



## **Open Grant Opportunity Collaboration & Innovation**

*Investing in Collaboration and Possibilities in a Post-Helene Environment*

Open from May 19 to June 27, 2025

Collaborations are long-term efforts around common goals where participating organizations share responsibility, authority and accountability for achieving results. True collaboration goes beyond just coordination between organizations or on a particular project. This is an opportunity for organizations to innovate and re-imagine how to best learn from the community, serve the community and resolve complex challenges with creative solutions.

### **Who Should Apply**

Organizations that are already working together or have a history of working together, whether in emergent or established ways post-Helene, are encouraged to apply for this opportunity.

This grant opportunity seeks to support *new work* – new or emergent efforts, outreach to new constituencies, new approaches to long-term challenges, new connections with community, new synergies and strategies among the collaborating organizations. Applicants are discouraged from creating new collaborations as a means of pursuing this grant opportunity.

### **Eligibility & Grant Details**

- Collaboratives working in the Qualla Boundary and 18 counties of Western North Carolina are eligible to apply.
- A single organization – the Hub Applicant – will apply on behalf of the collaborative. Hub Applicants may be 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charities, fiscal sponsorship organizations, government and governmental organizations, faith-based organizations or colleges and universities. The Hub organization administers all grant funds and directly manages 20% of the grant funds to provide for the administrative and logistical needs of the group. The remaining 80% of grant funds are allocated, as determined by the group, among collaborative partners (including the Hub) to support the various roles within the effort.
- Grants will range in size from \$50,000 to \$500,000 each, with up to 20% of funds available for flexible administrative funding and the balance (80% or more) for funding collaborative work. Terms of the grants are 12-24 months.
- Grants can support work at any stage:
  - ✓ Exploration – researching and/or assessing issues and concerns
  - ✓ Determining approach – identifying the best program, intervention or policy effort to address the issue or concern
  - ✓ Implementation – putting into practice the selected program, intervention or policy effort

### **Application Questions**

1. Please provide a summary of the innovative and collaborative effort you are proposing, how funds will be used, and how the work addresses a top priority for the region in a creative or innovative way. Please also address why this is the right time and environment for your effort and how the work strengthens existing collaborations and partnerships.
2. Please describe how your effort aligns with Dogwood's strategic priority areas of housing, education, economic opportunity, and/or health & wellness.
3. Who are the people this effort will serve? Please also explain how you have engaged and will continue to engage the most affected populations and community members, while authentically incorporating their perspectives into decision-making.
4. Please identify and briefly describe the partners that make up your collaborative group, any previous engagement between the partners, the unique roles that need to be filled in your effort, and your initial sense of how the group of partners might fill these roles given their experiences and skills.
5. Please describe how the collaborative effort contributes to a shared vision among the partners and how you anticipate the work progressing beyond the grant term. Do you see any challenges you may face in this effort that concern you or may prevent you from carrying out this work?
6. How will you share decision-making power within your collaborative group, or determine how to do so?
7. How will you measure success? What do you want to learn? How will you know that the people served by your work are better off at the end of your effort than at the beginning?

### **Application Process & Recommendations**

Applications will be accepted between May 19 to June 27, 2025

The Hub Applicant will apply on behalf of the collaborative, listing the members of the collaborative and explaining their shared history.

The application should:

- Explain the collaborative effort, program or strategy the grant will support
- Define the necessary roles and functions within the effort, identifying specific partners (if possible, though not required)
- Propose a budget reflecting, at minimum, distribution of administrative funding and collaborative funding according to the defined roles
- Include letters of commitment from each participating organization, signed by an individual with signatory authority within the organization, attesting to their understanding of the collaborative's

purpose, commitment to participation, and commitment to power-sharing with other partners and the communities served.

An ideal application will demonstrate how the collaborative will:

- Address a top priority for the region, based on community input and need
- Contribute to one or more of Dogwood's strategic priority areas (housing, education, economic opportunity, health and wellness)
- Serve people or communities who have experienced disinvestment or disconnection
- Bring together multiple strategically aligned partners (see definition on [grantmaking page of dht.org](https://www.dht.org/grantmaking))
- Reflect a long-term, shared vision
- Respond to a ready environment (i.e., the time and environment are ideal)
- Have or commit to developing an explicit plan for how strategic decision-making power will be shared among partners, served communities and those most affected
- Articulate what success might look like
- Incorporate plans for measuring progress, learning and evaluating impact

### **Learning Supports**

Forming and sustaining meaningful collaboration requires specific skills and support. To that end, collaborative groups will receive individualized coaching and technical assistance to support collaborative decision-making, power sharing, and managing evolving needs or potential roadblocks within their groups. Each collaborative will also designate a delegate from their group to attend monthly learning cohort sessions. These sessions will focus on connecting collaborative groups and sharing learnings related to effective collaboration between different groups.