



Opportunity Challenge Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Last updated on May 12, 2020

1. General

What is the Opportunity Challenge?

The Opportunity Challenge is a joint grantmaking initiative by the WES Mariam Assefa Fund and the Tarsadia Foundation that is looking for both new ideas and established projects that address barriers to employment and economic advancement for immigrants and refugees. While skills and knowledge are important keys to success in the workforce, other social factors such as access to childcare, transportation, and housing also greatly impact one's ability to achieve economic mobility.

What do you hope to accomplish through the Opportunity Challenge?

The Challenge aims to:

- Surface community-led solutions that address barriers to economic integration and mobility faced by immigrant and refugee workers in the U.S.;
- Highlight how adjacent fields and organizations are linked to and can support immigrant and refugee communities; and
- Elevate public understanding of the many challenges faced by immigrant and refugee workers, particularly those in low-wage occupations, as they work toward achieving economic stability and mobility.

Has the recent public health crisis affected how you approach the Opportunity Challenge?

While there is much we still do not know about how the global COVID-19 pandemic will unfold, one thing is certain: the current public health crisis and related economic disruptions will disproportionately impact those who are most vulnerable in our communities. Immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their families are experiencing challenges on multiple fronts as livelihoods are disrupted, people risk their health to go to work, and communities face unexpected prejudices and unwarranted fear.

The WES Mariam Assefa Fund and Tarsadia Foundation stand in solidarity with immigrants and refugees across the United States during this difficult time. And, in so doing, we've decided to proceed with launching this long-planned initiative, the mission of which is now more vital than ever. Both

organizations are exploring additional actions to provide immediate support to immigrant and refugee communities impacted by this crisis. To learn more, please sign up for the WES Mariam Assefa Fund's distribution list ([here](#)) and the Tarsadia Foundation's distribution list ([here](#)).

[New Item] How do you define "immigrant and refugee communities"?

The WES Mariam Assefa Fund and Tarsadia Foundation take an inclusive approach to defining immigrant and refugee communities, recognizing that the issues and barriers faced by new Americans are interconnected regardless of their status or background.

What is the difference between "New Ideas" versus "Established Programs"?

Projects that have been in operation for two years or more would be considered "Established Programs." Any projects in their early stages or that have been in operation for less than two years would be considered "New Ideas." Even if an idea has been adopted or implemented elsewhere, it would be considered new if this is the first time it has been implemented to benefit immigrant and refugee communities. Please note that the two-year marker applies to how long the project--not the organization--has been running. [Ask us](#) if you have any questions!

2. Eligibility

Who can apply for the Opportunity Challenge?

The following U.S.-based organizations are eligible to apply:

- Non-profit 501(c)3, 501(c)4, and 501(c)6 organizations;
- Mission-driven for-profits, including an LLC, LLP, B Corp, Benefit Corporation or Corporation; and,
- Individual or a group of individuals, as long as they are age 21 or older at the time the application is submitted and have or obtain a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor by August 31, 2020.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria but are partnering with other eligible organizations on the program you seek funding for, then you may have a partner organization be the primary applicant.

Is the Opportunity Challenge just for organizations working in immigration?

No! We are excited to hear from all non-profit organizations that address barriers to employment and economic advancement for immigrants and refugees, including those that may be serving other overlooked communities that also include many refugees and immigrants. For example, we would be delighted to hear from organizations working in the fields of transportation, labor unions, food services and agriculture, criminal justice reform, the

environment, and more – anyone working to support communities that include many immigrant and refugee workers.

Are there any types of programs that fall outside the scope of the Opportunity Challenge?

Yes, initiatives focused solely on the needs of children, such as educational programs, while equally important, would fall outside of the scope of the Challenge. Programs that are strictly religious or partisan would also be ineligible.

What about COVID-related programs?

We know that immigrants and refugees are everyday heroes in essential jobs and are particularly vulnerable to the economic, social and health risks of the pandemic. While the Challenge funds won't be released until September 2020, the negative effects of the pandemic are projected to extend far beyond this current moment and the Opportunity Challenge is supportive of programs in response to COVID-19 that need to be maintained, sustained and expanded in the months ahead.

Are you only looking for programs providing direct services?

While the spirit of the Challenge is to support programs and organizations working directly with their communities, we would consider projects focused on policy and advocacy, research and evaluation, and other types of work that while indirect, are inextricably linked to the organization's efforts to support immigrant and refugee communities.

My organization is faith-based. Can we apply?

Yes, 501(c)3-designated religious organizations are welcome to apply to the Opportunity Challenge as long as the project is otherwise eligible.

My organization is a government entity. Can we apply?

Yes, as a partner organization, but not as a primary applicant. The primary applicant will still need to be a non-profit 501(c)3, 501(c)4, and 501(c)6, a mission-driven for-profit, or an individual or a group of individuals with a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor.

Can organizations outside the U.S. apply?

No, the Opportunity Challenge is only accepting applications from organizations that are based in and serve communities in the United States.

My organization already received a grant from the WES Mariam Assefa Fund and/or the Tarsadia Foundation. Can we apply?

Organizations that have received funding from the WES Mariam Assefa Fund and/or the Tarsadia Foundation over the past year (2019-2020) may not apply to the Opportunity Challenge.

We previously applied for funding from WES Mariam Assefa Fund and/or the Tarsadia Foundation and were unsuccessful, can we still apply to the Opportunity Challenge?

Yes!

We used to be WES Mariam Assefa Fund and/or the Tarsadia Foundation grantees but no longer are, can we still apply?

Yes!

3. Application Portal

How do I submit an application to the Opportunity Challenge?

The application will become available on March 23, 2020 and must be submitted through [SurveyMonkey Apply](#), our online portal. Paper applications and applications sent by email will not be accepted.

How do I access SurveyMonkey Apply?

You may access it [here](#) and then click on "Register." You will first need to create an account in order to access the application. For further information about registering, please see [here](#).

Do all browsers work well with SurveyMonkey Apply?

Yes, however Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome offer a better site experience.

Can we download the application questions?

Yes, you may download the application itself before you submit or your responses to the application once you submit, if you want to keep it for your records.

Once you log into SurveyMonkey Apply and open your application, you will see three dots on the right of the page, right next to the word "Preview". If you hover over the three dots, you will see the "download" option. Please note that certain multiple choice questions might appear differently depending on the answer you provide.

***[New Item]* Do I need to complete the application all at once?**

No, you may log out and return to your application at any time. Your work will be automatically saved so you won't lose your progress if you log out.

4. Application Details

Can an organization submit more than one application?

No, each organization should submit only one grant application to the Opportunity Challenge, either under "New Ideas" or "Established Programs". See above for what qualifies as a "New Idea" and an "Established Program."

What if our organization has multiple sites? Should we submit one application per site or one application for all sites?

You should submit one application for all the sites and indicate how funding would be distributed among the sites, if at all.

Can we submit an application with another organization?

Yes. Organizations may – and are encouraged to – submit an application together. While the primary applicant must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, secondary applicants in a partnership may be any type of organization, including individuals.

However, if a partnering application receives an award, the award will be distributed to the primary applicant, who will serve as a single eligible entity that will have the legal responsibility and authority for the use of the award and that will exercise direction, control and supervision of the proposed project. Ask us if you have any questions!

Can a group of three or more entities apply in partnership to the Opportunity Challenge?

Yes, assuming all other eligibility criteria are met.

What can I expect from the Opportunity Challenge application?

Relatively short and sweet! After submitting some initial demographic information, the Opportunity Challenge asks four questions about your project that will allow WES Mariam Assefa Fund, Tarsadia Foundation, and its selection committee to make a well-informed decision.

If you have any questions or concerns about the information requested (e.g., budget details), please reach out to us at opportunitychallenge@wes.org.

What kind of information are we expected to submit in terms of budget?

The application has three brief questions related to the budget; one asking about your current operating budget, one about the project budget, and one about confirmed/pending funding for the project. All three questions ask for high-level budget information. Additional information will be asked of semi-finalists.

When is the Opportunity Challenge application due?

The application will become available on [SurveyMonkey Apply](#) on March 23, 2020 and must be submitted by May 26, 2020, at 11:59 pm Eastern Time.

5. Selection

How many applications will be selected as Opportunity Challenge awardees?

Seven awardees in total will be selected for funding.

What are the selection criteria for the Opportunity Challenge?

- **Impact:** Does your project create deep, long-lasting impact focused on the economic advancement of immigrant and refugee communities?
- **Vision:** Does your project put forth a compelling vision for the advancement of immigrants and refugees that is informed by and responsive to community needs?
- **Implementation:** Do the project's leaders understand the key considerations and resources that are required to successfully execute the envisioned project?
- **Replicability:** Does your project develop interventions that can be shared with or implemented in other communities?
- **Partnership Orientation:** Does your team authentically and intelligently collaborate with partners, when appropriate, to increase the project's capacity?
- **Innovation:** Does your project test new solutions to persistent problems, drawing upon lessons learned in other social justice movements or in adjacent sectors?

How will applications be evaluated?

Applications will go through three rounds of review; an eligibility screening, an internal review by WES Mariam Assefa Fund and Tarsadia staff, and an external review by our selection committee. You may see the selection committee members [here](#). WES Mariam Assefa Fund and Tarsadia Foundation will invite semi-finalists to a phone interview prior to selecting the Opportunity Challenge awardees.

When will the Opportunity Challenge awardees be announced?

WES Mariam Assefa Fund and Tarsadia Foundation will announce the awardees in September 2020.

6. Award

What is the grant amount that each selected organization will receive?

"New Ideas" will receive up to \$100,000 each and "Established Programs" will receive up to \$200,000 each.

How can the Opportunity Challenge funds be used?

The Opportunity Challenge grant is flexible funding to support the project presented in the application, as well as other activities and operating needs as relevant.

What is the duration of the grant period and is there any flexibility?

The intention of the Challenge is to be a two-year award. That said, the project itself can run for longer than that as long as the Challenge funding is expended within the two years. The award could be expended before the two year mark, if needed, but the reporting requirements and funding relationship would be in place for two years.

[New Item] What are the reporting requirements for the Challenge?

One of the goals of the Opportunity Challenge is to encourage organizations in adjacent spaces that may be serving a large number of immigrant and refugee workers—like housing, healthcare, transportation—to apply an intentional focus on supporting these communities through their work. With that broad approach in mind, the Challenge does not impose a set definition or metrics on grantees, but rather aims to work with the selected organizations to understand their existing frameworks for evaluating the success of their work.

If you have any additional questions, you may reach the Opportunity Challenge team at opportunitychallenge@wes.org or sign up for a 15-minute “office hour” sessions here:

<https://calendly.com/nefeli-opportunitychallenge/15min>