About the Nellie Mae Education Foundation

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is committed to using our power and privilege as a philanthropic institution to advance racial equity in public education. We are committed to championing efforts to prioritize community goals that challenge racial inequities and advance excellent, student-centered public education for all New England youth. We are proud to have been part of efforts over the last ten years to advance personalized, student-centered approaches to learning across the New England region. We are still committed to advancing these approaches. We learned that for student-centered practices to flourish, the structural inequities present in our education system needed to be addressed. We are focusing our grantmaking strategically on addressing the barriers to opportunity that are the greatest in the region. By doing so, we will lay the groundwork for student-centered approaches to take root in ways that center young people of color and youth living on low incomes.

Background

#BreonnaTaylor
#GeorgeFloyd
#TonyMcDade
#BlackLivesMatter
#BLM

Educators have demanding careers. Teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic presented another set of challenges for educators. Being thrust into adapting to virtual learning is no easy feat.

While navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic within their virtual classrooms, educators also took on the role and responsibility of reassuring Black students and their families that their lives mattered. As a result of the murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and too many others at the hands of police officers, we’ve seen educators facilitate and engage in necessary and courageous conversations around racism and anti-Blackness. Many of these conversations have been led by Black educators who do the heavy lifting while remaining overwhelmingly under-represented and undervalued in public schools across the United States.

Like countless educators, we have seen the videos and hashtags that have rapidly spread across social media in recent months. We’ve seen the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, and we know that this pain and devastation is only heightened...
for the Black community, where the impacts of this virus disproportionately fall. We have also witnessed the uprising against anti-Black racism in New England communities and across the globe. We hear both the pain and hope in the rallying cry of Black Lives Matter. We, alongside other philanthropic organizations across the nation, have been reminded that while COVID-19 is new, systemic racism affecting Black communities and anti-Blackness are as old as this nation’s story. Inequities persist for many Black communities who have been underserved and defunded for generations—Black educators and students matter.

At the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, our mission is to champion efforts that prioritize community goals that challenge racial inequities and advance excellent, student-centered public education for all New England youth. We are committed to using our power and privilege as a philanthropic organization to support efforts that challenge racism and anti-Blackness. We are clear that the hashtags written above and rapidly spreading across social media are so much more than hashtags. They are lives. Black Lives. And they matter.

**Goals**

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation is supporting educators (defined as anyone within the school/district who works directly with youth and/or teachers within that community, in support of their education) who have been at the forefront of facilitating necessary and courageous conversations and practices centered on eradicating anti-Blackness in their virtual classrooms, schools, and communities across New England. The Foundation is deeply interested in projects that are rooted in challenging anti-Blackness and centering the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Black people.

**Funding Priorities**

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation will provide financial support to educator or educator-serving organizations for activities including, but not limited to: organizing; holding classroom, school, educator, and/or community conversations; culturally responsive trainings for schools or districts; culturally sensitive therapy; community healing or other activities intended to center Black youth and families; attending trainings or conferences.
Given the ongoing context of the COVID-19 pandemic, we realize that many of the activities described above are likely to take place virtually. Educators who propose to facilitate virtual activities are welcome to apply.

While we understand and support cross-racial solidarity and allyship to eradicate anti-Blackness in this movement and in public schools, this grant opportunity has been designed to center Black educators in New England. Black educators are strongly encouraged to apply. Non-Black educator allies who center the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Black people are also eligible for this funding opportunity.

Request amount should not exceed $30,000. We anticipate many projects will be funded between $5,000 and $15,000, but we will fund projects rooted in collaboration up to $30,000. The project must be completed within six months of receiving a rapid response grant.

The Foundation funds public entities such as districts and public schools and 501(c)3 educational organizations that fall under the tax designation 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) and have an education focus, as evidenced in their articles of incorporation. Due to the Foundation’s tax status, private foundations (described in section 509 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code) and supporting organizations (described in section 509 (a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are NOT eligible grantees.

Proposal

Please respond briefly to the following on the application portal. (See portal access instructions in the Submission section below)

1. Briefly describe the community (i.e., classroom, school, neighborhood, or city) this project would impact.
2. Briefly describe yourself or your team. Please include your race and your role as an educator.
3. Describe the project. What would this funding be used for?
4. How would this grant change or benefit Black lives in your classroom, school, or community?
5. What policy, practice, or procedure would you like to see changed in your classroom, school, or community as a result of this grant?
6. If the request amount is less than the total budget, briefly explain how the remaining budget needs will be met.
Criteria for selection

- Grant request must respond to a time-sensitive, unanticipated event, urgent challenge, or need in communities. *This grant is not intended to support ongoing programs and projects.*
- Public school educator (or teams of public school educators) demonstrate(s) experience and history of leading efforts related to anti-Blackness.
- The project takes place **within New England (MA, RI, NH, VT, ME or CT)**
- Requests submitted by and/or in support of Black educators will be prioritized. However, requests from non-Black allied educators that center the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Black people are also encouraged.

Rapid response funding will not support the following requests:

- Requests from individuals\(^1\) or religious groups
- Capital campaigns
- Scholarships or fellowship programs
- Debt reduction or cash reserves
- Building construction or renovation
- Operating support or on-going programs (However, staff time to manage a short-term project is an allowable expense).

Eligibility

- While this fund is intended to support public school educators (individuals, teams, or collaborations), the Foundation can only provide grants to non-profits or government entities described below. Applications must include the entity that will receive and manage the grant. The Foundation understands that many educators may not have the support of their school or district. If you are interested in applying and your school or district is unable or unwilling to accept and manage a grant, please contact Alexis Harewood at aharewood@nmefoundation.org or Stephanie Cheney at scheney@nmefoundation.org to be connected with a fiscal agent that can help manage the grant if selected.
- The Foundation supports and funds education organizations that are classified as public charities.
- Organizations other than schools or districts must have 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) tax status or be fiscally sponsored by an education organization with 501(c)(3) tax status and 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2). The Foundation cannot provide grants to 501(c)(3) organizations with a 509(a)(3) status.
• Organizations may apply for a rapid response grant at any time but can only receive one rapid response grant within a 12-month period.

Additional Information

The Foundation aims to review proposals and disburse funds to selected applicants within 2 weeks of receiving the proposal. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and funds will be distributed until the limited pool of resources is exhausted or October 22, 2020, whichever comes first.

If you need assistance submitting a proposal or have questions about your eligibility, please contact Alexis Harewood at aharewood@nmefoundation.org or Stephanie Cheney at scheney@nmefoundation.org.

Proposal Submission Directions

Applications will be accepted using our online application portal. Signup for an account if you are a new user or log-in if you have used our system this year. Once you are logged in, navigate to the “Grants Opportunities” tab and select the “Rapid Response Fund – Educators for Black Lives” opportunity to start your application.