a formal collaboration, be that for exploration, active planning, implementation or post-implementation support. Better Together Fund manages a competitive application process, and *not all requests for funding will be awarded*. For your proposed collaboration to be eligible for any of the grant types, at least one of the partnering organizations must:

1. Be a nonprofit based in and/or serving the North Texas community. Preference will be given to collaborations that serve constituents in Dallas County.
2. Meet financial criteria including: a complete annual independent audit, an annual tax return (990/990EZ), an active board of directors and an IRS determination letter verifying non-profit status. New initiatives or non-profits must present equivalent financial documentation such as audited financial statements or a board-approved budget.

## Better Together Fund Does Not Support

Better Together Fund does not consider any transaction involving only one organization (e.g., internal reorganization/repositioning), or any short-term activity (e.g., organizing a conference in partnership, co-branding a one-time advocacy campaign).

Better Together Fund does not support program-level only collaborations that do not involve a fundamental shift in the organizations' business models (e.g., a nonprofit providing afterschool programming is not eligible for a grant because it "works" with a school).

Better Together Fund does not support applicants for the Better Together Grant if they have not previously received funding for any of the other grant types. **First time applicants must apply for a Readiness Assessment and Feasibility, Planning or Implementation Grant.** Better Together Grants are contingent on successful completion of a formal collaboration previously supported by the Fund.

## Criteria

Better Together Fund manages a competitive application process and not all requests for funding will be awarded. Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. Meets the [definition of formal collaboration](#) and has potential to meaningfully preserve, expand or improve efficiency or services to constituents and/or improve financial health of the nonprofit(s) involved
2. Alignment of purpose among the partners
3. Demonstrated commitment to the success of the collaborative venture among the partners at ED/ Board Chair level
4. The degree to which Better Together Fund funds can play a catalytic role in the process

5. Thoughtful pre-planning among partners as demonstrated in well-conceived responses, with clearly articulated costs, goals, timeline and benchmarks as appropriate

## Additional Information

Applications for Readiness Assessment & Feasibility Grants may be submitted by individual organizations seriously considering a formal collaboration, regardless if a prospective partner has been identified. All other applications must be submitted jointly by participating entities of proposed collaboration. For administrative purposes, one contact person must be designated to steward the grant application process.

A single organization may submit multiple applications so long as each collaboration involves a unique partner. If two organizations have multiple collaborative ideas, Better Together Fund asks that the strongest idea be submitted for review.

The size of funding allocations for each grant type will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the complexity of the proposed collaboration. In most instances, grants will be awarded for less than the maximum dollar amount indicated above. Better Together Fund anticipates some collaborations will face unexpected and unintended expenses that are outside the framework of these types of support and withholds the right to deploy additional capital at the Better Together Fund's discretion.

Better Together Fund will retain, share and look to grow an active list of technical assistance providers and consultants with demonstrated experience [as posted on the website](#), but will not require you to use any given firm.

## Application Deadlines

Better Together Fund accepts applications on a quarterly basis through the online portal. However, recognizing the importance of nonprofits being able to seize unpredicted catalytic moments, proposal review can be expedited upon request if the nature of the request is time-sensitive. Preliminary consultation requests are accepted and scheduled on a rolling basis.

Application deadlines are posted [on the website](#).

## HOW THE BETTER TOGETHER FUND MAKES GRANTS

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### Overview of Process

There are four steps in the Better Together Fund Grants process:

1. [Preliminary consultation \(required\)](#)
2. [Submit 1-page LOI](#)
3. [Receive invitation-only application and submit materials](#)
4. [Proposal compliance and review](#)
5. [Funding approval](#)

### Step One: Preliminary Consultation (required)

Steering Committee representatives are authorized to conduct a brief consultation with potential applicants to discuss the proposed collaboration concept and the status of deliberations to date.

To schedule a 20-minute preliminary consultation by phone, interested applicants may choose to contact any steering committee members they may know directly (e.g. Helen Holman, Ashley Brundage, Margaret Black, Charles Glover, Katie Robbins), or **reach out to [info@bettertogetherfund.org](mailto:info@bettertogetherfund.org)** to request a preliminary consultation.

Preliminary consultation requests are accepted on a rolling basis.

Based upon this preliminary consultation, Better Together Fund will provide guidance on next steps, which may include further actions that must be taken by the organization(s) before a LOI can be submitted. A face-to-face meeting with key leaders from the potential partner organizations may be requested to better understand the proposed collaboration and/or to assess the respective organizations' level of commitment to the process.

Your Steering Committee Representative will provide guidance on the appropriate grant type for your collaboration to consider. If your collaboration is eligible, your Steering Committee Representative will invite you to move forward with Step 2.

Organizations may be invited to submit formal applications for one of the five grant types (outlined below).

#### Types of Support:

1. **Readiness Assessment** to help nonprofits learn about various partnership options, clarify what they want from (and can bring to) a collaboration, and examine their readiness to engage in a strategic restructuring exploration. A Readiness Assessment is an important part of preparing for a successful collaboration. A limited number of applicants will be selected to receive a no-cost facilitated assessment with [La Piana Consulting](#), using the [Strategic Restructuring Assessment Tool \("SRAT"\)](#). Designed as an automated survey and report, the SRAT allows organizations to conduct their own assessment and internal conversations, then meets them where they are with a customized set of recommendations.

Approved applicants are expected to walk through the 25 questions with a group of staff and board members, manually recording their answers together before entering them into the online

questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> After submitting answers to the SRAT, the organization immediately receives a customized report pointing to resources on topics most relevant to the organization's unique needs, which may include readings, websites, podcasts and ideas for next steps.

Upon completion of the online survey, recipients are expected to participate in a half-day onsite consultative session conducted by La Piana Consulting. This consultation provides critical context to help organizations make the most of the resulting recommendations. The value of the Readiness Assessment is approximately \$4,000, paid for by the Better Together Fund. Applications for the Readiness Assessment may be submitted by individual organizations who are seriously considering a formal collaboration, regardless if a prospective partner has already been identified.

**Feasibility Grant (up to \$15,000)** to evaluate high-level feasibility of a collaboration and high-level initial analysis on fit, budgets, impact etc. by convening key parties and retaining outside experts as needed. Feasibility Grants may be used to pay for external facilitators, consultants and/or staff time (among all participating organizations, no more than 20% of the amount requested may be used for staff compensation). Feasibility grants may be made anonymously upon request, but require support of the Executive Directors and Board Chairs of participating organization.

Applications for a Feasibility Grant may be submitted by individual organizations who are seriously considering a formal collaboration, regardless if a prospective partner has already been identified.

- 2. Planning Grant (up to \$60,000)** to support one-time costs associated with activities to assess, negotiate, and design a formal implementation plan, timeline, and business model for the collaboration. Planning Grants may be used to pay for external facilitators, consultants and/or staff time (among all participating organizations, no more than 20% of the amount requested may be used for staff compensation)).
- 3. Implementation Grant (up to \$200,000)** to support one-time costs associated with a repositioning activity between two or more organizations. May be used to pay for third-party costs of lawyers, accountants, consultants, other one-time costs necessary to complete the transaction and/or staff time (among all participating organizations, no more than 20% of the amount requested may be used for staff compensation). Pre-requisites for Implementation Grants include: formal board approval, a formal implementation plan detailing scope, timeline, and business model, as well as an agreed upon set of metrics to measure the success of the collaboration.
- 4. Better Together Grant (up to \$350,000)** to support mission-based growth and innovation post-repositioning activity. This grant aims to energize teams to dream big together and implement transformative ideas which may have been conceived in the Exploration Phase (through Feasibility and Planning grants). Better Together Grants are contingent on successful

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<sup>1</sup>Better Together Fund recommends assembling a group including the Executive Director, staff leads in financial management, programs and fund development; and 3-5 board members (typically selected among officers/executive committee members)



completion of a formal collaboration previously supported by the Fund. **First time applicants must apply for a Readiness Assessment and Feasibility, Planning or Implementation Grant.**



## Step Two: Submit LOI

A LOI is required for the Readiness Assessment, Feasibility Grant, Planning Grant, and Implementation Grant.

Following the preliminary consultation, your Steering Committee Representative will invite eligible applicants to submit a one-page LOI, signed by Executive Director(s) and Board Chair(s)<sup>2</sup> of the entities in the proposed collaboration, briefly describing what you hope to accomplish with the grant.

Grant Type	Information to include in your one-page LOI
<b>Readiness Assessment</b>	What outcomes your organization hopes to achieve through the readiness assessment
<b>Feasibility Grant</b>	What your organizations can accomplish together that you cannot do separately and what key issues you must address during this Feasibility Phase, and what your intended outcomes are for this Feasibility Phase.
<b>Planning Grant</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefly describe the proposed collaboration and what the potential partnering organizations could accomplish together that cannot be done individually.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>How will it fundamentally change the way the two entities conduct business for the long-term?</i></li> <li>b. <i>What might the potential impact of these changes be on the individuals/communities served?</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Include the intended outcomes your organization hopes to achieve through the Planning Grant.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>What are the key issues you must address during this phase? What are the potential deliverables?</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Implementation Grant</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefly describe the proposed collaboration and what the potential partnering organizations could accomplish together that cannot be done individually.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>How will it fundamentally change the way the two entities conduct business for the long-term?</i></li> <li>b. <i>What might the potential impact of these changes be on the individuals/communities served?</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Include the intended outcomes your organization hopes to achieve through the Implementation Grant.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>What are the key issues you must address during this phase? What are the potential deliverables?</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Note: LOIs for Implementation Grants must also include a brief statement confirming that each board (i.e. not just the board chair) has formally approved implementation for the proposed project.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Or equivalent leadership roles

This LOI can be submitted directly via email to your Steering Committee Representative. The Steering Committee will determine as a group whether your collaboration is eligible to move to Step 3, and you will be notified either way.

If you have already submitted a LOI for a previous grant for the same collaboration, your Steering Committee representative may inform you that a new letter is not necessary.

## Step Three: Receive invitation-only application and submit application materials

Better Together Fund accepts applications on a quarterly basis through the online portal. However, proposal review can be expedited upon request if the nature of the request is time-sensitive. Preliminary consultation requests are accepted on a rolling basis.

All applicants must submit [Stewardship information](#) (page 13).

Please refer to the following applications for the respective required materials. Note while the Stewardship Information is required for all grants types, [Documentation Checklist](#) is required for all grant types *except* Readiness Assessment.

- [1. Readiness Assessment Application](#)
- [2. Feasibility Grant Application](#)
- [3. Planning Grant Application](#)
- [4. Implementation Grant Application](#)
- [5. Better Together Grant Application](#)

Grant funding decisions are approved by the Steering Committee and awarded through the Dallas Foundation.

## Step Four: Proposal Compliance and Review

The [Proposal Compliance Staff Review Form](#) is the tool Steering Committee members will use to ensure proposal compliance. If a proposal receives a “no” to any of the unshaded questions, it will be removed from the process and the applying organization will be notified via email.

Once passing the compliance review, all application materials will be reviewed by members of the Steering Committee and a funding recommendation will be made. When comparing programs applying for funding, Better Together Fund will refer to our established set of [criteria](#) and working definition of [meaningful collaboration](#). Occasionally the Steering Committee may request additional information and/or ask clarifying questions prior to reaching a funding decision.

## Step Five: Funding Approval

The Steering Committee will ratify funding recommendations for each application and promptly notify the primary contact.

Best efforts will be made to notify applicants as soon as possible following the submission deadlines. Similarly, if applicants are time-sensitive in nature, Better Together Fund will make every effort to notify applicants of the funding decision as soon as possible. Oftentimes, notification is made approximately four weeks after the application deadline.

## STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR ALL APPLICATIONS

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**[OUTLINED BELOW FOR YOUR REFERENCE. INVITATION-ONLY APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND SUBMITTED THROUGH AN ONLINE PORTAL]**

### **Primary contact for this grant<sup>3</sup>**

First and Last Name:

Organization:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

### **Organization #1 Information**

Legal name of the organization:

Doing business as (if applicable):

Mailing address:

Organization website:

EIN:

Mission statement:

What is the primary geographic area(s) where you serve your mission:

Briefly describe the constituents or clients to whom you primarily target your services: (700 characters)

Briefly describe the services/activities/programs you provide: (700 characters)

Number of full-time employees:

Number of part-time employees:

CEO, President or Executive Director name:

CEO, President or Executive Director phone:

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<sup>3</sup> For Planning, Implementation, and Better Together Grants, each partnership will designate a lead organization and contact person to steward the process from an administrative perspective. For Readiness Assessment, each individual applicant is the Lead organization. For Feasibility Grants, applicants may choose to apply individually or as a partnership.



CEO, President or Executive Director email:

Board Chair name:

Board Chair phone:

Board Chair email:

Please provide information on any active and/or pending grants with Steering Committee members (The Lyda Hill Foundation, The Meadows Foundation, The Dallas Foundation, United Way Metropolitan Dallas):

**Organization #2 Information (This part is not applicable if a second organization is not applying. If the second organization is not a 501c3, please complete this the section as applicable)**

Legal name of the organization:

Doing Business as (if applicable):

Mailing address:

Organization website:

EIN:

Mission statement:

What is the primary geographic area(s) where you serve your mission:

Briefly describe the constituents or clients to whom you primarily target your services: (700 characters)

Briefly describe the services/activities/programs you provide: (700 characters)

Number of full-time employees:

Number of part-time employees:

CEO, President or Executive Director name:

CEO, President or Executive Director phone:

CEO, President or Executive Director email:

Board Chair name:

Board Chair phone:

Board Chair email:



Please provide information on any active and/or pending grants with Steering Committee members (The Lyda Hill Foundation, The Meadows Foundation, The Dallas Foundation, United Way Metropolitan Dallas):

**Organization #3 Information (This part is not applicable if a third organization is not applying. If the third organization is not a 501c3, please complete this the section as applicable)**

Legal name of the organization:

Doing Business as (if applicable):

Mailing address:

Organization website:

EIN:

Mission statement:

What is the primary geographic area(s) where you serve your mission:

Briefly describe the constituents or clients to whom you primarily target your services: (700 characters)

Briefly describe the services/activities/programs you provide: (700 characters)

Number of Full-Time employees:

Number of Part-Time employees:

CEO, President or Executive Director name:

CEO, President or Executive Director phone:

CEO, President or Executive Director email:

Board Chair name:

Board Chair phone:

Board Chair email:

Please provide information on any active and/or pending grants with Steering Committee members (The Lyda Hill Foundation, The Meadows Foundation, The Dallas Foundation, United Way Metropolitan Dallas):

**Please submit these documents online for EACH collaborating organization that is a 501c3 nonprofit:**

1. **Independent Audit** - Most recent audited Financial Statements. Service Providers are expected to obtain an audit of their Financial Statements within six months of the end of their fiscal year. The audit is expected to be done within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. To qualify, the Audit must have a year-end no older than 18 months.
2. **Management Letter (If Applicable)** – If the most recent audit had a management letter (also known as internal control deficiency letter) with it, please submit a copy of that management letter and your service provider’s formal response. (A management letter is a detailed letter from the auditor that is usually addressed to the board of directors or the audit committee. It presents weaknesses identified during the audit and offers recommendations to address them.)
3. **Tax Return** - Most recent IRS Form 990 or 990EZ.

**NOTE:** You MUST SUBMIT an IRS Form 990/990EZ unless your organization is a church or other house of worship, and thus not required by the IRS to file a return. This exemption DOES NOT apply to general faith-based nonprofit service organizations.

4. **IRS Determination Letter** - Most recent IRS determination letter.
5. **Budget** - Most current board-approved operating budget with comparison to previous year.
6. **Board Roster** – Most current roster of your Board of Directors indicating those who are officers, members of the Executive Committee and all standing committees. If applicable, note which board members will be involved in the Collaboration Exploration or Implementation.
7. **Disclosures (If Applicable)** –Please list any major changes and/or circumstances, fraud, litigation, investigation or other related occurrences since your most recent audit that would affect the financial health of your organization. If there are not any disclosures, please indicate such when completing form online.

## READINESS ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

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**[OUTLINED BELOW FOR YOUR REFERENCE. INVITATION-ONLY APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND SUBMITTED THROUGH AN ONLINE PORTAL]**

Recipients of the Readiness Assessments receive access to the Strategic Restructuring Assessment Tool (“SRAT”) and a half-day onsite consultation led by La Piana Consulting. Scheduling a mutually agreeable date for consultation will occur after the organization has been selected to receive the assessment, valued at approximately \$4,000 plus travel expenses.

Applications for the Readiness Assessment may be submitted by individual organizations who are seriously considering a formal collaboration, regardless if a prospective partner has already been identified.

1. What is motivating your interest in this assessment at this time? Please be specific as preference will be given to organizations actively considering some form of partnership.

Examples of reasons for considering collaboration may include:

- potential departure of one or more senior leaders,
- advancement of a shared goal,
- competition for funding donors and/or clientele,
- difficulty funding necessary technological initiatives,
- difficulty in meeting external standards/requirements imposed on our organization,
- financial problems/pressures within one or more of the partnering organizations,
- funder initiated/mandated the collaboration,
- high/increasing costs,
- parent organization request,
- response to a community need, and/or
- response to a funding opportunity.

(1000 character limit)

2. What outcomes do you hope to achieve through participating in this assessment?
  - a. Outcomes that would improve our organization's internal processes/efficiency

(1000 character limit)

- b. Outcomes that would improve our organization's programs/services and impact on our clients

(1000 character limit)

- c. If you checked both, how would you prioritize each? (indicate which of the two outcome areas is of greatest interest to you)



(1000 character limit)

3. Have you already initiated or begun conversation with potential partners? If so, please describe.  
(1000 character limit)

4. Annual budget in the current fiscal year.

(100 character limit)

5. The following statement best describes my organization's financial situation

1. Stable and/or growing
2. Stressed and stretched, but able to maintain our current level of programs and services
3. Vulnerable – cutting programs and concerned about sustainability

6. What is your expected timeline to complete the online readiness assessment? What is your preferred two-week timeframe for scheduling the half-day onsite consultation with La Piana to review results and advise on next steps?

(700 character limit)

7. State confidentiality concerns, if any.

(700 character limit)

**Please submit these documents online for EACH collaborating organization:**

1. **Independent Audit** - Most recent audited Financial Statements. Service Providers are expected to obtain an audit of their Financial Statements within six months of the end of their fiscal year. The audit is expected to be done within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. To qualify, the Audit must have a year-end no older than 18 months.
2. **Management Letter (If Applicable)** – If the most recent audit had a management letter (also known as internal control deficiency letter) with it, please submit a copy of that management letter and your service provider's formal response. (A management letter is a detailed letter from the auditor that is usually addressed to the board of directors or the audit committee. It presents weaknesses identified during the audit and offers recommendations to address them.)
3. **Tax Return** - Most recent IRS Form 990 or 990EZ.



NOTE: You MUST SUBMIT an IRS Form 990/990EZ unless your organization is a church or other house of worship, and thus not required by the IRS to file a return. This exemption DOES NOT apply to general faith-based nonprofit service organizations.

- 4. **IRS Determination Letter** - Most recent IRS determination letter.
- 5. **Budget** - Most current board-approved operating budget with comparison to previous year.
- 6. **Board Roster** – Most current roster of your Board of Directors indicating those who are officers, members of the Executive Committee and all standing committees. If applicable, note which board members will be involved in the Collaboration Exploration or Implementation.
- 7. **Disclosures (If Applicable)** –Please list any major changes and/or circumstances, fraud, litigation, investigation or other related occurrences since your most recent audit that would affect the financial health of your organization. If there are not any disclosures, please indicate such when completing form online.

## FEASIBILITY GRANT APPLICATION

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**[OUTLINED BELOW FOR YOUR REFERENCE. INVITATION-ONLY APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND SUBMITTED THROUGH AN ONLINE PORTAL]**

1. How much are you requesting from the BETTER TOGETHER FUND for a collaboration feasibility grant?

	Amount Requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND	Total Feasibility Phase Expenses	Percent
Budget Amounts			

If amount requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND is less than the total Feasibility Phase budget, list other sources of support for this project (funding or in-kind).

(300 character limit)

2. Briefly describe the collaboration you are looking to explore.

(500 character limit)

3. Describe the reason(s) both organizations are considering collaboration and what prompted each organization to consider a collaboration at this time.

Examples of reasons for considering collaboration may include:

- potential departure of one or more senior leaders,
- advancement of a shared goal,
- competition for funding donors and/or clientele,
- difficulty funding necessary technological initiatives,
- difficulty in meeting external standards/requirements imposed on our organization,
- financial problems/pressures within one or more of the partnering organizations,
- funder initiated/mandated the collaboration,
- high/increasing costs,
- parent organization request,
- response to a community need, and/or
- response to a funding opportunity.

(1000 character limit)

4. Briefly describe the potential benefits of this collaboration. How might the collaboration meaningfully change how organizations involved will operate? What might the potential impact of these changes be on the individuals/communities served?

(1000 character limit)

5. State confidentiality concerns, if any.

(700 character limit)

**Submit these documents online:**

1. **Feasibility Phase Budget and Narrative** – Line-item budget and narrative describing the technical assistance support that is being requested. Narrative portion should identify name, cost, and timing for each technical assistance provider. If requesting funds to cover staff time, describe staff involved and designate time and amounts expected for each organization. Feasibility Grants will only cover staff time (for all collaborating organizations) up to 20% of the amount requested.
2. **Readiness Assessment Results Summaries (if applicable)** – Summary page(s) from La Piana’s SRAT if collaborating organizations participated.

**Please submit these documents online for EACH collaborating organization that is a 501c3 nonprofit:**

1. **Independent Audit** - Most recent audited Financial Statements. Service Providers are expected to obtain an audit of their Financial Statements within six months of the end of their fiscal year. The audit is expected to be done within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. To qualify, the Audit must have a year-end no older than 18 months.
2. **Management Letter (If Applicable)** – If the most recent audit had a management letter (also known as internal control deficiency letter) with it, please submit a copy of that management letter and your service provider’s formal response. (A management letter is a detailed letter from the auditor that is usually addressed to the board of directors or the audit committee. It presents weaknesses identified during the audit and offers recommendations to address them.)
3. **Tax Return** - Most recent IRS Form 990 or 990EZ.

**NOTE:** You MUST SUBMIT an IRS Form 990/990EZ unless your organization is a church or other house of worship, and thus not required by the IRS to file a return. This exemption DOES NOT apply to general faith-based nonprofit service organizations.

4. **IRS Determination Letter** - Most recent IRS determination letter.
5. **Budget** - Most current board-approved operating budget with comparison to previous year.
6. **Board Roster** – Most current roster of your Board of Directors indicating those who are officers, members of the Executive Committee and all standing committees. If applicable, note which board members will be involved in the Collaboration Exploration or Implementation.
7. **Disclosures (If Applicable)** –Please list any major changes and/or circumstances, fraud, litigation, investigation or other related occurrences since your most recent audit that would affect the financial health of your organization. If there are not any disclosures, please indicate such when completing form online.

## PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION

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**[OUTLINED BELOW FOR YOUR REFERENCE. INVITATION-ONLY APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND SUBMITTED THROUGH AN ONLINE PORTAL]**

1. How much are you requesting from the BETTER TOGETHER FUND for your collaboration planning phase?

	Amount Requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND	Total Planning Phase Expenses	Percent
Budget Amounts			

If amount requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND is less than the total Planning Phase budget, list other sources of support for this project (funding or in-kind).

(300 character limit)

2. Briefly describe the collaboration you are looking to explore.

(500 character limit)

3. Describe the reason(s) both organizations are considering collaboration and what prompted participating organizations to consider a collaboration at this time.

Examples of reasons for considering collaboration may include:

- potential departure of one or more senior leaders,
- advancement of a shared goal,
- competition for funding donors and/or clientele,
- difficulty funding necessary technological initiatives,
- difficulty in meeting external standards/requirements imposed on our organization,
- financial problems/pressures within one or more of the partnering organizations,
- funder initiated/mandated the collaboration,
- high/increasing costs,
- parent organization request,
- response to a community need, and/or
- response to a funding opportunity.

(1000 character limit)

4. Discuss the potential benefits of the collaboration. How might the collaboration meaningfully change how the organizations involved will operate? What can you accomplish together that you cannot do separately? What might the potential impact of these changes be on the individuals/communities served?

(2000 character limit)

5. If you receive a planning grant, do you also plan to (eventually) apply for the final Better Together grant? If so, how do you envision you will use those funds to further mission-based growth and innovation? (1000 character limit)

6. Discuss potential challenges of the collaboration. What are the key issues you must address together? (e.g., governance, culture, programming, staffing)

(1000 character limit)

7. What are the essential questions that must be answered before each organization can make the decision to implement a formal collaboration? To the extent possible, identify the sequence by which you need to answer these questions (e.g., what questions must you answer first before deciding whether to proceed further in the exploration?)

(2000 character limit)

8. How will you measure successful completion of the Planning Phase? Consider what success would look like even if your organizations elect not to proceed with implementing the proposed collaboration.

(1000 character limit)

**Submit these documents online:**

1. **Planning Phase Budget and Narrative** – Line-item budget and narrative describing the technical assistance support that is being requested. Narrative portion should identify name, cost and timing for each technical assistance provider. If requesting more than \$10,000 for any single technical assistance provider, attach copy of proposal. If requesting funds to cover staff time, describe staff involved and designate time and amounts expected for each organization. Feasibility Grants will only cover staff time (for all collaborating organizations) up to 20% of the amount requested.
2. **Readiness Assessment Results Summaries (if applicable)** – Summary page(s) from La Piana's SRAT if organizations participated.
3. **Additional work to date (if applicable)** – Share description and/or summaries of collaboration feasibility work completed to date.

**Please submit these documents online for EACH collaborating organization that is a 501c3 nonprofit:**

1. **Independent Audit** - Most recent audited Financial Statements. Service Providers are expected to obtain an audit of their Financial Statements within six months of the end of their fiscal year. The audit is expected to be done within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. To qualify, the Audit must have a year-end no older than 18 months.
2. **Management Letter (If Applicable)** – If the most recent audit had a management letter (also known as internal control deficiency letter) with it, please submit a copy of that management letter and your service provider’s formal response. (A management letter is a detailed letter from the auditor that is usually addressed to the board of directors or the audit committee. It presents weaknesses identified during the audit and offers recommendations to address them.)
3. **Tax Return** - Most recent IRS Form 990 or 990EZ.

**NOTE:** You MUST SUBMIT an IRS Form 990/990EZ unless your organization is a church or other house of worship, and thus not required by the IRS to file a return. This exemption DOES NOT apply to general faith-based nonprofit service organizations.

4. **IRS Determination Letter** - Most recent IRS determination letter.
5. **Budget** - Most current board-approved operating budget with comparison to previous year.
6. **Board Roster** – Most current roster of your Board of Directors indicating those who are officers, members of the Executive Committee and all standing committees. If applicable, note which board members will be involved in the Collaboration Exploration or Implementation.
7. **Disclosures (If Applicable)** –Please list any major changes and/or circumstances, fraud, litigation, investigation or other related occurrences since your most recent audit that would affect the financial health of your organization. If there are not any disclosures, please indicate such when completing form online.

## IMPLEMENTATION GRANT APPLICATION

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**[OUTLINED BELOW FOR YOUR REFERENCE. INVITATION-ONLY APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND SUBMITTED THROUGH AN ONLINE PORTAL]**

1. How much are you requesting from the BETTER TOGETHER FUND for your collaboration implementation phase? Reminder: Implementation grants fund one-time costs necessary to execute a formal collaboration between two or more organizations. This type of grant does not support expenses for program operations.

	Amount Requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND	Total Implementation Phase Expenses	Percent
Budget Amounts			

If amount requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND is less than the total Implementation Phase budget, list other sources of support for this project (funding or in-kind).

(300 character limit)

2. Briefly describe the collaboration you intend to implement.

(500 character limit)

3. If you receive an implementation grant, do you also plan to (eventually) apply for the final Better Together Grant? If so, how do you plan to use those funds to further mission-based growth and innovation?

(2000 character limit)

4. **Risks and mitigants.** Describe the potential business risks and possible mitigants produced by this collaboration. Describe the integration challenges this collaboration has experienced to date, as well as potential future challenges of implementing this collaboration.

(5000 character limit)

5. **Outcomes and metrics.** List 3-5 expected outcomes associated with this collaboration. Provide associated metrics that you plan to track in order to measure expected outcomes. *Successful applicants will be able to quantify how the collaboration will preserve, expand or improve efficiency or service to constituents.*

(3000 character limit)



**Submit these documents online:**

- 1. **Board resolution** – One-page letter signed by both Board Chairs confirming each respective board has approved the implementation of the collaboration described in this Application.
- 2. **Implementation Phase Budget and Narrative** – Line-item budget and narrative describing the technical assistance support that is being requested. Narrative portion should identify name, cost and timing for each technical assistance provider. If requesting more than \$10,000 for any single technical assistance provider, attach copy of proposal. If requesting funds to cover staff time, describe staff involved and designate time and amounts expected for each organization. Feasibility Grants will only cover staff time (for all collaborating organizations) up to 20% of the amount requested.
- 3. **Executive Summary** – Detailing scope, timing, business model and other pertinent details of the implementation plan.
- 4. **Summary of work to date** – Share description and/or summary of work performed to date from previous phases. Describe alternative paths considered.
- 5. **Timeline** – Detailed implementation timeline.
- 6. **Future operating budget(s)** – Post-implementation, including first and second years following implementation.

**Please submit these documents online for EACH collaborating organization that is a 501c3 nonprofit:**

- 1. **Independent Audit** - Most recent audited Financial Statements. Service Providers are expected to obtain an audit of their Financial Statements within six months of the end of their fiscal year. The audit is expected to be done within Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. To qualify, the Audit must have a year-end no older than 18 months.
- 2. **Management Letter (If Applicable)** – If the most recent audit had a management letter (also known as internal control deficiency letter) with it, please submit a copy of that management letter and your service provider’s formal response. (A management letter is a detailed letter from the auditor that is usually addressed to the board of directors or the audit committee. It presents weaknesses identified during the audit and offers recommendations to address them.)
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- 4. **IRS Determination Letter** - Most recent IRS determination letter.
- 5. **Budget** - Most current board-approved operating budget with comparison to previous year.
- 6. **Board Roster** – Most current roster of your Board of Directors indicating those who are officers, members of the Executive Committee and all standing committees. If applicable, note which board members will be involved in the Collaboration Exploration or Implementation.

7. **Disclosures (If Applicable)** –Please list any major changes and/or circumstances, fraud, litigation, investigation or other related occurrences since your most recent audit that would affect the financial health of your organization. If there are not any disclosures, please indicate such when completing form online.

## BETTER TOGETHER GRANT APPLICATION

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**[OUTLINED BELOW FOR YOUR REFERENCE. INVITATION-ONLY APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED AND SUBMITTED THROUGH AN ONLINE PORTAL]**

1. Project Name

(100 character limit)

2. What problem or need is this project designed to address?

(2000 character limit)

3. How will the project address the issue?

(2000 character limit)

4. List your specific goals and objectives for this project.

(2000 character limit)

5. If funded, how will the grant money be used?

(2000 character limit)

6. What is the timeframe for the project?

(2000 character limit)

7. How will success be measured?

(2000 character limit)

8. How much are you requesting from the BETTER TOGETHER FUND for your Better Together grant?

	<b>Amount Requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND</b>	<b>Total Cost of Project</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Budget Amounts			



If amount requested from BETTER TOGETHER FUND is less than the total Project budget, list other sources of support for this project (funding or in-kind).

(300 character limit)

**Submit these documents online:**

- 1. **Project Budget and Narrative** – Line-item budget and accompanying narrative



PROPOSAL COMPLIANCE STAFF REVIEW FORM – **FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

Agency Name:	Staff:
Grant Requested (type and amount):	Date Completed:

<b>Geographic Service Area</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Based in and/or serving the North Texas community. <i>Note: priority will be given to collaborations that serve constituents in Dallas County.</i>	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>Audit<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Did the agency submit an independent audit?	Yes/No
2. Was the year-end covered in the audit within 18 months of review date?	Yes/No
3. Is there a management/internal control letter included with the audit?	Document Included?
4. If there is a management letter included, is it absent of any material weaknesses and/or significant deficiencies?	Yes/No
5. If there is a management letter included, was it absent of a “going concern”?	Yes/No
6. If there is a management letter included, was it absent of an adverse opinion and/or a disclaimer opinion?	Yes/No
7. Does the auditor’s report indicate that the agency complies with all GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles)?	Yes/No
8. Is the auditor’s report an “unqualified” opinion?	Yes/No
9. Liquidity: Does the agency have 20 days of cash or more?	Yes/No
10. Program Expenses: Is the percentage 70% or more?	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>990<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Did the agency submit a 990 or 990EZ?	Yes/No

<sup>4</sup> If not available, please provide equivalent financial information such as a board-approved budget along with an explanation

2. Was the year-end covered in the 990/990EZ within 18 months of review date?	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>IRS Determination Letter</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Did the agency submit an IRS determination letter showing a non-profit status?	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>Operating Budget</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Did the agency submit an annual operating budget, with comparison to previous year?	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>Board Governance</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Did the agency submit a current Board roster, indicating officers and membership on the Executive committee and on all standing committees?	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>Disclosures</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
1. Is the agency absent of any disclosures that would negatively impact current financial health?	Yes/No
<b>Comments:</b>	

<b>Agency Score</b> An agency will receive a “fail” if any areas(other than shaded areas) are checked “no”.	<b>Pass/Fail</b>
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