



New England Civil Rights Fund

The nation's current political and social environment is presenting new challenges to many communities in New England. Immigrants and refugees, Muslims, communities of color, and LGBTQ people are among those most directly affected by recent policies that restrict their rights as well as by the negative rhetoric from some top federal officials.

In response to this context, the Barr Foundation conducted a special initiative in 2017, outside its core program areas, to: 1) promote human rights and protect civil liberties; and 2) strengthen investigative journalism and protections for freedom of the press. The Foundation ultimately awarded more than \$3.1 million in grants, most of them multiyear, in support of these goals.

Given the continued threats to many people's well-being and to our democratic norms, Barr's trustees authorized [a second special initiative this year](#). Building on our work in 2017, this effort is dedicated to: 1) supporting civil rights protections for communities in New England threatened by the current political and social environment; and 2) ensuring a fair and accurate 2020 Census count in New England. Barr recently announced [an initial set of grants](#) to leading organizations advancing one or both of these goals.

As part of this initiative, the Foundation has allocated up to \$1 million for the New England Civil Rights Fund ("the Fund") to invite a wider array of organizations to apply for funding, with a particular interest in identifying groups engaged in areas beyond Greater Boston. The Fund is open to organizations working in support of and in partnership with immigrants and refugees, Muslims, communities of color, and LGBTQ communities to support civil rights protections and strengthen community capacity to respond to new challenges.

Request Overview

As Barr sought to identify how its resources could be of greatest value at this time, we benefited from insights and advice from colleagues in the region's nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. Many highlighted the challenges for civil rights protection and community support beyond Greater Boston, as fewer philanthropic resources tend to be available outside of larger metropolitan regions. In addition, some Boston-based nonprofits are experiencing increased demand from nonprofits and individuals for technical assistance and services outside of Boston, and these requests are adding to existing strains on resources.

Through the New England Civil Rights Fund, Barr invites organizations to submit proposals for efforts to support civil rights protections and strengthen community capacity to respond to new challenges in communities throughout New England (i.e., Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont). While priority will be given to work beyond Greater Boston, applicants could include:

- Organizations outside Greater Boston for work to support civil rights protections and strengthen community response capacity—either directly or through re-granting to nonprofits in the area.
- Boston-based organizations for work within or outside Greater Boston, which may entail trainings and support for other nonprofits, as well as assistance to individuals.

Grants may be used for efforts that support immigrants and refugees, Muslims, communities of color, and LGBTQ communities to respond to new policies and threats in the current environment. Such activities could include, for example:

- Providing legal information and services to affected populations
- Strengthening leadership and organizing capacity among community members to respond to threats and advocate for themselves and their communities
- Working collaboratively across constituencies to promote the well-being of targeted populations
- Informing policymaking by sharing research, data, and local experiences
- Providing trainings and/or support to community groups engaged in the above activities

Grant amounts will vary, depending on an organization's proposed activities, size, and current capacity. Grant amounts are likely to be in the \$50,000–\$200,000 range. Most grants will be for 24-month (i.e., two-year) periods to allow for continuity in organizations' activities.

Selection Criteria

The Foundation will prioritize proposals that demonstrate the following:

- A track record of effectiveness in the area of work proposed
- An understanding of and history of involvement with the communities whom the organization intends to partner with and serve
- A clear plan of action and sound approach for measuring progress
- Staff capacity to implement the proposed plan of action
- Evidence of strong networks and partnerships with others in the field

Preparing a Proposal

Please address the following in a proposal of no more than seven (7) pages (fewer pages welcome). Barr welcomes proposals submitted to other funders if these points are addressed.

- Organizational Background
 - Mission, key goals and strategies, and major activities and programs
 - Track record related to the proposed area of work for which funding is sought
 - Key staff who will implement the proposed activities
- Proposed Use of Funds
 - Goals to which the funds will be applied
 - Activities that will be undertaken with the resources provided to meet these goals, including an estimated timeline

- A description of key partners and allies, and how the work complements that of others in the field
- Expected challenges and how they will be addressed
- Target Outcomes
 - Changes anticipated for those served or affected by the funded activities; please be as specific as possible about those affected and the expected impact
 - Approach for tracking progress

Please also include the following attachments:

- Board list
- Current annual operating budget
- Program budget (if applicable; you may submit a preexisting budget outline or use [this template](#); instructions for the template are [available here](#))
- Funding information (list of other foundation, business, and government funding sources, including dollar amounts and indications of which sources are committed, pending, or anticipated)
- Most recent audited financial statements (if organization is not required to conduct an audit, please submit most recent Form 990 filing)
- 501(c)(3) documentation

Timeline

May 31, 2018	Request for Proposals released
July 2, 2018	Proposals due (submit online here)
July 3–20, 2018	Additional information may be requested from applicants
July 30, 2018	Grant decisions announced

Please submit your proposals [through this website](#) no later than Monday, July 2, 2018.

Barr welcomes inquiries about this RFP at CivilRightsFund@barrfoundation.org.

About the Barr Foundation

The Barr Foundation’s mission is to invest in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally, and selectively engages nationally, working in partnership to elevate the arts, advance solutions for climate change, and connect all students to success in high school and beyond. With assets of \$1.7 billion, Barr is among the largest private foundations in New England and has contributed more than \$837 million to charitable causes. For more information, visit barrfoundation.org and follow [@BarrFdn](https://twitter.com/BarrFdn).