



This Request for Proposals is currently closed; the document is provided as a reference for people interested in the Catalyst Grant Program. To receive notices of future rounds of the Catalyst Grant Program, [sign up here](#).

Catalyst Grant Program Request for Proposals

Purpose of Solicitation	To support local activities related to advancing criminal justice reform and decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in the adult criminal legal system through data and technology in the focus areas of prevention, policing, and prosecution.
Lead Organizational Eligibility	Locally embedded 501(c)(3) organizations based in the US, excluding colleges and universities. We have a focus on those organizations embedded in communities of color, particularly Black communities.
Award	Selected applicants will receive \$40,000 in grant funds to cover project costs; assistance on data, policy, and community engagement from the Urban Institute; access to Microsoft technology and related support; and peer learning opportunities.
RFP Issue Date	Monday, January 10, 2022
Deadline for Proposals	Friday, February 25, 2022, 8:00 pm Eastern Time
Application Process and Content	Applications will be submitted online at the grant application website: https://catalystapplications.urban.org . A full list of application questions and instructions are in Appendix A . Given word limits for the 10 narrative questions, application responses are expected to be roughly five pages.
Project Requirements	Projects must aim to advance reform in prevention , policing , and/or prosecution ; contribute to decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system; incorporate data and

	<p>technology; and be locally focused. Additional information on specific project eligibility is in the section on Project Requirements.</p> <p>Grants will not be given to projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serve or focus on people under 18 years of age; • serve or focus on programs for people who are currently incarcerated; • serve or focus on programs related to people returning from incarceration; or • propose activities at the state or national level.
Register for Grant Program Updates	Sign up to receive notifications for updated FAQs, webinar reminders, and other deadlines. This registration is not required to apply for the grant.
Webinar: RFP Overview	An optional informational webinar will be held January 24, 2022 from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm Eastern Time. [Register here]
Microsoft Technology Use: Benefits and Workshop	<p>Projects are not required to use Microsoft technology, but projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for in-kind support and additional grant benefits.</p> <p>Workshops to learn more about relevant Microsoft technology will be available on January 26 (Register here) and February 2, 2022 (Register here) from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm Eastern Time.</p>
Deadline for Questions	You may send any questions to catalystapplications@urban.org . You must submit questions about project topics, eligibility, or other RFP content by Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 8:00 pm Eastern Time , and we will regularly post FAQ updates to the grant application website. The Urban Institute will continue to answer technical questions related to submission until the proposal deadline.
Notice of Decision to Applicants	May/June 2022
Project Award	June 2022
Project Period of Performance	Six months
Technical Assistance and Cohort Activities	August 2022 to January 2023

Table of Contents

Program Overview	1
Eligibility	2
Expectations of Awardees.....	2
Project Requirements	3
Use of Funds.....	5
To Learn More.....	5
Application Process.....	6
Selection.....	7
About the Catalyst Grant Program	8
Appendix A: Full Application Process and Content.....	9
Appendix B: Microsoft Technology Benefits.....	16
Appendix C: Expectations for Equitable and Ethical Data Use	20

Closed Opportunity

Program Overview

The US justice system disproportionately impacts and harms communities of color, especially Black communities. Racism and racial biases are deeply embedded in the justice system, leading to disparities based on race that are well documented. People of color, particularly Black people, disproportionately experience vehicle and pedestrian stops and are most likely to be searched by police during these stops. Moreover, Black people are arrested and detained at higher rates than white people and incarcerated for longer periods. Even when brief, contact with the justice system carries significant costs to individuals, families, and communities. Just a few days in jail can result in lost employment and housing, burdensome fines and fees, and destabilized family relationships. Justice involvement exacerbates existing challenges for many communities of color and contributes to a compounding cycle that criminalizes people of color.

Local organizations are at the forefront of creating systemic change in the justice system. And by improving access to relevant data and technology, communities can have additional tools to inform and improve policy and practices to make the justice system more equitable. They can share their experiences and programs using technology in a variety of ways, including to analyze, visualize, and share data in support of organizing, advocacy, and services.

The [Urban Institute](#) and the [Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative](#) are collaborating on the Catalyst Grant Program to help organizations use data and technology to advance racial equity and fairness in the criminal justice system.

We are seeking project proposals across the three areas of focus for the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative: (1) prevention, (2) policing, and (3) prosecution (described below). We are building on the [pilot launched earlier this year](#) that supported nine grantees across the country.

Goals of the Catalyst Grant Program include:

- Create a space for locally embedded nonprofit organizations to implement data and technology focused projects to advance criminal justice reform and decrease racial and ethnic disparities in prevention, policing, and prosecution;
- Enhance the technological and data capacity of nonprofit organizations focused on promoting justice and racial equity; and
- Disseminate innovative practices and lessons learned during implementation to other places.

Those selected to participate in the Catalyst Grant Program will benefit from:

- Funding award of \$40,000 for a six-month performance period;
- Light touch expert technical assistance on data, policy, and community engagement from Urban as needed to support your project;
- Access to Microsoft technology for nonprofits and related support as needed (see Appendix B);
- Virtual peer learning opportunities with Urban, Microsoft, and other awardees; and
- Elevation of your work through public-facing communications such as blogs, webinars, or conference panels.

Eligibility

Lead Applicant Organization

We are seeking lead organizations that are locally embedded with demonstrated relationships and connections to the community in which the project activities will take place. Understanding that inequities in the justice system disproportionately affect people of color, particularly Black communities, we also have a focus on organizations that reflect these communities by having people of color in staff leadership positions and trusted relationships with communities of color. We also encourage small community-based organizations to apply. Organizations may submit only one application.

- Lead applicants must be a 501(c)(3) organization based in the United States, excluding colleges and universities.
- Individuals are not eligible to apply as a lead organization.
- Organizations that received a 2021 Catalyst Grant or are a current recipient of another Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative grant are not eligible to be lead applicants, but may be a partnering organization with another lead (see below).

Partnering Groups or Individuals

- A partner is any group or individual outside of the lead applicant organization that is providing personnel or expertise necessary to key project tasks or deliverables, whether paid or unpaid.
- All partner groups or individuals playing key roles in the activities must be identified at the time of the application.
- As part of the application, you must provide a **letter of support** from partner groups, whether organizations or individuals, that confirms their participation consistent with their role in the proposal. If there are multiple partners, they can provide one letter together with multiple signatures if more convenient, as long as the letter outlines the roles for each group or person.
- Local or state governments can be partners in proposed projects but cannot receive funds. They still must provide a letter of support if playing key roles in the activities proposed.
- Organizations eligible to be a partner and receive funds include:
 - Local nonprofits, with or without 501(c)(3) status (including current Microsoft grantees)
 - National or global nonprofit organizations
 - Colleges or universities (public or nonprofit)
 - For-profit organizations

Expectations of Awardees

The intention of the Catalyst Grant Program is to advance criminal justice reform and contribute to decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system using technology and data. We also seek to increase nonprofit organizations' technological and data capacity through technical assistance, peer learning opportunities, and financial support.

To that end, Catalyst Grant awardees will be expected to:

- Commit to participate in the Catalyst Grant Program and advance their proposed project over the six-month project period;
- Engage with the Urban team through periodic calls and email communications as Urban monitors local efforts and gathers and disseminates lessons to the broader cohort;
- Participate in three or four virtual peer learning opportunities convened by Urban and Microsoft, which may include informal presentations to the other grantees;
- Submit a final narrative report at the conclusion of the project period;
- Develop a plan about how they will follow ethical standards in using data and technology, including responsibly protecting individuals and data as appropriate for the proposed activities and data sources and identifying and receiving approval for research activities from an Institutional Review Board if needed (see Appendix C); and
- If using Microsoft technology, engage as needed with available in-kind expert assistance regarding software benefits, activation and setup, training and technical support; and participate in initial assessment around project requirements and partner engagement models. (More information is in Appendix B. Specific support will be provided at Microsoft's discretion and will depend on active 501(c)(3) status and other project details.)

Project Requirements

Proposed projects and activities must:

- Advance criminal justice reform in at least one of the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative areas of focus—
 - **Prevention:** Preventing law enforcement contact, diverting people from incarceration, or interrupting violence in communities
 - **Policing:** Working to improve policing policies, programs, and practices, including facilitating connection between law enforcement agencies and communities
 - **Prosecution:** Advancing data-driven transparency and accountability that empowers both communities and prosecutors to decrease racial and ethnic disparities within the prosecution process
- Focus on adults (age 18 and older)
- Contribute to decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system
- Incorporate data and technology
- Be locally focused, meaning focused on a specific neighborhood, city, county, or tribal area where the organization is already embedded

Grants will not be given to projects that:

- Serve or focus on people under 18 years of age
- Serve or focus on programs for people who are currently incarcerated
- Serve or focus on programs related to people returning from incarceration
- Propose activities at the state or national level

We are open to creative strategies, but the following list includes examples of ways to incorporate data and technology into your project:

- Data acquisition (e.g., collecting, extracting, cleaning)
- Data analysis (e.g., calculating point-in-time statistics, examining disparities by race or geography, interpreting indicator trends)
- Data visualization and design (e.g., designing online tools, automating fact sheets, designing data-focused education and engagement materials)
- Technology development and implementation (e.g., setting up an Application Programming Interface [API], creating an app, customizing technology to help with program operations such as intake)

Projects are not required to use Microsoft technology, but projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for additional grant benefits and in-kind support. See Appendix B for details. (Independent of this grant program, there are additional Microsoft programs that provide donated and discounted technology offerings to all nonprofits: visit [Microsoft for Nonprofits](#) for resources.)

Listed below are examples of activities that could be supported by this program, assuming they meet the required elements listed above. These examples are far from exhaustive, and Urban and Microsoft welcome creative and innovative projects focused on using data and technology to advance racial equity and fairness in the criminal justice system. We encourage you to review the [grant website](#) to see previous grantee projects.

Use data or technology to inform and organize communities

- Train community members on how to use public criminal justice data sources
- Coordinate local residents in data collection or technology development
- Create and/or launch data-informed education campaigns for your community to highlight criminal justice system disparities
- Use technology to collect, organize, or share primary data on experiences of people in your area most affected by racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system
- Engage community stakeholders through the creation and dissemination of fact sheets that reflect data-driven insights and incorporate data analysis and visualizations as well as toolkits for advocacy

Use data or technology to facilitate justice reform among government officials

- Develop and/or implement data-driven reports and recommendations to inform policy or decision making by local elected officials and agency staff
- Work with local government on showing the need for and value of investing in criminal justice system data and in making such data public and usable
- Collect, organize, and/or analyze data related to identifying or raising awareness of racial and ethnic disparities

Use data or technology for program operations, monitoring, or performance management

- Improve an aspect of data management (extraction, transformation, loading, quality assurance, cleaning, etc.) with technology

- Analyze program data to improve the organization’s capacity to address racial and ethnic disparities
- Use technology to improve a process in program operations that is inefficient, inaccurate, or perpetuates racial bias
- Develop or improve systems to allow data sharing among organizations, e.g., for coalitions, cross-organization service delivery, etc.

Use of Funds

Funds from this award must be used for the proposed project activities. Allowable use of funds includes, but are not limited to: staff salaries to undertake qualified project activities, internship or fellowship stipends, payments to consultant or partner organizations for project activities, fees for data and technology training relevant to project activities, meeting costs, supplies, and other direct project expenses such as hardware or software licenses. Funds may not be used for political activities. Lastly, applicants may allocate up to twenty percent of their award budget to cover overhead expenses.

To Learn More

Webinars and Workshops

Urban and Microsoft will host an RFP overview webinar and technology workshops to help inform your work on your proposal.

The RFP overview webinar will describe the program and application process, as well as answer questions related to your proposal. A recording of the webinar and a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be posted on the Catalyst Grant Program application website.

The technology workshop will be offered twice and will demonstrate relevant Microsoft technologies and provide an overview of the additional grant benefits offered to those using Microsoft technology for their projects. This will include examples related specifically to nonprofits. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions specific to your data and technology needs. The webinar and workshops will also be recorded and uploaded to the Catalyst Grant Program application website.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the webinar and workshop for their own benefit, but not attending will not affect eligibility, scoring, or the selection process.

RFP Overview Webinar

- January 24, 2022, 4:00pm to 5:00pm Eastern Time ([Register here](#))

Microsoft Technology Learning Opportunity Workshop

- January 26, 2022 from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm Eastern Time ([Register here](#))
- February 2, 2022 from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm Eastern Time ([Register here](#))
- These workshops will cover identical material each time; it is being offered twice for schedule flexibility.

- Interested organizations should consider having data or technology-centric staff participate in the workshop (IT personnel, data scientist, program evaluator, program manager, etc.) in addition to whoever will be drafting the proposal.

Questions

General questions about this opportunity are welcome and should be directed to catalystapplications@urban.org or (202) 261-5868. You must submit questions about project topics, eligibility, or other RFP content by **Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 8:00 Eastern Time**, and we will regularly post FAQ updates to the grant application website. The Urban Institute will continue to answer technical questions related to submission until the proposal deadline (**February 25, 8:00 pm**). Also see [SurveyMonkey Apply FAQ](#) for questions related to your account or using the website.

Application Process

Please submit your proposal following the instructions on the Catalyst Grant Program application website at <https://catalystapplications.urban.org> by **Friday, February 25, 2022 (8:00 pm Eastern Time)**.

You will need to register on the [grant application website](#) to apply. After registering, you will receive an email to verify your email address. Upon logging in, you will be asked questions to determine your organization's eligibility for the Catalyst Grant Program consistent with the criteria listed above. You may postpone answering, but are required to respond to create an application. If your organization is not eligible, you will not be able to create an application.

If your organization is eligible, you may start an application. You will need to complete the following parts:

- [Verify 501\(c\)\(3\) Status](#)
- [Part 1: Organizational and project information](#)
- [Part 2: Narrative questions, where you describe how your project and your organization align to Catalyst Grant Program goals](#)
- [Part 3: Budget template and narrative](#)
- [Part 4: Additional organizational information](#)

Applicants must complete all required sections as part of their proposal, and use our standard Excel budget template (download from the [grant application website](#)). All questions and instructions are provided (for reference) in [Appendix A](#). Given the word limits for the 10 narrative questions, application responses are expected to total to roughly five pages.

We will only accept completed proposals that are submitted by the deadline. Because we want to treat everyone with fairness and respect, proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. We encourage you to submit your proposal in advance of the deadline so that any unforeseen difficulties, e.g., technical problems, may be addressed well before the deadline. This RFP does not obligate Microsoft to award an agreement, nor does it commit Microsoft to pay any costs incurred in preparing and submitting a proposal.

Notice of Awards

Selected organizations will be notified mid-May through June and will be required to submit an invoice and copy of your organization's W-9 to Microsoft seven business days after notification to accept the grant. **Failure to return the required documentation by the deadline will result in revocation of the award offer.**

Program Timeline

Grantees may begin their activities any time after the award in June. We expect to publicly announce the awards in mid-to-late July. Cohort activities and technical assistance will run from August 1 to January 31, 2022.

Selection

We anticipate providing awards to up to 30 organizations.

As listed above, all proposed projects must meet the following requirements:

- Advance criminal justice reform in one or more of the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative focus areas: [\(1\) prevention](#), [\(2\) policing](#), and [\(3\) prosecution](#).
 - Proposals that serve or focus on programs for people who are currently incarcerated or programs related to people returning from incarceration will not be considered
- Focus on the adult justice system (proposals that serve or focus on people under 18 years of age will not be considered)
- Contribute to decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system
- Incorporate data and/or technology
- Be locally focused, meaning focused on a specific neighborhood, city, county, or tribal area where the organization is already embedded (applications that propose activities at the state or national level will not be considered)

We welcome projects that require collection of new data and/or accessing data that may contain personally identifiable information (PII). As part of proposal reviews, the selection team will consider how, as appropriate for the proposed type of activities and data sources, the organization plans to responsibly protect individuals and data, including managing sensitive data, research, or PII (see Appendix C). These protections may be minimal, for example, if all the data are public, but more extensive if an organization proposes collecting sensitive data from participants or analyzing confidential data. In addition, projects that will be using Microsoft software to implement machine learning or artificial intelligence may be subject to additional review for ethics and responsible use.

We will select a cohort that represents the use of a range of data and technologies, but additional support and benefits will be available to selected projects that use Microsoft technology.

Every effort will be made to recruit and include those applicants representing places large and small, urban and rural, and from various regions of the country.

Understanding that inequities in the justice system disproportionately affect people of color, particularly Black communities, we are also prioritizing organizations that reflect these communities, as shown by having people of color in staff leadership positions and trusted relationships with communities of color.

Elements of the applications to be assessed in the proposal review process include:

- Project alignment with program goals of advancing criminal justice reform and reducing racial and ethnic disparities
- Project activities matching project goals for substantial and clear use of data and/or technology
- Organizational and staff capacity and connections to community of focus
- Feasibility (including timeline and budget)

About the Catalyst Grant Program

[About the Urban Institute](#)

The Urban Institute is the trusted source for unbiased, authoritative insights that inform consequential choices about the well-being of people and places in the United States. We are a nonprofit research organization that believes decisions shaped by facts, rather than ideology, have the power to improve public policy and practice, strengthen communities, and transform people's lives for the better. Our experts diagnose current challenges and look ahead to identify opportunities for change. And we don't stop there. We use our research findings to help stakeholders craft relevant solutions and strategies that address today's concerns and avert tomorrow's roadblocks. And we share our insights in real time with influencers eager to make smarter decisions.

Urban's Justice Policy Center seeks to inform solutions to crime and safety challenges in the interests of promoting effectiveness in criminal legal systems and operations; addressing the harms of victimization and system involvement; reducing racial and other inequities; strengthening community-led approaches to safety; and promoting justice, dignity, and well-being for all. We conduct objective, rigorous, interdisciplinary research, evaluation, and policy analysis and deliver data-driven recommendations, training, and technical assistance. In carrying out our research, we seek to center the voices, experiences, and perspectives of the people, practitioners, and communities most affected by crime and the criminal legal system.

[About the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative](#)

The Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative works to advance racial equity and fairness in the justice system, so communities can thrive. Through our strategic partnerships and breadth grant program, we work to advance the impact of organizations. These partnerships are developed to drive systemic change within communities, with a focus on preventing justice system involvement and eliminating racial disparities in policing and prosecution practices.

[Catalyst Grant Advisors](#)

The design of this request for proposals has greatly benefited from the insightful feedback provided by our advisors: Shiqueen Brown of Microsoft, Richard Paul Morales of the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership, and Rodrigo Martinez of the Urban Institute.

Appendix A: Full Application Process and Content

Applicants will be prompted by the application portal to answer questions about eligibility when registering for the site. Note: if an organization is not eligible, the application system will share a note that the organization is not eligible for the program and not allow the person to create an application.

Eligibility Questions

- Is your organization based in the United States? (Y/N)
- Is your organization a nonprofit with IRS-approved 501(c)(3) status? (Y/N)
- Please enter your Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Is your organization a local or state government? (Y/N)
- Is your organization a college or university? (Y/N)
- Are you a 2021 Catalyst Grant Program recipient or a current recipient of another Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative grant? (Y/N)

Application Tasks

Applicants must complete all required sections as part of their proposal.

- Verify 501(c)(3) Status
- Part 1: Organizational and Project Information
- Part 2: Project Narrative Questions
- Part 3: Budget Template and Narrative
- Part 4: Additional Organizational Information

Verify 501(c)(3) Status

The system will verify your organization's 501(c)(3) status by checking your EIN against the IRS database. If your EIN is not found, you will not be able to submit an application. If you receive a response that your EIN is not found and you believe it is incorrect, please email catalystapplications@urban.org.

- Enter Employer Identification Number

Part 1: Organizational and Project Information

Organizational Information

- Organization name
- Optional: Legal name (if different than operating name)

- Organization street address
- Organization city
- Organization state
- Organization zip
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Optional: Organization website
- Do you anticipate any changes to your 501(c)(3) status during the project period (such as separating from a parent organization)? Yes/No
- Primary point of contact: first name
- Primary point of contact: last name
- Primary point of contact: phone number
- Primary point of contact: email
- Secondary point of contact: first name
- Secondary point of contact: last name
- Secondary point of contact: phone number
- Secondary point of contact: email
- Optional: Project point of contact: first name
- Optional: Project point of contact: last name
- Optional: Project point of contact: phone number
- Optional: Project point of contact: email

Note: A partner organization is any group or individual outside of the applicant organization that is providing personnel or expertise necessary to key project tasks or deliverables, whether paid or unpaid. A support letter will be required from partners.

- Will you partner or subcontract with any other organization for the proposed work? (Y/N) [repeated as needed for second partner organization]

If yes, please complete:

- Partner organization name (if relevant)
- Partner organization street address
- Partner organization city
- Partner organization state
- Partner organization zip
- Partner organization point of contact: first name
- Partner organization point of contact: last name
- Partner organization point of contact: phone number
- Partner organization point of contact: email

Partner groups, whether organizations or individuals, must provide a letter of support confirming their participation consistent for their role in the proposal.

- Button to upload support letter or letters.

[Project Information](#)

Please complete this section for the specific project activities you are proposing. We acknowledge that your project proposal may be narrower than your overall organizational mission or groups of people served.

- Project Title
- What is the criminal justice system focus area for your project? (Check all that apply)
 - Prevention
 - Policing
 - Prosecution

Project Geography

We welcome projects that focus on a neighborhood, city, county, or tribal area. Please enter the information below about the location of the project activities. If your activities cover more than one city, county, or tribal area, please select just one to enter here and describe any additional areas in the project narrative.

- County where proposed project is located
- State where proposed project is located
- Optional: City where proposed project is located
- Optional: Tribal area where proposed project is located

Other Project Characteristics

Note: The following questions are not about eligibility but are intended to help the grant program team select a diversified portfolio.

- Does your project focus on any of these groups? (Check all that apply)
 - Immigrants
 - LGBTQ+
 - People who are unhoused
 - Women
 - Men
 - Young adults ages 18 to 26
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Middle Eastern or North African
 - Asian or Asian American
 - Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Black or African American
 - White
 - Hispanic/Latinx/Spanish origin
 - Our project is not designed specifically for any of the groups listed above.
 - Another group not listed (fill in)

Note: Use of Microsoft technology is not required, but projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for additional grant benefits and in-kind support; see Appendix B of the RFP for more details.

- Please select which Microsoft technology products you plan to rely on for your project activities, or if you do not intend to use Microsoft products. (Check all that apply)
 - Excel/ Excel Power Query
 - Power BI
 - Microsoft Forms
 - Azure
 - PowerApps
 - Other (fill in)
 - Not using any Microsoft products

Part 2: Project Narrative Questions

This section includes questions in which you will describe your project, its purpose, and your organization's qualifications. There are 10 questions below with word count limits; the total text to be submitted will total roughly five pages or less.

Overview

1. Please provide a brief overview of your proposed project, noting your community of focus, and explain how it advances criminal justice reform and reduces racial and ethnic disparities. [up to 300 words]

Description of Project

2. Describe the key activities you propose to undertake with this grant. [up to 500 words]
3. Explain how data and/or technology will be used in the context of your project. [up to 400 words]
 - If relevant to your activities, what specific data source(s) will you use, and do you currently have access to that data?
4. What key software, platforms, or apps do you plan to use to implement the data and/or technology activities within the project? Indicate whether your organization or your partner has prior experience using the technology. Please include Microsoft and non-Microsoft technologies, if applicable. [up to 200 words]
5. If proposed activities include collecting or accessing sensitive data or Personally Identifiable Information (PII), please describe how you will responsibly protect individuals and data. See Appendix C for background. If not relevant, please list "Not Applicable." [up to 200 words]
6. Please list key milestones and timing for the proposed activities over the six-month grant performance period. [up to 250 words]

Qualifications

7. Please describe how your organization develops and maintains connections and trust with the community of focus for the proposed work. [up to 250 words]
8. Please describe past or current activities or experiences of your organization (or your partners) that are relevant to the proposed activities. [up to 150 words]
9. What are the qualifications and experience of the key project staff in your organization that will complete the proposed work? Please specifically address those skills related to the data and/or technology components. [up to 250 words]
10. If relevant, what are the qualifications and experience of the key project staff in the partner organization(s) to complete the proposed work? Please specifically address those skills related to the data and/or technology components. If not relevant, please list "Not Applicable." [up to 250 words]

Part 3: Budget Template and Narrative

This section relates to the proposed budget for your proposed activities. The application will require you to 1) upload a completed version of the budget in the Excel template provided and 2) provide a narrative explanation of the costs.

Total costs should not exceed \$40,000 and all should fall under the allowable expenses (see "Use of Funds" section in the RFP).

Budget Template

Download and save the budget template from the [grant application website](#). to your computer so you can fill in your budget, and then upload the completed budget template here.

- Upload completed budget template [Upload a file]. Acceptable formats: *.xls, *.xlsx

Budget Narrative

In the narrative section, please provide bullets that correspond to the line-item cost components in your uploaded budget spreadsheet.

Responses only need as much detail as needed for reviewers to understand the costs.

Please include the following categories if they are included in your submitted budget. [up to 1,000 words]

- Salaries/Wages: Detail each grant funded position and person's role in your project. Note: This section should include personnel employed by your organization only; staff from partnering organizations, consultants, and other contractors should be detailed in the Subcontract/Consultants line item.
- Subcontracts/Consultants: Cost of staff or services from partnering organizations or individuals, consultants, and other contractors should be detailed here.
- Hardware Costs: If your program involves the purchase of any hardware (laptops, tablets, physical devices, etc.), including but not limited to Microsoft hardware, those costs must

be reflected in your budget and budget narrative, as Microsoft cannot purchase any hardware products on behalf of a grantee.

- **Software Costs:** If your program involves the purchase of any Microsoft software, please refer to Appendix B when determining whether to include these costs in the budget and budget narrative, as some costs are covered by Microsoft's Tech for Social Impact program. If your program involves non-Microsoft software, please include those costs in the budget and budget narrative.
- **Other Direct Costs:** Provide information on other requested costs, such as events or meetings, internship or fellowship stipends, participant costs, or technology training, please include the purpose and frequency.
- **Overhead Costs:** Provide your overhead rate, which is subject to a cap of 20% of the total requested amount.
- **Funding Sources other than the Catalyst Grant:** If you are applying for or have secured funding from any other sources for these activities, please briefly describe the source, status, and amount. Do not include this amount in the budget spreadsheet.

Part 4: Additional Organizational Information

Note: The following questions do not relate to eligibility but are intended to ensure the grant program includes a diversified portfolio. Responses will not be seen by reviewers who are scoring your application.

We recognize people with lived experience in the criminal justice system as experts in the field. Does your organization have leadership or key project staff who self-identify as having been directly involved in the justice system?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Below we will be asking questions about the racial make-up of your organization's leadership.

Communities of color, particularly Black people, are the most affected by inequities in the justice system. We understand that these communities are the best suited to address problems within the justice system and are also aware that organizations with leaders of color have been excluded from many philanthropic opportunities historically. In response to this, the Catalyst Grant Program strives to prioritize funding organizations that have people of color in staff leadership positions and organizations with trusted relationships with communities of color.

We understand the questions below are intrusive by nature. You may decline to answer any of the below racial demographic questions. Responses will not be seen by reviewers who are scoring your application. After the application is scored, the core project team will consider leader's demographic information as it selects finalists and decides on the 30 awardees, in service of our goals of granting to groups with people of color in staff leadership positions.

- How many leaders (i.e., executive directors, president, active founder) does your organization have? (We recognize that some organizations have shared leadership structures instead of one executive director.) [Enter number]

- What racial or ethnic group or groups does your organization's leader identify with? (Check all that apply) [repeated as needed for number of leaders]

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Asian or Asian American
- Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White
- Hispanic/Latinx/Spanish origin
- Another race or ethnicity not listed above (fill in)
- Prefer not to answer

Closed Opportunity

Appendix B: Microsoft Technology Benefits

As noted in the RFP, projects are not required to use Microsoft technology, but projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for additional grant benefits and in-kind support.

This Appendix describes:

- The types of Microsoft technology that might be relevant to your proposed project
- How the use of the Microsoft technology should affect your budget preparation
- The additional in-kind assistance available to projects using Microsoft technology
- How you can learn more about Microsoft technology in the Catalyst Grant Program
- How all eligible nonprofits can access discounted technology and assistance from Microsoft (independent of the Catalyst Grant Program)

What Microsoft technology might be relevant to your Catalyst Grant project?

There is a wide array of Microsoft technology that may enable your proposed projects. Some examples include Excel and Azure Cognitive Services for data analysis, Power BI for visualization, Microsoft Forms for data collection, PowerApps for building apps to engage stakeholders and manage collaboration, Azure/Cloud Data Solutions for secure data storage and sharing, and more.

The above examples are not exhaustive; Microsoft has a complete list of discounted technology available to nonprofits and a wide array of technology solutions that may be relevant to your project. More information regarding these and other Microsoft solutions can be found on [Microsoft for Nonprofits](#).

How will the use of Microsoft technology affect the budget submitted in the application process?

The licenses and credits for Microsoft technology that are currently offered free to all eligible nonprofits, and hence to all Catalyst Grant awardees, are:

- 10 MSFT 365 Business Premium licenses (Office applications including Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint, Forms, and more)
- 10 Power Apps per-user licenses
- Unlimited Power BI Desktop Licenses or a nonprofit discount for Power BI Pro licenses
- \$3,500 annual Azure Grant credit

Since these costs are covered through Microsoft, **budgets submitted with the application should NOT contain the above Microsoft technology costs.** Technology costs beyond what is listed above may be included in the budget if needed.

What in-kind support and assistance can I receive?

Projects using any Microsoft technology will be considered for additional support as long as the proposed use is integral to the project activities. The exact structure and amount of in-kind support will depend on the type of activities, the capacity of the organizations to execute them, and the specific technology used in relation to key project activities. The final provision of in-kind support is subject to Microsoft's discretion.

Microsoft intends to provide technology experts to help you implement or adopt Microsoft technology for your project. Onboarding support will be provided to help with Microsoft technology set up, user license registration, and troubleshooting. In addition, technology support will include training and technical support from on-call experts who will advise on technology issues related to achieving the project goals over the six-month award period.

Elements and phases of in-kind support available during the grant period are:

Onboarding/Concierge – Individualized service to describe eligible technology, grant activation, setup, and license management, as well as optional 1-to-2-hour basic demos of Azure, Modern Work, Dynamics, or Power platform, including curated documentation, training resources, and referrals to technology specialists.

Architect Discovery & Scope – Projects determined to be a fit for this level of engagement may participate in an initial assessment with a Microsoft Cross Cloud Solution Architect to gather project requirements, provide initial design paths, and recommend technology partners for the purpose of assessing projects that are well suited for deeper engagement.

Managed Customer Success – Organizations will have access to a grant-dedicated Customer Success Specialists POD proficient in Microsoft 365, Power Apps, Power BI and Azure. This includes a dedicated Microsoft specialist who will work with your organization to build a digital engagement model that furthers your project.

Lastly, strong projects in organizations with sufficient capacity and availability to engage are eligible to be selected for deeper scoped engagements with vetted and mission aligned Microsoft nonprofit partners who will implement and deploy Microsoft technology solutions during the six-month project period. This is known as the Partner Delivery model:

Partner Delivery Model – Specialists assigned to work with your organization are responsible for implementing a digital enablement solution(s). They would provide a proposal to the grantee and execute upon agreed upon scope and timeline. Costs of this would be covered by the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative.

Grantees selected for this model may also be considered and vetted for continued funding support through the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative beyond the Catalyst Grant program.

How can I learn more about preparing to apply for a Catalyst Grant?

Microsoft will host a **workshop** to demonstrate some relevant technologies, with specific examples for nonprofits and provide the opportunity for attendees to ask questions. See the “Learn More” section in the main RFP for dates and registration links. Interested organizations should consider having data or technology-centric staff participate in a workshop (IT personnel, data scientist, program evaluator, program manager, etc.) in addition to whoever will be drafting the proposal.

What if you are not awarded a Catalyst Grant or want to use Microsoft technology for work beyond your proposed project?

You can still benefit from Microsoft for Nonprofits. Below is a list of Microsoft resources available to all nonprofits, regardless of participation in the Catalyst Grant Program.

All eligible nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status (exemptions listed [here](#)) can access donated and discounted Microsoft solutions; donated offers are listed below. These free licenses remain available as long as your nonprofit status remains active.

Microsoft for Nonprofits

- 10 Microsoft 365 Business Premium licenses (Office applications including Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint, Forms, and more)
- 10 Power Apps per-user licenses
- Unlimited Power BI Desktop licenses or nonprofit discount for Power BI Pro licenses \$3,500 annual Azure Grant credit

To access these offerings, go to <https://www.microsoft.com/nonprofits> and validate your nonprofit status. There are also other resources for nonprofits offered through this site.

For reference, Microsoft technology solutions often of interest to nonprofits include:

Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit:

- Connects the intelligent and integrated capabilities of the Microsoft cloud to the most common nonprofit organizational scenarios, including constituent engagement, staff collaboration and volunteer management, and program design and delivery.

Modern Workplace / Microsoft 365, which includes:

- **Office apps:** Advanced features such as Excel Power Query that enable connecting and analyzing separate data sources.
- **Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive:** Cloud-based platforms to streamline teamwork and enable data sharing and collaboration with partner organizations.

Power Platform, which includes:

- **Power BI:** Connects, cleans, and models your data, without affecting the underlying source; visualizes (or discovers), and shares important insights.

- **Power Apps:** Provides an accessible tool for building custom web and mobile applications, requiring minimal coding skills, to engage and manage stakeholders, for example.

Azure / Cloud Data Solutions, which includes:

- **Azure:** Cloud-based data storage, rather than local computers and servers, that keeps data secure and allows access from anywhere, plus a host of additional functionality.
- **Nonprofit Data Warehouse Quickstart:** A pre-packaged, 'one-click' set up, Azure-based warehouse for storing data specifically designed for nonprofits.

Closed Opportunity

Appendix C: Expectations for Equitable and Ethical Data Use

The Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative and the Urban Institute (Urban) are strongly committed to the ethical and equitable use of data and technology. In the Catalyst Grant Program, we expect our grantees to maintain respectful relationships and trust with communities of focus. In support of this, we encourage and support grantees to learn about and follow the principles of ethical and equitable data and technology use, especially for any activities involving people.

Below we describe some elements of responsible data stewardship. We expect the first category of “Principles for Equitable Use of Data” to be relevant to most proposed projects, while protecting personally identifiable information and submitting research projects to an Institutional Review Board will be relevant for a smaller subset.

As part of proposal reviews, the selection team will consider how, as appropriate for the proposed type of activities and data sources, the organization plans to responsibly protect individuals and data, including managing sensitive data, research, or Personally Identifiable Information (PII). These protections may be minimal, for example, if all the data are public, but more extensive if an organization proposes collecting sensitive data from participants or analyzing confidential data. In addition, projects that will be using Microsoft software to implement machine learning or artificial intelligence may be subject to additional review for ethics and responsible use.

Once selected as a grantee, we will require all selected organizations to develop a plan about how they will follow ethical standards and consider equity as they use data throughout the project (collecting, analyzing, publishing, etc.), especially how they will protect people participating in research. Urban will be available to review and advise on these plans as a technical assistance partner.

Principles for Equitable Use of Data

Principles for equitable use of data require people, including Catalyst grantees, to consider how any collection, analysis, and publishing of data and related products during the project will affect the people and communities reflected in the data. As a reference, Urban Institute’s [Principles for Advancing Equitable Data Practice](#) offers a framework and examples for thinking through the equity implications of your data-related activities.

- Maximizing benefits and avoiding causing harm to the extent possible, even if it is not a formal or legal requirement. This requires considering risks and benefits holistically.
- Upholding people’s power to make decisions that are in their best interest and to protect people who do not have that power. People can make informed decisions when they have information, the capability to understand it, and the freedom to act on it.

- Fairly distributing burdens and benefits among people. This principle underscores that communities and people who bear risks and burdens deserve to benefit. It also emphasizes the responsibility to ensure that undue burden is not put on people unlikely to benefit.

Protection of Personally Identifiable Information

We expect all grantees to follow any data governance policies that their organizations, or partner organizations, have established and to have procedures in place for protecting any personally identifiable information (PII), such as names, social security numbers, personal characteristics, and others, used in their project.

For reference, Chapter 4 of the National Institute for Standards and Technology's [Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information \(PII\)](#) provides recommendations on the ways PII data should be protected. Organizations should implement safeguards for any PII they house, such as:

- Creating policies and procedures to protect PII
- Minimizing the use, collection, and retention of PII
- De-identifying information
- Storing and sharing the data securely

Submission to an Institutional Review Board to Approve Data Collection

As one mechanism to protect the rights and welfare of people participating in data collection, organizations, such as colleges, universities, and hospitals may have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to review data collection procedures, risk to research subjects, and data security plans for research projects. IRBs review proposed research projects and have the authority to approve, require modification of, or disapprove research activities.

Projects that support the operations of a program or service are less likely to fall into the category of research and hence less likely to be appropriate for an IRB review. If your project is a research study involving the collection of private or identifiable information on individuals, for example a survey or interviews of community members, IRB review may be beneficial to ensure that you are protecting people participating in the study appropriately. Research projects that may be exempt from needing an IRB review according to Federal standards are those that are accessing data, documents, and records that are publicly available or collecting data in a way that the subjects cannot be identified either directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, such as an anonymous survey.

If your project is a research study collecting or accessing data with personally identifiable information, we strongly recommend you explore undertaking IRB review in the interest of protecting the people represented in the data. If you are partnering with an academic institution or other research organization in data collection, we recommend that you inquire if their procedures require an IRB review for your project.

If an IRB is appropriate for your project, any anticipated IRB costs and time for review should be factored into your proposed project's budget and timeline. We will recommend that grantees pursue the submission as soon as they are notified of the award.

Nonprofit organizations without their own IRB may make use of the IRB of a local partner or university or contract with a commercial IRB available to review proposals for a fee. The US Department of Health and Human Services provides an advanced search of its [online directory](#) that can suggest institutions with accredited IRBs in your area who you can reach out to and inquire about external submissions.

If you are unsure whether or not your intended activities might merit an IRB review under this grant program, you may contact the Urban team to discuss your proposed project, though Urban cannot issue any legal decisions related to IRBs. Given the implications for budgets and timelines, we recommend you reach out as early as possible in the proposal process. Urban Institute staff will be available to provide technical assistance post-award to grantees submitting to an IRB for review.

Closed Opportunity