

## THE BARRA FOUNDATION

### Information Requested in the Letter of Inquiry

*Below are the questions you will be asked when submitting a Letter of Inquiry (LOI). We are providing information in this format for reference only. As specified on our website, LOIs must be submitted using our [online process](#).*

Barra is focused on innovative approaches that address existing or emerging problems and opportunities. The Letter of Inquiry (LOI) is an opportunity for you to tell us about your approach. We would like to learn about your idea and how this experiment represents a break from existing practice that can influence others. Think of this LOI as a pitch. It doesn't have to give us every detail, but it should clearly and concisely communicate the most critical points. If we think your idea has the potential for Catalyst Fund support, we will contact you to learn more.

Please refer to the Catalyst Fund [How to Apply](#) and Catalyst Fund [FAQs](#) sections of our website to learn more about what we consider when reviewing LOIs.

### **Required Information**

#### **Year organization was founded**

#### **Fiscal Sponsor**

If you have a fiscal sponsor, please name your fiscal sponsor and provide the year for your organization, not the fiscal sponsor.

#### **Organization's Annual Budget**

Enter the total amount of your organization's current annual operating budget. If you have a fiscal sponsor, provide your organization's budget, not the fiscal sponsor's budget.

#### **Project Name**

#### **Amount Requested**

#### **Grant Duration**

Tell us how many months of funding you are requesting.

#### **County or Counties Served by Project**

Select all of the counties that will be served by the proposed project.

#### **Area or Areas of Interest**

Please choose your primary interest area. If your idea relates to multiple interest areas, please check the applicable boxes.

#### **Budget**

The project budget should provide a good sense of how much is needed for the proposed work and sources of funding beyond what you are requesting from The Barra Foundation. The project budget does not need to be final for the LOI. We understand that budgets evolve as projects take shape. Your budget should be broken down by line item and by year if multi-year funding is requested.

If funds have been raised or requested from other sources, please provide this information. Please use the budget template when submitting your budget.

### **Tell Us About Your Idea**

When submitting an LOI, keep in mind that at the LOI stage, we are just trying to determine if the proposed idea meets the Catalyst Fund's innovation criteria.

Tell us about your idea by attaching a brief video\* or answering the LOI questions below.

*\*If you would like to submit a video describing your idea, please upload a URL link to your video below. The video must directly answer the LOI questions. Please do not submit videos longer than 10 minutes. Unfortunately, we cannot accept video files directly due to file size limitations. Please also be sure to submit a budget as a Word, Excel or PDF attachment.*

***Respond to the following questions:***

#### **Question 1. Tell us about your idea.**

We are looking for early stage approaches that are unexpected, bold and unorthodox, that can change the conversation, and inspire and inform others. Provide a brief explanation of how the work is being done now by you or others and how the proposed approach is different. From the LOI we are trying to understand if your idea stands out as an innovative approach, so give us your best elevator pitch.

#### **Question 2. How do you plan to test and implement your idea?**

Share a brief summary of your plan to test this idea.

#### **Question 3: Why is now the right time to do this?**

Explain why now and why yours is the right organization to undertake this work. For example, is there new research, technology, leadership or partnership opportunity that makes this a good time to pursue this idea? What is spurring you to do this work now?

## THE BARRA FOUNDATION

### Information Requested in the Application

*If invited to submit an Application after we review your LOI, below are the questions you will be asked in the Application. We are providing information in this format for reference only. As with LOIs, Applications must be submitted using our [online process](#).*

#### Questions Requesting Organization Information

- Organization Background
  - Provide a brief statement of your organization's purpose or mission.
  - What is your organization's target population(s)?
  - Please attach a list of the members of your Board of Directors.

#### Questions Regarding Proposed Project

##### *Question 1: Problem or Opportunity*

In the LOI, you submitted a brief description of the problem or opportunity that the project seeks to address. If you have additional information that helps us to better understand the specific problem or opportunity, and why this is an opportune time, please include it here. If your LOI provided all of the information we need to understand the problem or opportunity, you may skip this question and enter "See LOI."

##### *Question 2: Project Description*

In the LOI you briefly described your project. Please expand on the information previously provided by giving us a more complete overview of the project. For example: How will it work? Who will be served? Who will be involved in the project design or implementation? What resources do you need?

##### *Question 2b (optional)*

If you plan to use consultants, please tell about the consultants you've considered and attach a scope of work from your preferred consultant.

##### *Question 3: Origin of the Idea*

Where did your idea for the proposed project come from? Tell us about how you came up with the proposed approach to address the identified problem or opportunity. Was it an "a-ha" moment; a brainstorming session with colleagues; did you conduct research; try something else that did not work; talk to others within or outside of your field who have done similar work?

##### *Question 4: New and Different*

Tell us how this approach is new and different from existing or past solutions. Why do you think your approach has the potential to be more effective than existing or past solutions?

##### *Question 4b*

To your knowledge, is anyone either in the region or elsewhere doing the same or similar work to what you are proposing? If so, tell us who and describe how your approach is different from theirs.

*Question 5: Better*

How will you know if your approach is better than existing or past solutions? How you will measure your results? Can you evaluate the work on your own or do you need outside assistance?

*Question 5b (optional)*

If you propose bringing an idea to the region that is in place elsewhere, why do think this approach will work here?

*Question 6: Significant*

No matter how large or small your idea is, we are interested in ideas that have the potential to inform how others think and/or do their work. What potential does it have to catalyze change? If we look ahead three, five or ten years from now, what would you like the result of this work to be? Did it change the conversation or inform others?

*Question 7: Learning*

Whether they are successes, failures or changes made along the way, there is value in sharing lessons learned with others. How will you share your findings or lessons learned and who will you share them with?

*Question 8: Risk*

What risks do you see to achieving your goals? What are the limitations of the idea? How do you plan to manage the risks and address potential limitations?

*Question 9: Leadership*

Tell us about the strengths you bring to this work. We want to understand your capacity to bring this idea to fruition and why yours is the right organization for this undertaking. This might include: unique aspects of your organization; the qualifications of your staff, board and/or consultants; your partners generally or for this work specifically; your funders or other supporters; your knowledge of the field; or, your collaborations or knowledge sharing with organizations beyond the Greater Philadelphia region.

*Question 10: Milestones*

Please detail three or four key milestones that you will use to determine the incremental success of your project during the grant period.

*Question 11: The Future*

Should your idea work, how do you plan to support it in the future? We are particularly interested in your plan for obtaining the financial support or revenue needed if this work will be ongoing. In addition, what non-financial resources will you need to reach your goal (e.g., stakeholder participation, technical assistance, referrals to resources, etc.) and how will you obtain these resources?

*Project Budget*

The project budget should provide a good sense of how much is needed for the proposed work and sources of funding beyond what you are requesting from The Barra Foundation.

Your budget should be structured in a way that would allow you to effectively carry out the proposed idea. For example, when undertaking a planning process, organizations could use

Catalyst funds to hire consultants for planning work and feasibility testing before launching a project or to conduct research on a significant business model change. However, funds might also be used for planning activities conducted by an organization's own staff, as appropriate.

Your budget should be broken down by line item and by year if multi-year funding is requested. If funds have been raised or requested from other sources, please provide this information. Please use this budget template when submitting your budget.

*Timeline*

Provide the estimated start and end dates for your project.