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The Minneapolis Foundation Awards First Round of Safe Communities Grants

31 groups will receive \$623,725 in funding. A second round of grants is under review and will be announced later this summer.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — The Minneapolis Foundation today announced the first round of grants from its Fund for Safe Communities, awarding \$623,725 to 31 community-based groups that are using a broad spectrum of approaches and strategies to reduce violence in Minneapolis neighborhoods.

“Violence is a problem that has always been with us, and one violent death in Minneapolis is one death too many,” said Chanda Smith Baker, Senior Vice President of Impact at The Minneapolis Foundation. “This summer’s horrific challenges have only intensified the urgency of this issue, and we are doubling down on our efforts to support the many local leaders who are doing high-impact work to reduce violence in their communities.”

The grants announced today will support organizations that applied for funding through a process that began this spring, before the killing of George Floyd. In light of Floyd’s horrific death in police custody and the civil unrest that followed, The Minneapolis Foundation quickly committed an additional \$500,000 to the Fund for Safe Communities, and a second round of grants is currently under review, with awards expected to be announced in August.

In reviewing these grants, The Minneapolis Foundation prioritized applications from groups that are led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color and engaged in efforts that are grounded in the needs of diverse Minneapolis neighborhoods.

The Foundation designed a low-barrier application process for these grants in an effort to reach the broadest, most diverse pool of applicants possible and to offset the additional burdens

posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, applicants had the option of submitting proposals via video files, and they were allowed to apply as individuals, even if they did not have a nonprofit organization serving as their fiscal agent.

“Our biggest takeaway from this grant round was understanding that these kinds of newly adopted practices for grantmaking are an important way for us to support cutting-edge leaders,” said Brandon Williams, The Minneapolis Foundation’s Safe Communities & Criminal Justice Fellow. “Our process was designed to give applicants confidence that, first and foremost, we would consider their work, and not focus on critiquing the way they communicated it to us. This welcomed unique and promising applications from organizers who have never been funded by The Minneapolis Foundation before.”

The quality of the proposals that the Foundation received makes a strong case for continuing this approach, Williams said. “We must continue to shift our practices and efforts to make Minneapolis a more equitable and safe place for everyone, especially those who are marginalized and underrepresented.”

Established in 2018, the Fund for Safe Communities supports tangible, specific, and meaningful actions to address and prevent violence. Inspired in part by the leadership shown by students who were affected by the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the Fund emphasizes the importance of work led by young people.

The Fund is advised by a committee of eight young adults who, in a variety of ways, have been personally affected by gun violence in Minneapolis. The committee reviewed grant applications submitted in this round and made funding recommendations to Smith Baker.

“I feel it's important to invest in communities directly, and that is exactly what this committee does,” said advisory committee member Meti Regassa. “All of the members have a vested interest in watching Minneapolis become a safer version of itself.”

The awards announced today will support the following groups:

- A Mother's Love Initiative
- African American Center of Minnesota
- American Indian Community Development Corporation
- Appetite for Change
- Art is My Weapon
- Be the Voice
- Circle of Discipline
- Conflict Resolution Center
- East African Integration Center
- Ghands, Inc.
- HAVEN International
- HIRED, Inc.
- La Oportunidad

- Lucy Laney Boxing Academy
- Me and My Sis-Stirs
- Metro Youth Diversion Center
- Minneapolis MAD DADS
- NAACP of Minneapolis
- Ostara Initiative
- Philando Castile Peace Garden
- Philando Castile Relief Foundation
- Pillsbury United Communities
- Plymouth Christian Youth
- Pollen Midwest
- Professional Firefighters Association
- Restorative Justice Community Action
- Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice
- Somali Action Alliance of Minnesota
- Strength Group
- The Price Dynamic
- Urban Ventures Leadership Foundation

Businesses and members of the public are encouraged to contribute to the Fund for Safe Communities. Contributions are welcome in any amount.

To make a tax-deductible online donation or to learn about future funding opportunities from the Fund for Safe Communities, go to <https://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/safe-communities/>.

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About The Minneapolis Foundation: For more than 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve lives in Minnesota and beyond. The Foundation manages \$900 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than \$70 million in grants. The Foundation brings people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community. www.minneapolisfoundation.org