California
COMMUNITY
Foundation

Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund
2022 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Updated 2/4/2022

Through multi-sector, multi-agency partnerships that advance a more equitable educational system, the Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund (LASIF) supports underrepresented Los Angeles County students in obtaining a postsecondary credential or degree, bolstering economic mobility and creating brighter futures for students and families in our region. LASIF is an initiative of the California Community Foundation (CCF), with support from a network of local and national donors and funders.

CCF invites proposals from community-based nonprofit organizations, K-12 public and independent schools and districts, and public and private colleges and universities in Los Angeles County for funding consideration in 2022.

PROPOSAL PROCESS & TIMELINE
LASIF grantmaking in 2022 will be facilitated through a rolling application review and funding process. Proposals will be accepted from January 21, 2022 through May 3, 2022.

Consideration by the CCF Board of Directors and grant disbursements will take place in two rounds, with Round #1 granted in June 2022 and Round #2 granted in October or December 2022. Applicants who meet the priority deadline for Round #1 but are not funded in June 2022 will be considered for Round #2. An estimated $2-3 million in funds will be granted across the two funding rounds, with at least $1 million reserved for Round #2.

Proposals will be accepted online only through CCF's Special Initiatives Application Portal. A list of all LASIF 2022 Application Questions is available.

Key Dates

Online Application Opens for Submission	January 21, 2022	Link to CCF's Special Initiatives Application Portal
Informational Webinar	January 28, 2022	Link to LASIF 2022 Informational Webinar Video
Application Submission Priority Deadline for Round #1 Funding Consideration	March 8, 2022	CCF anticipates two rounds of LASIF grantmaking in 2022 (June and October/December). Applications submitted by midnight on this date will be eligible for June 2022 consideration, as well as the second round of funding in October/December.
Application Submission Final Deadline for Round #2 Funding Consideration	May 3, 2022	Final deadline to submit applications for funding consideration in October and/or December 2022.
Final Notice of Grant Status	September 30, 2022	If not otherwise notified, all applicants will be informed of the final status of their application by this date. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the spring and summer. Funding decisions will be shared on a rolling basis, as decisions are made.

CONTACT INFORMATION
We understand that the proposal process can be very time-intensive for applicants. Organizations may submit questions not addressed in this Request for Proposals (RFP) via email and/or request a pre-scheduled 15-minute call with CCF staff

at https://calendly.com/lasif/lasif-2022-rfp. Please direct all inquiries related to this RFP to lasif@calfund.org.

LASIF FOCUS & PRIORITIES

CCF' education portfolio is committed to solutions driven by racial equity, parent/family engagement, strategic leveraging of public funds, and alignment with meaningful policy change. CCF's postsecondary investments seek to advance an inclusive, well-resourced education system for all young Angelenos that improves social and economic trajectories of individuals, and contributes to the productivity, health and well-being of the region. Efforts focus on high-quality advising and addressing affordability challenges faced by low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students through targeted investments in direct financial supports, school and community-based services, and systems level reforms at the institution and policy levels.

The Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund (LASIF) has been CCF's signature postsecondary grantmaking program since its launch in 2012. LASIF supports advising and affordability efforts that help scholars graduate with minimal debt and encourages pathways to social and economic mobility.

In 2021, CCF commenced a strategic refresh process that resulted in the following strategy refinements:

Individualized Supports	to	Systems Building Partnerships
Bachelor's Degree Prioritization	to	Multiple Postsecondary Pathways
Scholarships for Direct Costs	to	Innovative and Responsive Student Aid
Data Collection for Assessment	to	Collaborative Inquiry for Continuous Improvement

In summary, beginning in 2022, LASIF will focus more explicitly on multi-sector, multi-agency partnerships that support underrepresented students to obtain a postsecondary credential or degree. In addition to a greater emphasis on place- or population-based collaborations, a wider range of potential student aid award methods will be considered. This expands the range of potential aid types from more traditional scholarships to include emergency grants, and potentially other direct aid methods such as paid internships. Finally, based on community and student input, LASIF's original prioritization of bachelor's degrees and students who enroll in college directly from high school was amended to be more inclusive of the multiple accredited, nonprofit postsecondary institutions and pathways that support economic and social mobility.

In 2022, we are particularly interested in proposals that address one or more of the following focus areas:

- Programs and partnerships that creatively use student aid funds as part of a strategy to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and students of color who pursue and complete postsecondary certificates and degrees.
- Strategies that increase access to public financial aid, including FAFSA/CADAA completion, for large numbers of low-income students.
- Strategies that support attainment of postsecondary certificates and degrees, from accredited, nonprofit postsecondary institutions, that minimize debt and maximize pathways to social and economic mobility.
- Partnerships and strategies that have the potential to scale effective practices.
- Efforts that serve high-needs, underserved regions and populations of LA County, including those with low college attainment rates and limited college access/success service providers.
- Programs that implement supports that extend past postsecondary admission to include ongoing persistence supports, including beyond the first or second years of postsecondary for students with junior and senior standing.

Competitive proposals will demonstrate the following:
- A commitment to developing programs and services with a racial and intersectional equity lens.
- Strong, existing ties to the communities they serve.
- Engagement of youth, their families, and community in program design and assessment.
- Intentional use of data and evaluation activities to inform program design and improvement.

GRANT TYPES
Eligible organizations and partnerships are invited to apply for one or more of the following grant types. If relevant, some organizations may be considered for and awarded more than one type of grant. For example, an organization that is part of a partnership in one region, but also provides services in a second region under a different model or structure, could be considered for both Partnership and Program grants.

Partnership Planning Grant
LASIF Planning Grants are intended to support **two or more partners** (may include community-based nonprofits, public high schools, and/or nonprofit colleges/universities) to work towards a plan to better align services, goals, systems, and impact assessments. Preference for partners that work together in a local context and in alignment with partner K-12 schools and/or colleges/universities. Plan may focus on serving a priority student population (e.g., foster youth, Black male students). Under a partnership model, funding may be granted to more than one organization, or managed through one fiscal lead.

Partnership Implementation Grant
Funding to support **two or more partners**. Preference for partners working together in a local context and in alignment with partner K-12 schools and/or colleges/universities. Services may focus on serving a priority student population (e.g., foster youth, Black male students). Under a partnership model, funding may be granted to more than one organization, or managed through one fiscal lead. Funding may include support for Student Aid Funds (see below for more info).

Program Implementation Grant
LASIF Program Grants are to support **one organization**'s work to address college access and success, ideally in collaboration with other organizations and/or K-12 schools and/or colleges/universities. Preference for organizations working specifically to address needs and opportunities in a local context and in alignment with partner K-12 schools and/or colleges/universities. Services may focus on serving a priority student population (e.g., foster youth, Black male students). Funding may include support for Student Aid Funds (see below for more information).

Summary of Grant Types

LASIF Grant Type	Summary	Anticipated Grant Amount	Anticipated Grant Length	Request May Include Student Aid Funds?
Partnership Planning	Funding to support **two or more partners** to design and plan efforts to better align services, goals, systems, and impact assessments that address college access and success equity gaps, as aligned with LASIF goals.	$25,000 - $100,000	Up to 1 year	No
Partnership Implementation	Funding to support **two or more partners** to implement collaborations and aligned direct services to address college access and success equity gaps, as aligned with LASIF goals.	$200,000 - $1 million+	2-3 years	Yes
Program Implementation	Funding to support **one organization**'s work to address college access and success equity gaps, as aligned with LASIF goals. Preference for work that is in collaboration with other organizations and/or K-12 schools and/or colleges/universities.	$50,000 - $150,000+	2-3 years	Yes

Note: Grant amounts, funding term/length, and other terms are projections based on currently available resources.

ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES & STUDENT AID FUNDS

Applicants will be asked to provide a draft grant budget, to include how funds would be used across four main categories, and multiple partners (as relevant).

Budget categories:

- Programmatic Costs – Costs related to service delivery.

- Student Aid Funds (if relevant) – Funding for grantees to administer financial support to postsecondary students. This may include funding for need-based scholarships, paid internships, emergency financial assistance, or other concepts as proposed by the applicant. Please note that detailed records and additional reporting will be required for any grants that include Student Aid Funds.

- Indirect Costs – Costs related to overall organization and/or program administration. There is currently no standard or default indirect cost rate for LASIF grants. For this proposal, CCF staff anticipate requests of 10-15% of total grant budget proposal. If different, please describe needs. CCF staff seek to understand indirect costs needs to support program success and sustainability.

- Sub-Grants to Other Organizations (if relevant).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Included below are questions received by CCF during the January 2022 informational webinar.

Eligibility
1. *Can an applicant be fiscally sponsored by another eligible nonprofit?* Yes.

2. *Must our organization be based in Los Angeles County to be eligible?* Organizations do not have to be headquartered in Los Angeles County but must serve young people in Los Angeles County.

3. *Can a charter school that offers a college scholarship to graduates apply for this fund?* Yes.

4. *Can you confirm that this opportunity is not institutionally limited? For example, can a university submit multiple proposals from different units?* Yes.

5. *Can an institution of higher education be the lead applicant for a partnership grant?* Yes.

6. *Can an organization apply without a partner?* Yes, under a program Implementation grant type.

7. *Can a community-based organization be faith-based?* Per CCF guidelines, eligible organizations are: 1) nonprofit agencies with evidence of tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and not classified as a private foundation; 2) Operated and organized so that they do not discriminate in the hiring of staff or in providing services on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability. Please note that funds cannot be used for sectarian purposes, i.e., programs that promote or require a religious doctrine.

Focus Areas
8. *What is the target age or grade range for this funding opportunity?* For the purposes of this opportunity, funded efforts must primarily serve learners between the ages of 14 to 24. However, programs are encouraged to provide continued support earlier and/or into adulthood.

9. *Can participants be both current high school students and recent graduates?* Yes.

10. *Can the grant be used to support a community schools program geared toward college?* Yes.

11. *We currently support students at the high school level and do a lot of work to support FAFSA and college applications. Are you interested in receiving proposals from organizations that work just on this priority point in the RFP (and not on the post-secondary levels)?* While there is a preference for services that extend or partner with continued supports past high school graduation, we are interested in receiving proposals that focus exclusively on college access activities as well.

12. *Are programs that support students working toward and achieving their high school equivalency certificate eligible?* Yes. However, the primary focus of this includes postsecondary access and/or completion as well.

Application Portal and Template
13. *If you already have a grant account at CCF, do you need to create a new one specifically for this request for proposal (RFP)?* Yes, LASIF proposals in 2022 will be managed under CCF's Special Initiatives Application Portal. This will be a new portal for most applicants.

14. *Where can an applicant access a preview of all application questions?* All LASIF RFP questions can be found at: https://calfund.smapply.org/protected/resource/eyJoZnJIIjogMTIyOTE4NzM4LCAidnEiOiAxNzYxMjB9

15. *Is there a different application for the different grant types?* No. Some questions will be less relevant to one or more grant types and be listed as optional.

Budget and Use of Funds
16. *Will these funds need matching sources?* No.

17. *The budget should reflect 24-36 months, correct? Should the outcomes reflect the same time period?* Yes, depending on the grant type.

18. *What is the maximum grant size?* There is no maximum grant request size. Funded projects may be awarded an amount different than requested. Anticipated grant sizes are listed on page 3 of the RFP serve as suggested grant request ranges.

19. *Funds are available to include adding systems software for administration and staff?* Yes, depending on the types and size of systems software purchases. Please describe needs and intent in the grant application and draft grant budget.

20. *Are there instances where an organization applies for $100,000 (for example), and CCF/LASIF will award less than the requested amount? Or is it all or nothing?* Yes. Funded amounts may be different than requested.

21. *Will the process allow for any back and forth if there are more applications than money available? For example, if we ask for $100,000 but you only have $50,000 available, will you reject the application or ask to modify the scope for 50,000?* Yes.

Student Aid
22. *Would a program that gives direct financial aid (either to help high school seniors in our youth program offset the cost of entering college or offer financial support to our alumni in college) be considered an eligible project?* Yes. However, the direct financial aid should be accompanied by other services as well. Programs that work exclusively as scholarship or aid administrators will likely not be competitive in this process.

23. *What about aid per student?* There is currently no minimum or maximum aid amount per student. We seek to understand your program model and proposal.
24. *If our organization already participates in a donor-directed scholarship program via CCF, are the children we*

serve also eligible for LASIF? Existing engagement in other CCF-funded programs by an application organization or students served would not impact grant eligibility. Please note existing CCF grants and partnerships on the application.

25. *Could the grant pay toward the internships targeting BIPOC college students?* Yes. That would likely be an eligible use of Student Aid, depending on the details of the program.

26. *How much can we request for student aid funds?* There is no specific amount or limit for student aid funding requests.

Grant Types

27. *You mention that organizations may apply for one or more of the grant types. Will it be possible to apply for a Program Implementation Grant for current activities, and also apply for a Partnership Planning Grant for future planned activities? Would we submit two separate proposals in this case?* Yes, if meaningfully different projects/scopes, organizations, or partnerships may apply for more than one grant type. In this example, two separate proposals would be submitted.

28. *Do we need to submit separate applications for each category?* No, multiple applications are required only if applying for more than one type of grant.

Other

29. *How many awards do you expect to make in each category?* The number of grants and awards per type has not yet been determined and will be driven by the number of applicants and available funds.

30. *What are the anticipated data collection and reporting requirements for grantees?* Through the application and review process, CCF looks forward to learning existing and proposed data collection, assessment, and learning processes of proposed efforts. Further, with chosen grantees, CCF will design updated LASIF reporting and data collection requirements for grants made in 2022 and beyond. This may include the required submission of individual student-level information.

31. *Is this grant program viewed as a way to provide seed funding only or is there a possibility for additional funding to support new programs into the future?* We anticipate renewal opportunities, though that is not guaranteed and may be at a different funding level (could increase/decrease).

LASIF HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Addressing postsecondary access and affordability through financial assistance has been an important strategy at the California Community Foundation (CCF) since the Foundation's first scholarship fund was opened in the early 1930s. As one of the largest scholarship providers in Los Angeles today, CCF awards millions of dollars annually to students to pursue postsecondary degrees or workforce training.

The Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund (LASIF) was established in 2012 as a partnership between the CCF and the College Futures Foundation to increase college access and success in Los Angeles County. Since 2012, through support from dozens of donors and funding partners, more than $25 million has been granted across 46 nonprofit partners, with 38,000+ students served and 7,000+ scholarships awarded.

LASIF Scholars to date, of whom 90%+ are Pell Grant or CA Dream Act recipients and 91%+ identify with race/ethnicity groups historically underrepresented in higher education, are completing postsecondary degrees far faster and at higher rates than local and national averages. Of LASIF Scholars who enrolled in college in 2015 or before, 70% have earned a bachelor's degree, with an additional 25% still enrolled.

While the core LASIF model has remained consistent over its ten-year history, the initiative has undergone important evolutions in response to student needs. In 2017, LASIF added the Young Men of Color Initiative to

better integrate specific strategies that support male students. In 2019, the [Relief from Urgent Student Hardship (RUSH) Fund](#) was launched to help students struggling to meet basic living expenses persist towards their postsecondary aspirations.

In 2021, the LASIF team commenced a strategic refresh process that engaged various partners. Insights were garnered through a range of approaches including [action research led by LASIF scholars](#), quantitative analysis of LASIF scholar postsecondary trajectories, subject matter experts, and key constituent listening sessions.

Funding guidelines in 2022 reflect this process and align intent of LASIF and previous pilots (Young Men of Color and the RUSH Fund) under one grantmaking program. Beginning in 2022, LASIF will focus more explicitly on multi-sector, multi-agency partnerships that support underrepresented students to obtain a postsecondary credential or degree. In addition to a greater focus on place- or population-based collaborations, use of student aid funding will expand to consider additional methods such as emergency grants and paid internships support, as well as more traditional scholarships. Finally, the prioritization of bachelor's degrees was amended to be more inclusive of the multiple postsecondary institutions and pathways that support economic and social mobility.