"Creating Community in Northwest Arkansas through Bridging and Belonging Initiatives"

Introduction:

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to continue strengthening community in Northwest Arkansas. Our goals are steeped in the belief that when our neighbors thrive and feel a sense of belonging in our shared community, we all are stronger and better.

Increasing division poses a threat to the resilience of every community across the U.S., and a specific challenge we must address is the decline in the opportunity to convene and build community, as recent research has shown. This community building often takes place in what are known as “third spaces” (homes are referred to as “first spaces” and the workplace or schools are typically known as “second spaces”). Third spaces are communities built around interests and passions. Identifying space and finding opportunities to strengthen community and increase empathy in Northwest Arkansas is the issue we’re addressing with this RFP.

Therefore, we are issuing a request for proposals to fund programming that will help us answer the question: How do we come together to amplify and craft opportunities to strengthen our social connection to one another and be the community every neighbor deserves?

Possible Solutions

Research has shown that programming that bridges divides between diverse communities can facilitate belonging and help us grow to be better neighbors. These types of programs can also strengthen our community engagement, increase empathy and result in kinder communities. Increasing opportunities for bridging communities, especially in healthy third spaces, can increase our sense of belonging and help us all live better lives.

Proposals from community agencies for programming should create opportunities for bridging community by:

- bringing different groups of people together over a sustained period
- coalescing around a common goal of strengthening social connections
- supporting the creation of third spaces in our community.
Definitions

**Bridging community:** bringing together groups of people who have different life experiences that allow individuals to be seen, heard and known and build empathic communities across populations (powell, 2021, 16:20)

**Belonging:** individuals “feel that they fit in and are part of the community and feel accepted and recognized for their abilities.” (van Gijn-Grosvenor & Huisman, 2020)

**Third space:** “specifically, physical locations outside of the home (first place) or workplace (second place) that facilitate social interaction, community building, and social support. Public facilities and institutions, including libraries and parks, constitute third places; but so do commercial businesses and certain privately-operated organizations such as coffee shops and cafes, bars, beauty salons, barbershops, bowling alleys, gyms, child daycare, recreation and community centers, sites of worship, and shopping malls. These third places span a diversity of locations that are all defined by their ‘ordinariness’ – simple, unassuming, and usually affordable places to ‘hang out.’ (Hickman, 2013).

**Examples of bridging community belonging:**

Examples of projects that create belonging and community can include but are not limited to sports, art, service or “giving back”, gardening and cooking. Programs **must not be ‘one and done’**, but they must be sustained over time allowing the participants time and opportunity to build relationships and coalesce around their passions. Individuals engaged in these projects should be from a variety of backgrounds, brought together as equals to work toward a common goal.

**Awards:**

- Grants will be awarded to organizations whose project budgets range between $20,000 to $200,000 for a 6- to 18-month project period. We expect to provide approximately $1 million in funding for all the projects under this RFP.

**Proposals should include:**

- Focused populations that your program will engage
- Clear goals and objective of your program
- Proposals examples can include but are not limited to:
  - Current programming in which funding request will bring to scale.
  - Current programming with the opportunity to modify and refocus
  - New programming to test efficacy and viability
- An assessment plan to evaluate the outcomes of your project
- Timeline from start to execution to evaluation
- Detailed Budget
• Letters of support from partners

How proposals will be scored:

Experience and Track Record of the Organization 10%
• Trust, experience and reach with the population served
• Experience implementing programs
• Diversity of staff/board and representative of population served

Sustainability 10%
• Evidence of the program's sustainability and integration into the organization’s work following the end of the grant

Budget 15%
• Cost Effectiveness
• Clarity in line items and descriptions as it relates to the project implementation plan

Desired Results/Measurable Impact 25%
• The key indicators of the program's desired outcomes
• The desired learning you hope to gain from the program implementation
• Detail who will this program inform future program decisions or organizational impact in the community

Proposed Plan for Program Design and Execution 40%
• Detail how the plan aligns with strategic areas noted in the RFP?
• The plan’s feasibility to operationalize within the timeline of 6-18 months
• Detail the engagement of relevant thought partners
• Detail how the population served is engaged as a thought partner in the program development

Important Dates:

• September 26th 8:00 am Request for Proposals will be made available [http://www.cybergrants.com/walmart/shortform](http://www.cybergrants.com/walmart/shortform) using invitation code: CCNWACOM

• Monday October 3rd 12:00 pm: RFP Training/technical assistance call [https://walmart.zoom.us/j/92012020052](https://walmart.zoom.us/j/92012020052)

• Friday October 21st 11:00 am: Technical Assistance Zoom Call: [https://walmart.zoom.us/j/93031389890?from=addon](https://walmart.zoom.us/j/93031389890?from=addon)

• Friday November 6th Proposal deadline (11:59 pm CST)
December 2022

Length of Grant:

- Up to 18 months (grants will tentatively start mid-January 2023)
- If applying as a pair or group of organizations, one organization must serve as the grantee applicant and take accountability for the overall project. Collaborative proposals should clearly define roles of each organization and any amounts to be transferred by the grantee applicant to the collaborator.
- Funding provided by the Walmart Foundation cannot be used for any activities that exclusively benefit or involve Walmart stores or business.

Eligibility Checklist
Organizations applying must meet one of following criteria:

- An organization holding a current tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, listed on the IRS Master File and conducting activities within Northwest Arkansas. 501(c)(3) organizations must be recognized as public charities other than Type III supporting organizations.
- A recognized government entity: state, county or city agency, including law enforcement or fire departments, that are requesting funds exclusively for public purposes.
- A K-12 public or nonprofit private school, charter school, community/junior college, state/private college or university.
- A church or other faith-based organization with a proposed project that benefits the community at large, such as food pantries, soup kitchens and clothing closets.

Award Conditions

- Organizations that have already received a Northwest Arkansas grant but have not completed an impact report may not be eligible to apply or receive a new grant.
- Grant request amount should not exceed 30% of the applicant’s total operating budget for the most recent fiscal year.
- Overhead/indirect costs (non-program-related expenses) may not exceed 15% of the total program budget.
- While the majority of grants are less than two years, organizations may propose initiatives with timeframes that extend up to three years. No-cost extensions may be requested for up to an additional 12 months, if necessary.
Funding provided by the Walmart Foundation cannot be used to provide services, compensation, or preferential treatment to Walmart stores or Walmart affiliated businesses.

**Funding Exclusions**

- Association/chamber memberships
- Athletic sponsorships (teams, events)
- Faith-based organizations when the proposed grant serves private interests rather than conferring a benefit to the community, in general
- Unrestricted funding
- Political causes, candidates, organizations, or campaigns
- Grants to individuals, to include scholarships (tuition, room and board or any other expense related to college, university, or vocational school attendance)

All grant applications are made subject to review of the organization’s reputation and activities, and its agreement to comply with applicable terms and conditions.

**Statement of Non-Commitment**

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Walmart Foundation to award a grant or to pay any costs incurred in preparation of the proposals to respond to this request. Those responding to this RFP must follow its procedures and requirements. Failure to comply with or complete any part of this RFP may result in rejection of the proposal. The Walmart Foundation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to negotiate separately with competing applicants for funds described in this RFP.

Additionally, receipt of funds through this request does not guarantee future funding and organizations should proactively raise funds to sustain efforts after the end of this two-year grant.

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References


