

2024 Expanding Engagement Q&A

Q: Are programs that include events eligible for funding?

A: Yes. Please refer to the description of each level of funding for examples of programs that may be eligible for the grant.

Q: Would a program funded under last year's Expanding Engagement grant qualify as "recently started" for purposes of meeting the criteria for Level 2 funding?

A: Yes. If a new program was created last year with expanding engagement funds, this would be considered recently started.

Q: Is there a hard deadline for when the grant period must end?

A: One year from the first payment is when we would expect the funds to be used by, and we will be looking for a summary of the program at the end of one year.

Q: Would you consider more than one application from an organization that has multiple sites?

A: Yes, if the sites are run individually targeting different areas of the city, then multiple sites within the organization can apply for the grant.

Q: Would you please explain what you consider "social engagement?"

A: Social engagement includes opportunities for older adults to come together and socialize in spaces that are accessible to them in community spaces. This can also include events/activities that may draw older adults to participate and socialize with one another and combat social isolation.

Q: Are 501c4 groups eligible to apply? Should we look for a sponsor?

A: We cannot give grants to 501c4 groups (due to lobbying/political aspects). We ask that you have a fiscal sponsor if possible. Please reach out with any specific questions regarding this.

Q: Could an organization be a partner on one application and the primary applicant for another project?

A: It could, for example if different communities of older adults are being served for each project.

Q: Would financial education workshop series for seniors be a viable grant option?

A: If the financial literacy classes contain a social component, and participants can get to know one another and provide support to one another, then they could align with the purpose of the Expanding Engagement grant program.

Q: Could funds be used for transportation for older adults to attend programming (for older adults) that already exists within an organization?

A: Yes, this would be reasonable.

Q: Can this grant fund supporting older adult volunteers with stipends?

A: Grants cannot fund gift cards since they are not great for auditing. Stipends are allowed, and we can work with you to figure out how that would look. A direct payment could be a way to provide stipends.

Q: If we are currently doing a one to one visiting program and would like to build upon it by bringing the older adults (and visiting volunteers) in the program together for group activities -- does this count as a new social engagement project?

A: Yes, if this is a type of programming that is not happening yet, and it will bring people together into a group for social activities, then it seems like it is new.

Q: If a program is already receiving Age Strong funding, can we apply for this grant to expand the program into new neighborhoods/communities?

A: Being a current grantee does not disqualify an applicant from submitting an application.

Q: If an organization wants to continue the work that was funded from last year, does the organization need to reach new consumers?

A: The goal would be to serve new older adults, and outreach to individuals who are not currently served by the existing program.

Q: Is it okay to have repeat past consumers for services?

A: Yes.

Q: Do older adults being served by the program need to be residents of Boston, or can programming just be located in Boston and serve individuals who are not Boston residents?

A: These funds are meant to serve Boston residents.

Q: With current programming, can these funds be used to maintain/expand the current program? Can funds be used to pay workshop providers?

A: If a program is recently started and would be using funding to accelerate the program, that would qualify. Funding can go towards bringing in service providers (exercise, art class, etc.).

Q: Can funding be used to decorate or modify physical spaces to be more inviting?

A: Decorating physical spaces to make them more welcoming does not align with the goals and purpose of Expanding Engagement funds, so such budget items would not be considered eligible.

Q: Would a program offering free walking tours and transportation to the tours from Senior Centers, where the program allows for discussion and making social connections, be a good fit for the Expanding Engagement Grant?

A: Based on this information, it seems like the project could align with the Expanding Engagement grant program. Take a look at the purpose and goals of this funding and keep them in mind as you think through the program and prepare your responses.

Q: Do you recommend we identify and connect with potential senior centers, senior housing, adult day care centers, etc. who would like to participate before we apply? Or is it ok (or even better?) to wait until after we learn if we are awarded the grant. Perhaps you have recommendations of groups or places looking for these kinds of activities?

A: Preparation is always helpful and could result in implementation occurring more easily and quickly, should the project get funded.

Q: Does the Age Strong Commission have preferred vendors for transporting seniors? Again, are these connections and relationships we should establish before applying for the grant?

A: We don't have preferred transportation vendors. As stated above, preparation can help implementation to occur more easily and quickly, should the project get funded.

Q: Are staff salary and staff hiring acceptable budget items/activities for the Expanding Engagement grant application?

A: Yes, staff salaries are an acceptable budget item for the Expanding Engagement grant.

Q: Would you please send a PDF of the application?

A: Through the Expanding Engagement grant webpage, if you click on "Apply Now," you can access a document of the full application through the link at the bottom of the first page of the Google Form application.

Q: Is there an automatic/separate renewal process for a previous grantee, or should we apply again from scratch?

A: In accordance with the 2023 Expanding Engagement grant agreement, the grant period is 1-year. Any organization seeking to be considered for a 2024 Expanding Engagement grant must complete the 2024 grant application, which is linked on the Expanding Engagement grant webpage.

Q: Was the information session recorded, and how can it be accessed?

A: The information/Q&A session recording is available on the Expanding Engagement Grant [Webpage](#).

Q: The budget template has allowable expenses including transportation, entertainment, and food for gatherings. Are other expenses allowable under the grant, such as staff training; materials, supplies, and small equipment to deliver the program?

A: The budget template provided is just an example of expenses that may be included, and you may add your own expenses to that template based on what is applicable for the program.

Q: Does the proposed program need to meet all, or multiple of the grant priorities listed, or can it meet only one?

A: We expect applications to align with the purpose listed in their respective level categories.

Q: Can you provide any additional guidance on how our proposed program fits within the Commission's priorities for this opportunity?

A: Visit the Expanding Engagement Grant webpage and take a look at the purpose and goals of this funding. Keep them in mind as you think through your project or program, and as you prepare your responses.

Q: Would transportation to and from peer support groups be an eligible cost under this grant?

A: Transportation would be an allowable expense as part of a social engagement project or program being proposed for an Expanding Engagement grant. If applying for a level 2 or 3 grant, we would expect transportation to be one of the budget items, not the only budget item.

Q: Is it an eligible use of funds to spend the bulk of the personnel costs between October 1, 2024 and April, 2025?

A: Staffing being paid out of this grant later in the grant period would be fine if that's what the program requires. I would encourage some grant fund spending between April 2024 and September 2024 so something can be captured for reporting purposes in quarter 1.

Q: If we select/apply for the Level 3 Grant, and it is decided that we are not a good fit for that, would there be an option to re-apply for Level 2, or would the Grants Applications Committee assign us to the Level 2 Grant?

A: The Review Committee would determine if a partial award is recommended, which could result in a level reassignment. There will not be a re-application process for this grant program.

Q: Are these funds available to religious communities?

A: Yes.

Q: Can funds be used to re-do the sound system so Zoom participants and in-person can hear well enough to participate?

A: Installation of a new sound system is not an eligible expense for Expanding Engagement grant funds.

Q: Will there be another information session for the Expanding Engagement Grant?

A: No, there will not be another information session. There is a recording of the information session available on the Expanding Engagement webpage. A Q&A document will be posted as well.

Q: Are we eligible to apply again now for a grant which would begin in April, even though we are still within our previous grant funding period (for Expanding Engagement), which ends May 31, 2024?

A: Yes, Current Expanding Engagement Grantees are eligible to apply for a 2024 Expanding Engagement grant. For any current Expanding Engagement Grantees who receive 2024 Expanding Engagement grants, there will be an overlap of the two grant periods.

Q: Is there a higher likelihood of receiving funding for the Level 1 grant versus Level 2 or 3?

A: We anticipate a greater number of level 1 grants than Levels 2 and 3, but this will depend on the grant applications that are received.

Q: Are costs associated with hiring teaching artists to implement the programming considered eligible expenses for the Level 1 grant?

A: Yes, this would be an allowable expense.

Q: Is there a specific template that should be used to create the SMART goals for Level 2 and Level 3 funding requests?

A: We did not create a specific template to use, and would recommend addressing the following aspects following the SMART goals format: (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).