



Advancing Health Equity in Black Maternal Care



This request for applications (RFA) invites Black-led and Black-serving organizations that support the well-being of Black birthing people and mothers and their families to apply for funding. Organizations serving diverse populations are also welcome to apply if they can demonstrate a clear and meaningful connection to Black birthing people and mothers and their needs, experiences, and overall well-being.

This funding opportunity is grounded in the understanding that Black-led and Black-serving organizations play a critical role in improving maternal health outcomes. Increasing investment in these organizations is a major step toward shifting resources and decision-making power to communities most impacted by inequities.

Funds are intended to support organizations and coalitions in strengthening their work and long-term sustainability. This may include building strong organizational cultures, growing and supporting the Black birthing workforce (doulas, midwives, community health workers, etc.), and strengthening the capacity of individuals and organizations advancing birth equity.

Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) will award up to 10 grants across the state, with each organization eligible to receive up to \$130,000 over two years. These awards are for general operating support, meaning funds can be used to strengthen and sustain the work organizations are already doing. Applicants are not required to create new programs or initiatives to be eligible for this funding.

Key Application Dates	
Open Date	June 8, 2026
Pre-application Call	June 29, 2026- Click here to register for the pre-application call
Close Date	July 23, 2026 noon Central Time
Anticipated Award Notification	November 2026



Background and Approach

Black birthing people and mothers are disproportionately affected by maternal mortality, with rates triple those of white people. A variety of issues contribute to maternal mortality and morbidity in Missouri, 84% of which are preventable. Additionally, social determinants of health such as economic instability, lack of access to safe housing, less access to nutritious food and transportation create environments that are unsustainable for Black birthing people and mothers to thrive.

Underlying these disparities are systems that have historically failed to provide culturally responsive, respectful, and supportive care for Black birthing people and mothers. Structural racism continues to shape both the conditions in which Black families live and the care they receive.

The Improving Maternal Health Outcomes (IMHO) initiative focuses on creating meaningful change for Black birthing people and mothers by shifting how resources, power, and decision-making are distributed across the maternal health ecosystem. Through listening sessions with Black-led organizations, birth workers, and community members, informed by resources such as the [Birthing Justice Impact Report](#), [Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs \(AMCHP\)](#), and [Fundors for Birth Justice & Equity](#), MFH has heard consistent priorities. These include the need for more culturally responsive and holistic support, expanded access to a diverse birthing workforce, and stronger investment in community-based approaches that are trusted and rooted in lived experience.

This funding opportunity builds on these insights by investing in Black-led and Black-serving organizations, strengthening skills, and capacities to build equitable, culturally congruent alliances that nurture and value thriving Black communities in Missouri. By providing flexible support, MFH aims to strengthen their capacity, sustainability, and ability to respond to community-identified needs, contributing to improved maternal health outcomes for Black birthing people and mothers and their families.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be nonprofit or governmental entities and meet [MFH funding guidelines](#). Applicants may apply with a [fiscal sponsor](#).

To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants should:

- Be a **Black-led** and/or **Black-serving organization**
 - This may include organizations with Black leadership (founder, director, core team, or board) and/or organizations deeply rooted in and accountable to Black communities
- Have a **commitment to and experience supporting Black maternal health, Black birthing people and mothers and their families' well-being in Missouri**



- Have trusted **relationships with the community you serve**
 - This may look like strong word-of-mouth, reputation of expertise, alignment of values, referrals, or long-standing community connections
- Demonstrate a **clear connection to the communities you serve**
 - This could include organization leadership with shared lived experiences, neighborhood proximity, community partnerships, or community-informed approaches (formal or informal)

Preference will be given to organizations that:

- Are grassroots/community-based organizations, with operating budgets of less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000), especially those that are serving communities that have historically been disenfranchised
- Organizations or networks that have not previously been funded by MFH
 - This can include coalitions, taskforces, or emerging collaborative efforts that are committed to improving Black maternal health outcomes
 - This can include organizations/coalitions previously awarded through community-led grantmaking partners and not directly from MFH
- Are doing work that is deeply rooted in community needs and lived experience
- Have an intent to or can demonstrate a commitment to serving Black birthing people and mothers in rural communities

How to Apply

Applications must be received by noon CST on Thursday, July 23, 2026. Please plan accordingly and submit your application well before the deadline, as MFH cannot accept late applications.

- To start a new application, [click here](#).
- To return to an application in progress, log in to your [account](#). For information about the online portal, [click here](#). If you have additional questions, click on the circle in the top right-hand corner of the portal.



Proposal Requirements

The funding available through this RFA is considered general operating support, and organizations may request up to \$130,000 over two years. MFH expects to award up to 10 grants.

- **Proposal narrative.** Address each section below. The narrative can be up to three pages and must be double-spaced, with at least 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font. We include these requirements to ensure the readability of the application. We welcome you to submit previous proposals/narratives and append any additional responses to prompts below to those materials. Briefly describe the project.
 - Tell us about your organization and the community/communities you serve.
 - Describe how your organization connects with and builds trust with the community you serve.
 - How does your organization engage with Black birthing people and mothers to understand and support their needs?
 - If you received this funding, how would it support your organization over the next 1–2 years? (a solidified budget is not necessary.)
- **Financial documents.** Applicants must submit the following documents. If using a [fiscal sponsor](#), financial documents for both the applicant and fiscal sponsor organization are required.
 - Most recent annual accounting period balance sheet and income statement (including revenue and expenses). If an organization does not have a balance sheet or an income statement, please submit a document that shares the total amount of revenue and expenses for the most recent annual accounting period (FY 2025)
 - Current year's approved budget (including revenue and expense).
 - Fiscal sponsor explanation and agreement. If using a [fiscal sponsor](#), provide explanation as to why one is needed. In addition, a signed Fiscal Sponsor Agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities between the applicant and fiscal sponsor must be submitted.

The Foundation reserves the right to:

- Request additional information from any or all applicants
- Conduct discussions with applicants to ensure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the application requirements
- Request modifications to a respondent's application prior to final award to ensure alignment of project elements with the [core values](#), [mission](#), and operating standards of the Foundation
- Approve subcontractors proposed or used in carrying out the work
- Reject any or all applications submitted



Inquiries

If you have questions about the goals or content of this RFA, please contact Terry Plain, Senior Strategist - Initiatives, at vplain@mffh.org or (314) 345-5542.

About Missouri Foundation for Health

Missouri Foundation for Health is building a more equitable future through collaboration, convening, knowledge sharing, and strategic investment. Working in partnership with communities and nonprofits, MFH is transforming systems to eliminate inequities within all aspects of health and addressing the social and economic factors that shape health outcomes. To learn more please visit mffh.org.