

The JHU Innovation Fund for Community Safety Final RFP
February 2, 2021

I. Overview

Johns Hopkins University has created a \$6 million, 4-year fund to support innovative, community-led programs designed to reduce violence in Baltimore, with a focus on the areas neighboring campuses in Mount Vernon, Charles Village, and East Baltimore.

After announcing the creation of the fund in September, Johns Hopkins held four listening sessions, and set up opportunities for public input through texting, email, and [a website](#). Several hundred community residents, faculty, staff, and students attended the public listening sessions and provided thoughtful, meaningful, and valuable input. Dozens of additional community members provided their input on a broad range of questions related to the development of the Fund via email and the website.

In late November 2020, a draft RFP was released via [the Johns Hopkins Innovation Fund website](#) and sent to all attendees of the public listening sessions held in October. The draft RFP set out details on eligibility for the fund, authorized uses of funding, the availability of technical assistance and Fund's plans for external evaluation. It also explained the requirements for an application and provided criteria for the application review. Over 100 community members provided thoughtful and insightful comments on the Draft RFP.

This Final RFP reflects many of the public comments. We also have developed an additional [“Frequently Asked Questions”](#) webpage that addresses other questions, including explaining why certain suggestions were not able to be taken. We plan to host a **LIVE Question and Answer Session on January 19, 2021 from 5-6 pm for residents, students, faculty, and community organizations**. Register [here](#) and you may also submit your questions in advance when you register. Based on this session, we will add more detail to the “Frequently Asked Questions” webpage by early February. Should there be any additional updates or clarifications, they will also be posted there. Please check back regularly. If you still have additional questions, you may email innovationfund@jhu.edu. We deeply appreciate the input and participation from so many in helping to guide this process.

We will also be hosting a **virtual partner matching session on January 25, 2021 from 5-6pm**. This session is for applicants still looking for a JHU affiliate or community-based organization to partner with. Register [here](#) if you'd like to participate.

When you are ready to submit your application, please visit [the RFP application page](#) for further details on how to do so.

II. Eligibility for the Fund

The JHU Innovation Fund for Community Safety will support community-led efforts to reduce violence in Baltimore, with a focus on the areas neighboring campuses in Mount Vernon, Charles Village, and East Baltimore.

Who is eligible to apply?

Applications for the Fund must be filed by community-based nonprofit organizations located in Baltimore, Maryland. These are organizations that are registered as nonprofits in Maryland and not an academic institution. The applicant organization is responsible for the accuracy of the application, for the management and oversight of the grant spending, and for providing required reports and other deliverables back to the Fund.

Each application can include funding and activities for many different kinds of partners. These include:

- Community partners, including community-based nonprofit organizations and other community groups, local religious institutions, and community members
- Students, staff, and faculty at academic institutions
- Public agencies
- For-profit businesses

The application must explain the roles of each partner. Community partners together must receive at least 51% of the funding for project activities.

What if I am interested in applying but I do not work now with a community-based nonprofit organization?

You can collaborate with a community-based nonprofit organization for the purpose of this application. In this case, the community-based nonprofit organization will be the applicant. The community-based nonprofit organization will take responsibility for the grant, designate a responsible staff member to oversee the grant, and be the fiscal sponsor for all activities. The community-based nonprofit organization can receive a small portion of the grant to cover administrative expenses (see the “Frequently Asked Questions” document for additional details).

Is there an expectation of collaboration with Johns Hopkins students, staff, or faculty?

Yes, there is an expectation for collaboration with Johns Hopkins students, staff or faculty. Each application should include a budget allocation for the collaborator of at least 10%. See the Frequently Asked Questions document for more information on Johns Hopkins partners, including information for community organizations that do not have partners at the time of the release of the RFP.

Are expansions of existing activities eligible?

Yes. The activities can be expansions of existing work.

III. Level of Funding

Applications can request up to \$250,000 a year for up to four years of funding. It is perfectly acceptable to request less than the maximum amount.

More information about the budget, including information about administrative or indirect costs is in the frequently asked questions document.

IV. Focus Areas

Activities should relate to one or more of the following four focus areas:

1. **Environmental improvements to specific locations.** Many such improvements have been associated with a reduction in violence and a greater sense of safety.
2. **Programs to provide support and services to individuals at high risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence.** Such programs might include counseling or coaching, job training and placement, or other services.
3. **Efforts to help youth at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence stay safe and succeed in school or work.** These efforts should involve the leadership and participation of youth themselves.
4. **Community mediation.** Such programs should build on existing successful models where possible.

V. Eligible Geography

Projects related to Focus Area 1, environmental improvements, must take place within the following footprint below.

For projects related to Focus Area 2-4, applicants should explain how the proposed work *focuses* on the following footprint, understanding that many of the people engaged may not live or work in the specific area. Eligible projects may include citywide efforts that will put additional emphasis in the areas designated on the map.

A map of eligible geographies can be viewed [here](#).

VI. Ineligible Activities

The Fund cannot support lobbying. The Fund will separately provide for evaluation (see below), so evaluation should not be included in grant budgets.

VII. Reporting, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation

The Fund anticipates hiring one or more technical assistance partners and an evaluation team. The purpose of technical assistance is to help projects succeed. The purpose of evaluation is to help the projects orient to a set of appropriate outcomes and to assess the progress and outcomes fairly.

Before funding is provided, the successful applicant will meet with a technical assistance partner and the designated evaluation team and reach agreement on a plan for reporting, technical assistance, and evaluation. Reporting is expected to be on a quarterly basis. All of the data generated by the evaluation team will be shared with the project team. The project team, the evaluation team, and the Fund will have the ability to use the data to share results and information about the project outcomes with others.

Grantees are expected to participate in semi-annual meetings with other grantees to share experiences and lessons learned.

VIII. Grant Funding

It is anticipated the funds will be provided in advance on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. An annual review of the project will be the basis for continued funding. Notwithstanding this annual review, the Fund shall have the right to review the use of funds at any time.

Innovation Grant funding shall be kept in a separate account that can be independently audited.

IX. The Application

If you choose to submit the application by hard copy or document upload, the application should be no more than 5 single-spaced pages, with one inch margins, written in Times New Roman 11 point font.

The application should include these numbered sections:

1. **Title**
2. **Name of applicant community-based organization that will take the lead responsibility**
3. **Responsible lead contact at this community-based organization**

4. **Names of other individuals, organizations, and businesses involved**
5. **Names of academic partners**
6. **Total amount of money requested by year**
7. **Focus area or areas covered by the project:**
 1. Environmental improvements to specific locations.
 2. Programs to provide support and services to individuals at high risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence.
 3. Efforts to help youth at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence stay safe and succeed in school or work.
 4. Community mediation.
8. **Summary of the project in one paragraph**
9. **Background and rationale for the project.** Please explain why you think this idea will make a difference for community safety in the immediate to near-term. If the proposal is an expansion of an existing activity, please explain the current work here, including the rationale for expansion.
10. **Plan of action**, organized by specific activities with a clear explanation of the roles of partners listed in #4 and #5 above.
11. **Geography.** Explain how the project will work in the eligible geography as described above.
12. **Impact.** Include the intended impact, including the description of what success for the specific project looks like, and how that success might be measured. Please discuss the relevance of the project to one or more major outcomes of interest to Baltimore City: homicide rates, perception of neighborhood safety, adverse childhood experiences, and the employment or education of youth ages 16 to 24.
13. **Discussion of how this project can lead to greater understanding of ways to reduce violence and inspire additional work by others.** To the extent possible, identify policymakers and other audiences that may be interested in using the results.

X. Numbered Appendices to the Application (required, does not count in the 5 page limit)

1. **Project timeline (up to 4 years)**, showing key activities for each year.
2. **Background on project partners** (both organizations and key individuals). For each key organization and individual in the project, explain the experience of each working in similar efforts in Baltimore.
3. **Project budget by year**, including the amount for each partner by year, along with an explanation of the proposed expenses. Note: The selection process may include negotiation on the budget.
4. **Last audit** for the applicant community-based organization

5. **Letters of support.** Support letters should come from each of the partners in the application as well as up to four additional letters from community members, community organizations, Baltimore City officials, or Johns Hopkins affiliates.

XI. Guidelines for Project Budget

Applicants are required to submit a project budget for each year of funding requested. Please only request funding for years in which the project will be active. We are accepting all formats so long as the requested information is provided. A sample budget has been included in this RFP and can be found on page 7 for those seeking additional guidance. Budgets should include the following information:

Overall budget plan:

Please provide for each year you will be requesting funding, up to 4 years:

- **Total amount of funding requested, by year**
- **Annual funding distribution by partner** (e.g. community-based organization, JHU partner, lead applicant, if any)
- **Total amount of administrative costs across all partners, by year***

Specific budget plan:

For each partner in the project, please provide:

- **A summary of the key role of the partner in the overall project**
- **Annual budget which includes expenses for: staffing, other categories of expenses related to programmatic activities, and administrative costs.***
- **An explanation of the staffing of the project**
- **An explanation of each of the other categories of expenses related to programmatic activities**

**Each application can have a total of 20% for administrative costs, otherwise known as indirect costs. These costs should include utilities and rent, fiscal oversight, administrative staff, legal and other professional services, and equipment rental. These funds can be distributed across the various partners, with the exception of Johns Hopkins students, staff, and faculty.*

XII. Criteria for Application Review

Only complete applications that meet the key requirements— including that they are submitted by community-based nonprofit organizations and include activities in one more of the focus areas in the eligible geographic areas -- will be scored.

Scoring will be organized in four areas:

- **Rationale and Potential Impact.** There is a strong rationale for how this effort can reduce community violence in the immediate to near-term.

- **Plan.** The proposed activities are well planned, make sense, are realistic, and can achieve the goals.
- **Experience.** The lead organization and partners are experienced, ready, and able to carry out the work.
- **Budget.** The budget is appropriate for the project.

Appendix 1 - Sample Project Budget

Please submit a project budget for each year of funding requested. The budget plan should be organized in these sections. Please see below for a simple example.

Each application can include up to 20% of the budget for administrative costs, otherwise known as indirect costs. These costs might be used for such expenses as utilities and rent, fiscal oversight, administrative staff, legal and other professional services, and equipment rental. The specific expenses for administrative funds do not need to be specified in the budget. These administrative expenses can be distributed across the various partners, with the exception of Johns Hopkins students, staff, and faculty.

Section 1: Overall Budget Plan

Please provide for each year you will be requesting funding, up to 4 years:

- Total amount of funding requested, by year
- Annual funding distribution by partner (e.g. community-based organization, JHU partner, lead applicant, if any)
- Total amount of administrative costs across all partners, by year*

Example:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Partner A	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
Partner B	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$50,000
Total	\$55,000	\$60,000	\$65,000	\$70,000	\$250,000

Our total budget is \$250,000. Of this amount, our total administrative expenses is \$40,000, which is less than the cap of 20%.

Section 2: Specific budget plan:

For each partner in the project, please provide:

- A summary of the key role of the partner in the overall project
- Annual budget which includes expenses for: staffing, other categories of expenses related to programmatic activities, and administrative costs.*
- An explanation of the staffing of the project
- An explanation of each of the other categories of expenses related to programmatic activities

Example:

Partner A: Partner A will be leading the project, through a part-time project manager who will be working with community partners to create a plan for improvements in our neighborhood to improve public safety. Partner A will also be hosting many community meetings and workshops, which will require supplies. Partner A will hire local youth as interns for \$10/hour.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Part-time manger	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$120,000
Youth Interns	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
Meetings and related supplies	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
Administrative costs	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000
Total	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$200,000

Partner B: Partner B will be involved in purchasing and providing supplies for the community improvements, based on the plan developed by Partner A. The supplies will be purchased for the project with a 10% markup for delivery. Partner B is not requesting any staffing, just funding for supplies to assist with the improvements.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Supplies	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$50,000