2026-2027 Transforming Systemic Inequality Grant Opportunity

PROPOSALS DUE OCTOBER 23rd

The Leever Foundation is pleased to announce a request for proposals designed to assist Waterbury, CT by supporting local and/or regional collaborative strategies working to achieve greater equity of opportunity and outcomes in Waterbury communities that have been under-resourced and disproportionately harmed by systemic inequality.

This opportunity will specifically support work towards:

SYSTEMS CHANGE like collaborative visioning, community organizing, advocacy or social justice work

STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION such as influencing power shifts, narrative shifting or social innovation

USE THIS LINK TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE DEFINE SYSTEMS CHANGE & STRUCURAL TRANSFORMATION

The Foundation welcomes proposal requests of up to $50,000 for activities to be implemented over one year. Depending on the application, annual continuation could be considered for up to three years.

GRANT FOCUS AREAS

This funding opportunity prioritizes applications that:

- **Center the power, leadership and voices of people from marginalized communities -** efforts where people most affected by inequities are not simply recipients of services, but are actively shaping priorities, making decisions and building collective power.
- **Utilize a social justice lens -** demonstrate a recognizable commitment to creating a more just society by addressing historical and contemporary inequities and challenging structures that produce or perpetuate those inequities.
- **Focus on systems-level and collective change -** this funding opportunity prioritizes efforts that seek to change the conditions, policies, practices, institutions, narratives or structures that contribute to inequity and shape the lives of many rather than addressing the immediate needs or circumstances of individuals.
- **Are rooted in community and connected to broader movements -** Strong proposals will demonstrate meaningful relationships with the communities (however defined) they seek to impact; and where possible, support strategies that contribute to broader movements.
- **Have an operating budget under $2 million** and meet the Foundation's funding criteria. Organizations with budgets over $2 million may also be considered when partnering with smaller or grassroots Waterbury organizations.

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ELIGIBILITY

All applicants will complete a survey to determine eligibility; but generally, applicants must:

- Be incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization or be working under the auspices of an authorized fiscal sponsor.
- Have a minimum annual budget of $150,000 or submit an application to work in partnership with an organization that does. Grant awards will not exceed 15% of the applying organization's annual budget and the maximum grant amount is $50,000.
- Hold a Waterbury footprint, meaning an office or a regular presence in Waterbury OR one of the key collaborating organizations has a Waterbury footprint. **The work must impact the region that includes Waterbury, CT.**

*Please note that this grant opportunity DOES NOT fund: Individuals, capital campaigns, 501(c)4 institutions, schools (public, private, or charter), organizations with annual operating budgets under $150k and over $2M or entities that received Leever Foundation funding in other 2026 grant rounds.

HOW TO APPLY:

Step 1: Eligibility Survey - All applicants must complete a brief eligibility survey before submitting a full proposal. The survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Eligibility Survey LINK **Survey Closes on October 19th**

Step 2: Full Application - Prospective partners that complete the survey and meet the eligibility criteria will receive a link to the full application on the Foundation's grant portal. **Proposals due by October 23rd**

PROCESS AND TIMELINE:

September 16th at 1pm - **Question & Answer Session about the RFP**
Sign-up HERE for the online meeting

October 19th - **Eligibility Survey Closes**

October 23rd - **Full Proposal Submission Deadline**

November 2nd-6th - **Proposal Clarification Process**

Late November - **Award Decisions Announced**