2020 Grantmaking Guidelines
Woods Fund Chicago (Woods Fund) is a private grantmaking foundation committed to funding community organizing and public policy advocacy that advances racial equity and economic justice. A core principle of Woods Fund is people most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice lead the process of defining problems and developing solutions. Evolving from and building upon this principle, in 2009, the Woods Fund board of directors voted to approve a racial equity priority for the foundation. Since that time, Woods Fund has been intentionally learning and implementing strategies to meaningfully live out this charge as a foundation. For the past eleven years, this has included: developing a diversity requirement for board members and senior staff, providing capacity building grants and trainings to seed and support racial equity work, convening grantees and foundation colleagues to advance learning, increasing funding for campaigns and coalitions working explicitly to reform and/or dismantle structurally racist policies and institutions, and using a racial equity framework to guide the foundation’s entire operations.

11 years after Woods Fund identified racial equity as a priority, Woods Fund is taking an additional step to further its commitment by prioritizing this focus within its grantmaking guidelines. The key changes to the grantmaking guidelines include: requiring organizations to have an explicit racial equity and economic justice focus; requiring a majority of people of color in organizational leadership, including senior staff and board membership; requiring organizations to be considered for multiyear funding to have their executive director or board chair be a person of color; and the creation of the Catalyst Fund. These changes should not be interpreted as a departure from its previous guidelines, rather an extension of them with a more explicit racial equity focus.

Racial Equity and Economic Justice Framework
Woods Fund is deepening its commitment to racial equity and will support work that explicitly advances racial equity and economic justice. Within this context, Woods Fund will continue to support community organizing, public policy advocacy, and the integration of these two strategies as outlined in the following program area sections.

With support from experts, colleagues, and grantees, Woods Fund has defined terms and developed language that informs the racial equity and economic justice framework for its grantmaking, but recognizes that there may be variations to these working definitions:

**Structural racism** is the cumulative impact of historical and current policies and practices and cultural stereotypes and norms that together maintain racial hierarchies and inequitable racial group outcomes.

**Systemic racism** enables structural racism to persist and is composed of policies and practices in public and private institutions that result in the exclusion or promotion of certain racial groups that perpetuate and reinforce inequitable outcomes.

Structural and systemic racism have produced income inequality and unequal access to resources and opportunities for generations of Chicagoans. This is evidenced by severe racial disparities across nearly every quality of life indicator, including health, housing, income and wealth accumulation, employment, education, and criminal justice.
Racial equity is a multi-issue framework defined as an outcome and a process. As an outcome, racial equity is situational fairness, where and when race no longer determines one’s socioeconomic outcomes. As a process, racial equity is applied when people most impacted by structural racism are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that dismantle structural and systemic racism.

Racial equity is achieved through:

- Acknowledgement and accounting for past and current inequities, and provide all people, particularly those most impacted by structural racism, the infrastructure needed to thrive
- Collaboration and coalition building
- Systemic change and/or transformation where structural and systemic racism and economic injustice exists leading to the:
  - Application of differential resources to unequal needs
  - Removal of barriers that segregate or contribute to the persistence of structural racism and economic injustice
  - Targeted reform and/or dismantlement of institutional policies and practices that enable structural racism and economic injustice to exist and persist

Woods Fund will continue to listen to, respond to, and provide opportunities for grantees to increase their understanding and to share their knowledge.

Eligibility Requirements, Limitations, and Restrictions for Grants
This section will enable organizations to determine their alignment with Woods Fund’s vision, mission, and core principles and priorities.

Eligibility Requirements
Woods Fund will support organizations that:

- Have an explicit racial equity and economic justice focus. The organization’s commitment to racial equity and economic justice should be present in their mission, vision, and/or values and will also include the presence or progress towards the six building blocks as described below
- Prioritize and engage people most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice to lead the process of defining problems and developing solutions
- Have the majority of people of color in their leadership, including senior staff and board membership (renewing organizations may have two-years to meet this requirement)
- Lead with community organizing and/or public policy advocacy as the strategies for change

Six Building Blocks for Racial Equity
Woods Fund grantmaking is guided by the following six building blocks and will be used to review grant applications. These are not requirements, rather guidelines for how organizations may incorporate racial equity in their work.

1. Establishment of a shared language around race and racial equity
2. Utilizing a structural perspective vs. an individual perspective
3. Understanding local and national racial history using structural analysis that identifies the accumulated causes of inequitable outcomes and develops strategies accordingly
4. Using disaggregated data that advances the understanding of how different groups are differently situated
5. Applying a racial equity impact analysis/assessment to examine how different racial and ethnic groups have been or will likely be affected by policies and/or practices
6. Effectively communicating that racial equity will result in improvements for all groups

Application Questions
The applications are available via the online grants management system; the directions for how to access it are described at the end of this document. The applications include questions to determine the following:

- Commitment to community organizing and public policy advocacy as strategies for change
- Prioritization and engagement of people most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice to lead the process of defining problems and developing solutions
- The presence of goals that aim to advance racial equity and economic justice and produce equitable outcomes for communities most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice
- Clear analysis of root causes and how the proposed goal(s) will result in decreased racialized economic disparities
- Participation in coalitions to achieve greater impact
- Ability to monitor, assess, and document the impact of the change(s) being sought, strategies being used, and the progress being made

Limitations and Restrictions
Woods Fund grants are generally limited to nonprofit organizations that operate in the Chicago metropolitan area and are primarily provided to organizations located in Chicago. Woods Fund will only provide grants to organizations as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or have a fiscal sponsor. A fiscal sponsor acts as a guardian of grant funds, retains discretion and control over the use of grant funds, and ensures that the funds are used for 501(c)(3) purposes. The fiscal sponsor and organization’s missions should be in alignment.

Please note that Woods Fund requires organizations to adhere to lobbying limits established by the federal government for organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation. Please refer to the information provided on the BolderAdvocacy.org of the Alliance for Justice website for a detailed description of regulations and requirements for nonprofits engaged in advocacy work.

Woods Fund will generally not support:
- Business or economic development projects
- Capital campaigns, capital projects, capital acquisitions, housing construction/rehabilitation
- Endowments
- Sponsorship of fundraising events or program advertising
- Health care institutions, including, but not limited to, hospitals and clinics
- Direct services

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3 Adapted from ABFE Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities
Types of Grantmaking: Core and Special
There are two types of grantmaking and respective processes: core and special. The core grantmaking process is open to organizations that meet all of the eligibility requirements, and the special grantmaking process is by invitation only. All grant funding allocations are made annually through the foundation’s budget process and are in compliance with the spending policy outlined in Woods Fund’s Investment Policy Statement.

Core Grantmaking
Core grantmaking encompasses the majority of Woods Fund’s annual grants budget, and the Woods Fund board of directors awards these grants two times a year.

Core grantmaking involves a two-step application process. The first step is the submission of the Letter of Inquiry form for new applicants or the Intent to Apply form for renewing organizations. If invited, the second step of the application process is the submission of a Full Application for new applicants and an Integrated Application for renewing organizations.

Level of Support
Grant funding amounts depend on the size, capacity, and demonstrated efficacy of the organization. The range of grants is $15,000 to $55,000. New applicants approved for funding will generally receive $15,000-$25,000 annually for the initial year(s) of funding.

Type and Duration of Support
Woods Fund prioritizes general operating support, when possible. Woods Fund may provide project support in circumstances where:
- The organization’s budget and mission is significantly focused on non-community organizing/non-public policy advocacy work and activities and/or
- The organization is applying for a specific project

Multiyear Grants
Multiyear grant applications are accepted by invitation only. To be considered for a multiyear grant, an organization must:
- Have received consecutive funding from Woods Fund for at least the previous two-years
- Be financially sustainable
- Be a collaborative partner and field builder
- Consistently meet objectives
- Have their executive director or board chair be a person of color
- Submit timely and complete applications and reports

There may be factors that may result in ineligibility or an inability to completely fund an entire multiyear cycle.

Program Areas
Core grantmaking program areas include:
Community Organizing
The Community Organizing program area seeks to support organizations that bring people together who individually may lack power but collectively can build and wield power to advance racial equity and economic justice. Community organizing enables democracy at the grassroots level to reform and transform systems.

Woods Fund will support organizations that:
- Prioritize and engage people most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice to lead the process of defining problems and developing solutions
- Are community-based and building an informed power base
- Participate in coalition building to achieve greater impact

Public Policy Advocacy
The Public Policy Advocacy program area seeks to support organizations that influence public discourse and policy decisions to advance racial equity and economic justice.

Public policy advocacy is comprised of a continuum of activities that aim to inform decisions within the public sector and may include: educating the public and policymakers; influencing legislation, referendum, budgeting, and rule-making; monitoring policy implementation; and taking legal actions.

Woods Fund will support organizations that:
- Seek to create systems change to advance racial equity and economic justice
- Ensure that people most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice have a voice in the policymaking process
- Have a strong track record of working with community-based organizations
- Participate in coalition building to achieve greater impact
- Have demonstrated an ability to effectively influence policymakers and the policymaking process

Integrated Approach: Community Organizing and Public Policy Advocacy
The Integrated Approach program area leverages the power of community organizing and public policy advocacy strategies. This program area seeks to support community-based organizations that employ both strategies to advance racial equity and economic justice.

Woods Fund will support organizations that:
- Seek to create systems change to advance racial equity and economic justice
- Prioritize and engage people most impacted by structural racism and economic injustice to lead the process of defining problems and developing solutions
- Are community-based and building an informed power base
- Participate in coalition building to achieve greater impact
- Have demonstrated an ability to effectively influence policymakers and the policymaking process
Application Process
Letter of Inquiry (LOI)
Woods Fund requires new applicants to submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) form. New applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in grant information sessions; the dates of these sessions are available on the website.

To apply, new applicants will need to create an account via Woods Fund’s online grant management system.

Once an LOI is submitted, the applicant will receive an electronic notification that the LOI was received. The applicant will be notified within two-weeks if they are invited to submit a full application. Instructions to complete the full application will also be provided at that time.

Intent to Apply (ITA)
Woods Fund requires renewing organizations to submit an Intent to Apply (ITA) form. Organizations will receive instructions on how to apply from the Grants Manager via email in advance of the deadline.

Once an ITA is submitted, the applicant will receive an electronic notification that the ITA was received. The applicant will be notified within two-weeks if they are invited to submit an integrated application. Instructions on how to complete the integrated application will also be provided at that time.

Deadlines
All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. on the due dates listed below. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted:

March 2020

- Letter of Inquiry Form and Intent to Apply applications available: November 1, 2019
- Letter of Inquiry Form and Intent to Apply due date: December 6, 2019
- Letter of Inquiry Form and Intent to Apply response date: December 20, 2019
- Full Application and Integrated Application due date: January 17, 2020

September 2020

- Letter of Inquiry Form and Intent to Apply applications available: May 1, 2020
- Letter of Inquiry Form and Intent to Apply due date: May 29, 2020
- Letter of Inquiry Form and Intent to Apply response date: June 10, 2020
- Full Application and Integrated Application due date: July 10, 2020

Special Grantmaking
Special grantmaking may be available to organizations by invitation-only. Please contact the grants managers or a program officer for more information.
Special Grantmaking includes:
  ● Capacity Building Initiative
  ● Catalyst Fund
  ● Social Justice and Arts Fund
  ● Rapid Response Fund

Capacity Building Initiative
The Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) is a one to three year program through which organizations receive individualized support from a highly qualified consultant and engage in workshops and peer learning sessions to address the capacity needs and opportunities of the organization. Organizations selected to CBI will be awarded a grant to cover the costs associated with the initiative.

Catalyst Fund
This fund will support organizations engaged in a public policy advocacy campaign and/or collaborative work on a particular issue(s) that leverages an opportunity, political (non-partisan) moment, or resources. This work can be new work or ongoing work targeted on addressing the adversely disproportionate impact of racism and racist systems on communities of color. Grant sizes may vary, and the duration will range from 2-3 years.

Social Justice and Arts Fund
This fund supports social justice and arts efforts that inform, inspire, and mobilize people to take action in community organizing campaigns and/or public policy advocacy efforts that work to advance racial equity and economic justice. Organizations interested in collaborating with individual artists or arts organizations to advance their community organizing and/or public policy advocacy efforts can apply for funds up to $10,000 on a rolling basis until funding is exhausted.

Rapid Response Fund
This fund supports one-time, time-sensitive activities that catalyze existing community organizing campaign(s) and/or public policy advocacy effort(s). Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis with a maximum award of $10,000.

Acknowledgements
Woods Fund engaged racial equity scholars and practitioners, philanthropic serving organizations, foundation colleagues, and grantees in developing its racial equity and economic justice framework. Woods Fund acknowledges the input and expertise of ABFE, Center for Social Inclusion, The Hyams Foundation, and Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity in the development of the framework.