



December 16, 2024

## **The F. M. Kirby Foundation announces a new grant opportunity to support innovation and program expansion**

The F. M. Kirby Foundation Board of Directors is piloting a new grant program that provides resources for organizations seeking to expand their ability to advance social change and increase their impact. The Foundation has designated a total of \$300,000 per year for the next three years to establish the “Innovation Engine” Grant Program. From this total, the Foundation will award three-year project-support grants to as many as 6 organizations. The grant program will only be open to current F.M. Kirby Foundation grantees with budgets between \$250,000 and \$4 million.

The program focuses on strategic innovation by investing in thoughtful program expansion undertaken by its grantee organizations. The program’s name derives from the concept of the “Twin Engines” — a dynamic model that emphasizes two key drivers: scaling proven solutions and fostering innovation. Inspired by the research of Ann Mei Chang & Laura Lanzerotti, profiled in the Stanford Social Impact Review article entitled “Twin Engines for Propelling Social Impact,” this approach guides organizations not only to sustain their efforts, but also to continuously evolve to meet the demands of an ever-changing world.

In describing the rationale behind this new initiative, Foundation President Justin Kiczek explains, “We believe that the most effective way to drive lasting impact is by supporting organizations that balance innovation with scalable action. By cultivating partnerships and investing in forward-thinking ‘Engine No. 2’ initiatives, we hope to empower these nonprofits to maximize their reach, deepen their influence, and propel their organizations forward in the future.” The Twin Engines model aligns closely with the Foundation’s values, focusing on enhancing organizational capacity while encouraging bold, creative approaches to problem-solving.

Grants will fund new projects or programs that either address the needs of new constituents or address unmet needs of current constituents. Supported programs must complement, but not duplicate or replicate, established work undertaken by the nonprofit. Applicants must demonstrate that the planned program is aligned with the organization’s current mission and vision, and they must describe their plans for sustaining the new initiative over the long term.

The online application portal will open on April 1, 2025, with applications due by May 30, 2025. Applications will be reviewed to assess how the organization has applied the “Engine No. 2” concept in the design and implementation of the proposed program. Applicants will be asked to describe how the proposed initiative was developed, how it will be managed, and the expected impact of the program once implemented. The “Innovation Engine” Grant Program is meant to

be a supplemental initiative, operating independently from an organization's annual grant request to the Foundation. The content of this application, and the grantee's decision whether to apply, will have no impact on the outcome of the annual grant request.

All applications will be reviewed using a clear set of evaluation rubrics established by the Foundation. Finalist organizations will be identified in the fall and may be asked to participate in an interview with the Foundation. The awardees will be announced in December 2025.

The Foundation will host a webinar on February 27 for organizations that are considering applying for the grant. Additionally, a comprehensive Innovation Engine Grant Program page will be hosted on the Foundation's website, which will include details on the grant program's objectives and review process, a set of explanatory FAQs, as well as a link to the online application portal.

For any questions regarding this initiative, contact Dave Cucchiara, Communications & Program Associate, at [dac@fmkirby.com](mailto:dac@fmkirby.com).

To register for the webinar, [click on this link](#).