



## WES Mariam Assefa Fund Frequently Asked Questions

### U.S. Funding Opportunity: Employer Practices

The WES Mariam Assefa Fund seeks proposals to identify new ideas that can drive more inclusive employer practices in the U.S. And improve economic mobility for immigrants and refugees. You can read more about the issues we seek to address through this funding opportunity [here](#).

### Key Terms

**Below is how we define the following terms, found throughout these FAQs, in the context of this funding opportunity:**

- **Demand-driven employment:** Training/employment programs built around employer and labor market needs with direct engagement of employers – to enable workers to more easily enter sectors that are growing and in need of workers to fill jobs.
- **Flexible funding:** Risk-tolerant grant funding that can shift as needed to test and demonstrate the impact of innovative, earlier stage, and/or less proven concepts. Flexible funding covers indirect costs and allow partners to make changes without submitting formal requests, while still working toward a strategic project goal.
- **Innovation:** To be innovative, your idea may include applying a new approach to a problem (or an existing approach in a new context), making a change in your practice to expand impact or reach, or creating a new product, tool, or framework.
- **Lived or proximate experience:** Personal knowledge about the communities their organization serves and direct experience or knowledge of the issues they seek to address.
- **Systems change:** Systems change is about addressing the root causes of social problems, which are often complex, interconnected, and a result of structures, power, and/or mental models. In the context of the Fund's work, one example of systems change work is addressing the ways in which educational and labor market systems contribute to discrimination against and the structural exclusion of immigrants and refugees who are looking for good jobs or seeking to advance in their careers. For those interested in delving into systems change, we encourage you to explore the [resources](#) developed by FSG.

### Eligibility

#### **Who is eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?**

You are eligible to apply if you are:

- A mission-driven organization (for-profit, non-profit 501(c)3, 4, or 6, or fiscally sponsored organization), whose work is aligned with at least one of the WES Mariam Assefa Fund's four impact goals:



- Build the case for solutions that advance **equitable economic mobility** for immigrants and refugees
- Deepen the bench of **leaders from immigrant communities and communities of color**
- Accelerate the uptake of **worker-centered innovations**
- **Grow the movement** to foster welcoming, inclusive, and equitable workplaces and communities
- Registered and doing work in the U.S. or based outside of the U.S. but leading work in the U.S.
- Committed to ensuring immigrant and refugee workers can access good jobs, achieve their career goals, and participate in inclusive, equitable economies.
- An organization whose leadership team and staff reflect the communities you serve and bring lived experience from immigrant and refugee communities and communities of color.
- Not currently receiving funding from the WES Mariam Assefa Fund. Organizations with active grants are not eligible for this opportunity; however, organizations that previously submitted a funding application but were not selected and past grantee partners are welcome to apply.

**We are looking for organizations that approach their work with:**

- **A systems change mindset.** You consider how your work can lead to structural changes in the way employers are engaged in supporting economic mobility and quality jobs for immigrants and refugees.
- **A learning orientation.** You consider how the lessons from your work can be shared more broadly and impact the policies and/or practices of other service providers, training institutions, employers and policymakers.
- **Innovation.** You think about how to test new solutions or pivot existing solutions to improve employer practices, drive better employer engagement, and build more meaningful demand-led partnerships with employers.
- **An intersectional lens.** The way you design, implement, and evaluate your efforts seeks to meet the needs of workers facing multiple barriers to economic mobility, including racism, ableism, sexism, and other biases.
- **Centering workers' voices.** Your work is designed, implemented, and evaluated in partnership with workers and you actively seek to center their perspectives and priorities in your approach. You work with employers to ensure the voices of jobseekers and employees are reflected in workplace culture, talent practices, and business practices.

**What ideas fall outside of the scope of this funding opportunity?**

We will not consider:

- Incremental expansion of existing programs (e.g., increasing the number of a program's participants).
- Programs designed in isolation, without meaningful or worker employer engagement.



- One-off programs with limited potential for learnings that could be shared more broadly and lead to system change and/or replication.
- Research projects or convenings without actionable recommendations, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement activities.
- Scholarships and grants to individuals.

**My organization is faith-based. Can we apply?**

Yes, 501(c)3-designated religious organizations are welcome to apply 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?**

Yes, organizations that are based outside of the U.S. are eligible to apply; however, their proposal must focus on work to serve communities in the U.S.

**My organization already received a grant from the WES Mariam Assefa Fund. Can we apply?**

Organizations with active grants with the WES Mariam Assefa Fund are not eligible.

**We previously applied for funding from WES Mariam Assefa Fund and were unsuccessful, can we still apply?**

Yes!

**We used to be WES Mariam Assefa Fund grantee partner but no longer are. Can we still apply?**

Yes!

## **Application Portal**

**How do I submit an application?**

The application will become available on May 18, 2021 and must be submitted through **SurveyMonkey Apply**, our online portal. **Paper applications and applications sent by email will not be accepted.** To help you prepare your application, you can preview the **application form**.

Following the review of LOIs, selected organizations will be invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal questions are included in the application form linked above. See below for further details regarding the full proposal process, timeline, and key dates.

**How do I access SurveyMonkey Apply?**

If you have never created a SurveyMonkey Apply account for the WES Mariam Assefa Fund before, you may access SurveyMonkey Apply **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](#).

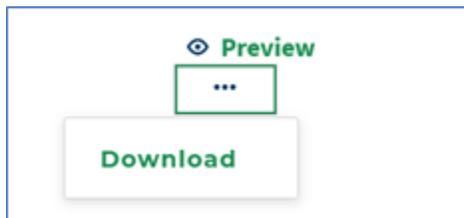
If your organization has already created a SurveyMonkey Apply account, please log in using your current SurveyMonkey Apply account (the same account you used to apply for previous grants from us). Please reach out to Zenia Dacio-Mesina ([zdaciomesina@wes.org](mailto:zdaciomesina@wes.org)) if you need to retrieve your login information.

### **Can we download the application questions?**

If you do not have a SurveyMonkey Apply account, you can preview and download the **application form**.

If you have a SurveyMonkey Apply account, 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 (see screenshot below). Please note that certain multiple-choice questions might appear differently depending on the answer you provide.



### **Do all browsers work well with SurveyMonkey Apply?**

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

## **Application Details**

### **Can an organization submit more than one application?**

No, each organization should submit only one Letter of Intent at a time.

### **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?**

Yes, assuming all other eligibility criteria are met.

**When is the Employer Practices Letter of Intent due?**

The LOI will become available on SurveyMonkey Apply on May 18, 2021. LOIs will be accepted on a rolling basis. LOIs submitted between May 18, 2021 and July 7, 2021, by 11:59 pm Eastern Time will be reviewed, with LOI notifications due to applicants in late August 2021. We will respond via email, either to decline funding or to provide instructions to submit a full proposal online.

LOIs received after July 8, 2021 and by November 8, 2021 will be reviewed, with notifications due to applicants in late December 2021. Again, we will respond via email, either to decline funding or to provide instructions to submit a full proposal online.

**Will there be another opportunity to submit an LOI in 2022?**

Yes, we are launching this application as a permanent feature on our site to diversify the way we find new ideas and meet potential partners. The themes for the 2022 open application have yet to be determined.

## **Video Submission**

**The LOI form includes a video submission. Is this required?**

No, the video is ***completely optional*** and is meant to reduce applicant burden and provide another way for applicants to tell us about themselves and share their vision in another format.

There is an *optional* question in the Letter of Intent form to share any other information not captured elsewhere in the application regarding your organization, initiative, community served, or anything else that you believe will help in our evaluation of your request. You can provide this information via text (300 words max) and/or via video. If you opt to make and submit a video, it should be brief (maximum 60 seconds) in which you introduce yourself and describe your initiative. Reviewers will review the videos for content, not for production value.

To be clear, this video is not expected to be of professional quality; we prefer seeing a new video made on a smartphone versus a higher quality video made for another purpose.

The video is ***completely optional*** and is meant to reduce applicant burden and provide another way for applicants to tell us about themselves and share their vision in another format.

**Can I submit a video instead of written responses to the application questions?**



No. Although the video is optional, the written responses to the application questions are required.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

### **What criteria will you look at to select funding recipients?**

Applications will be reviewed using the following evaluation criteria:

- **Vision:** Does the initiative put forth a compelling vision for the advancement of immigrants and refugees?
- **Informed by Workers and Employers:** To what extent is the initiative informed by and responsive to the needs of employers, as well as the needs of immigrant and refugee workers?
- **Systems-change Impact:** What impact is the initiative striving to achieve and how timely is it? To what extent could this initiative contribute to systemic change?
- **Innovative:** Does the initiative propose a new or improved approach to addressing the challenge/problem identified?
- **Potential for Learning:** Would the initiative result in learnings useful for the field, including models for replicability and scale?
- **Partnership Orientation:** Does the team leading the initiative authentically and intelligently collaborate with partners, when appropriate, to increase the initiative's capacity, reach, and/or impact?
- **Implementation:** Do the initiative's leaders understand the key considerations and resources required to successfully execute the envisioned work?

### **How will applications be evaluated and selected?**

Applications will be reviewed during the timelines indicated below by Mariam Assefa Fund staff and our external review committee based on the evaluation criteria. Selected organization will then be invited to submit a more detailed application, including budget details, and meet virtually with Fund staff to discuss their proposals. Awards will be announced in late October.

## **Key Dates**

### **When can I expect to hear about the status of my application?**

For our 2021 funding round (LOIs received between May 18 – July 7, 2021), LOI notifications - either to decline funding or to provide instructions to submit a full proposal online - will be sent via email in late August 2021. For those invited to submit a full proposal, final funding notifications will be sent in late October.

For our 2022 funding round (LOIs received between July 8, 2021 – November 8, 2021), LOI notifications will be sent via email in late December 2021. For those invited to submit a full proposal, final notifications will be sent in early March 2022.

Below are all of the key dates for this funding opportunity:



## 2021 Funding

<b>LOI Due</b>	By July 7, 2021
<b>LOI Review: Fund Staff and External Review</b>	July – August 2021
<b>Application Notifications: Declinations or Invitation to Submit Full Proposal</b>	Late August 2021
<b>Full Proposals Due (if invited to submit)</b>	Late September 2021
<b>Full Proposal Review: Fund Staff and Board</b>	Late September – Mid-October 2021
<b>Virtual Interviews with Applicants</b>	Mid-October 2021
<b>Final Notifications</b>	Late October 2021
<b>Anticipated earliest start date</b>	November 1, 2021

## 2022 Funding

<b>LOI Due</b>	By November 8, 2021
<b>LOI Review: Fund Staff and External Review</b>	November - December 2021
<b>Application Notifications: Declinations or Invitation to Submit Full Proposal</b>	Late December 2021
<b>Full Proposals Due (if invited to submit)</b>	Late January 2022
<b>Full Proposal Review: Fund Staff and Board</b>	Late January – early February 2022
<b>Virtual Interviews with Applicants</b>	Mid-February 2022
<b>Final Notifications</b>	Early March 2022
<b>Anticipated earliest start date</b>	April 1, 2022

## Award

### **What type of funding should I apply for - general operating support for my organization or funding for a specific program / project?**

If the work of your organization as a whole is aligned with one of the focus areas of this funding opportunity, we will consider a request for general operating support. If the work of your organization is broader and you are seeking support for one of your organization's projects that is aligned with the focus areas of this funding opportunity, then you should request funding for that specific program/ project.

### **What is the grant amount that my organization can expect to receive?**

Most grants awarded through the open application will range from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

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



Proposed time period for funding is one to two years. Projects that require longer than two years or less than one year are not eligible.

**What are the benefits of becoming a funding recipient of the WES Mariam Assefa Fund?**

Organizations that receive funding will join our grantee partner community. Through our community of 30+ grantee and investee partners in the U.S. and Canada, we aim to share resources and learnings, make connections, and provide capacity-building, technical assistance, and communications.

The Fund provides flexible funding for projects and general operating support for organizations that we fund.

**What are the reporting requirements for funding recipients?**

If your organization is approved for funding, you will discuss reporting requirements with the Fund staff. To date, we have not asked grantee partners to use a specific reporting template and have required partners to share two reports during the grant period: interim and final narrative and financial reports. Partners can repurpose reporting materials utilized for other funders. Any additional deliverables or reporting for the grant will be identified and agreed upon mutually by the funding recipient and Fund team. As part of our **equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts**, we will also collect optional demographic data from our partners.

***If you have additional questions, please reach out to [fund@wes.org](mailto:fund@wes.org). We are happy to answer your questions and aim to respond to all inquiries within 48 hours. Questions submitted to [fund@wes.org](mailto:fund@wes.org) will also be added to this FAQ document on a weekly basis.***