

# 2026 Grant Guidelines: Building an Inclusive Economy & Advancing Equity in Education Grants

## ABOUT BPI

The Black Philanthropy Initiative (BPI) is a 100% Black-led initiative of The Winston-Salem Foundation. Our mission is to engage people in investing their time, talent, and treasure to strengthen and support Black communities in Forsyth County.

## OUR GRANT PROGRAMS

BPI explicitly—but not exclusively—makes grants to Black-led organizations and initiatives working to improve outcomes for Black communities in Forsyth County. All BPI grants are made possible through community donations.

## ELIGIBILITY

The Advancing Equity in Education and Building an Inclusive Economy grants support organizations working to ensure Black individuals, families, and communities in Forsyth County have access to the resources, opportunities, and systems needed to thrive.

Together, these grant opportunities center a shared vision: creating equitable pathways for learning, economic mobility, and long-term prosperity—while addressing the systemic barriers that have historically limited access and opportunity for Black communities.

These programs invest in efforts that:

- Advance racial equity across K–12 and higher education systems, with a focus on improving achievement outcomes for Black students
- Create learning environments that affirm students’ humanity, uphold their dignity, and support their growth and success
- Address systemic barriers that limit access to educational resources, economic opportunity, and upward mobility
- Build accessible pathways to family-sustaining and high-paying careers
- Provide tools and resources that support wealth-building and long-term financial stability
- Strengthen and support a thriving ecosystem of Black-owned businesses

While these grant opportunities align with The Winston-Salem Foundation’s focus areas, BPI’s decision-making process remains independent and community-led—grounded in the voices, experiences, and priorities of the community.

To be eligible, organizations must:

- Operate within Forsyth County, NC
- Be a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, public school, higher education institution, or faith-based organization. *Organizations without 501(c)(3) status may apply with a fiscal sponsor that meets these criteria*
- While BPI does not fund for-profit businesses, we do support nonprofits, schools, and faith-based organizations that offer programming or resources for Black entrepreneurs and small

business owners

Examples of Potential Grant Requests may include, but are not limited to:

- Programs that support Black entrepreneurs and strengthen pathways to business ownership
- Financial education initiatives for Black families, including investing, wealth-building, and homeownership
- Career readiness programs that lead to family-sustaining wages and long-term career opportunities
- Efforts that address gaps in educational resources and access to opportunity
- Initiatives that reform disciplinary policies and practices that disproportionately impact students of color
- Professional development and training for educators on topics such as implicit bias and culturally responsive teaching

## PRIORITIES

BPI is committed to addressing the root causes of racial and economic injustice impacting Black communities in Forsyth County. Structural racism and philanthropic bias have historically limited access to resources, networks, and decision-making power for Black-led work. Too often, leaders of color face exclusion, underinvestment, and harmful grant practices that delay or diminish the impact of their solutions. **To help address these disparities, BPI prioritizes proposals that meet one or more of the following criteria:**

Priority will be given to:

- **Black-led organizations** – Organizations where more than 50% of staff in decision-making roles and/or board members identify as Black
- **Neighborhood Investment** – Programs serving predominantly Black neighborhoods, including ZIP codes 27101, 27105, and 27107
- **Community-centered approaches** – Organizations that actively partner with people most impacted by inequities—engaging them in setting goals, shaping solutions, and guiding how the work is carried out

### Why We Use the Term “Black”:

BPI uses the term Black because it is inclusive of people of African descent across diverse cultural and geographic backgrounds. This includes African Americans, Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latinos, and people of mixed ancestry who identify as Black—whether solely or in combination with other racial identities.

## FUNDING GUIDELINES

Examples of the types of grants BPI *will support*:

- **Program or Project grants:** to support existing programs or projects, or to start new ones. (Funding for one-time events or media and art projects will be considered if they are part of a larger strategy that otherwise meets the funding criteria.)
- **Planning grants:** to develop new programs or modify existing programs to better meet the needs of Black populations in Forsyth County.
- **Collaboration grants:** to provide funding to bring together groups in collaborative or cooperative projects that will yield greater impact than the groups would be able to achieve on their own.
- **Evaluation grants:** to evaluate the impact on the Black community of an existing or new program that meets the funding criteria. (Evaluation funding may also be included in a program or project grant request.)
- **Research grants:** to support social sciences research on educational issues that impact Black populations in Forsyth County. Requests for research funding will be considered if the research will have a direct application toward implementing a program to address the root causes of a problem or to create social change around an issue, including for advocacy purposes.

- **Pilot Programs:** initial small-scale projects that are used to assess the viability of program ideas.

BPI *will not fund* the following:

- Programs or organizations that discriminate based on ethnicity, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veterans' status.
- Programs that proselytize or promote any particular religion or sect or deny services to potential beneficiaries based upon religious beliefs.
- Individuals, including direct scholarships.
- Scholarship funds for general educational programs. Funds to support educational expenses will be considered if tied to the focus areas in these guidelines. This funding should be part of a larger program.
- Programs that focus only on providing subsidies for childcare, health insurance, housing, or any other similar services. (A small portion of the project budget may be used for these items if they are part of a larger project.)
- Programs that focus only on providing direct financial assistance to meet the immediate needs of individuals. (A small portion of the project budget may be used for these items if they are part of a larger project.)
- For-profit organizations.
- Capital campaigns, annual campaigns or fundraising events, endowment campaigns, or retirement of debt.
- Political campaigns or other partisan political activity.

## FUNDING AVAILABLE

Organizations can submit one application for any amount up to **\$15,000**.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Proposals are submitted online through the Winston-Salem Foundation's Grants Portal. The BPI Grants Committee will review all proposals and select the proposals to receive grants based on available funding. Notifications will be issued in December.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| • <b>Monday, March 30th</b>           | Application opens in <a href="#">Grants Portal</a> |
| • <b>Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup></b>   | Application closes                                 |
| • <b>Week of June 15<sup>th</sup></b> | Notification of funding decisions                  |

## HOW TO APPLY

Visit the BPI grants program page and scroll down to the ***How to Apply*** section.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

We are available to discuss proposal ideas and answer questions about the application process. Please email [bpi@wsfoundation.org](mailto:bpi@wsfoundation.org) to schedule a conversation.