



## **Facing COVID Fallout for Youth and Educators with Creativity and Compassion**

The Beker Foundation is launching an RFP in response to the COVID crisis.

Imagine it is 2023: COVID vaccination has been widespread, and life is seemingly “back to normal.” While many kids and educators managed, and perhaps even thrived, during the abrupt shift to technologically mediated learning, many others suffered and continue to feel the reverberations.

COVID-19 starkly exposed and exacerbated the opportunity gap between low- and high-income youth, particularly for children of color. Children who lacked easy access to technology, internet, and adults able to devote time and energy to ensure their online success experienced learning loss and absenteeism. Children and teens’ social isolation and academic frustrations resulted in mental health struggles compounded by lack of access to affordable mental health care.

Meanwhile, teachers, already stressed by inadequate support, were experiencing burn-out at high rates as they often struggled to both teach online and manage their own children’s remote learning. These disparities were also evident on the college level: while applications to Ivy League schools exploded, enrollment at cash-starved community colleges, a major route to advancement for BIPOC, immigrant, and lower-income young adults, sank dramatically.

As the pandemic recedes, The Beker Foundation is looking to support innovative ideas that address the revelations and repercussions of COVID-19 on **youth and/or educators in Massachusetts communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.**

### **Proposed use of funds should include:**

- Programming that supports the academic, social, and/or emotional well-being of young people at home, at school, or in their communities, or
- Programming that reaches and supports educators working with students from early childhood to college in either formal or informal settings
- Either programming created in direct response to COVID, or existing programming that could be modified or expanded to meet anticipated needs
- Engagement with underserved communities
- Active community collaboration and input-seeking

**Strong applicants will be able to demonstrate some or all of these key characteristics:**

- Demonstrated impact in underserved communities
- A commitment to social justice
- A clear, proactive vision for how you can create or support change
- Robust partnerships within and across communities and institutions

**The Beker Foundation is open to receiving applications from programs and organizations that:**

- Are a registered 501(c)(3) or use a fiscal agent that is a 501(c)(3)
- Are based in the United States
- Are working primarily in Massachusetts
- Have been operating for at least one cycle (usually a year)

**Timeline & Details**

- We will consider grant amounts between \$2,500-\$25,000.
- The number of grants awarded will depend on the number of applications and the amounts requested.
- While we will do our best to fully fund successful proposals, we may offer partial funding in some cases.
- This is a one-year grant with a possibility of renewal.
- We expect that grants will be awarded by November 2021. A report on progress and results must be submitted by December 2022 (the format is flexible; this can be done verbally as a phone call or Zoom meeting, or in person if possible).
- BIPOC-led organizations are strongly encouraged to apply.

To be considered for this grant, please submit this [initial application form](#) by June 4, 2021. Finalists will be notified by July 6. Proposals will be due by August 6, and final decisions will be made by Oct. 1. If you have any questions, please con

tact Felice Whittum at [felice@bekerfoundation.org](mailto:felice@bekerfoundation.org).

**About The Beker Foundation**

The Beker Foundation was founded with deep gratitude for the generosity of others and to continue a legacy of tzedakah (giving). Our mission is to invest in organizations doing work that is creative, community-centered, and collaborative, both Jewish and secular. We seek to cultivate a world that brings diverse people together to find common ground. Our hope is that those who benefit from our giving will be inspired, as we have been, to pay it forward.

The Foundation cannot provide grants to individuals, nor can it provide funds for projects that directly influence legislation, political activities, or candidates for public office.

The Foundation does not award grants to organizations that discriminate in hiring or in the provision of services on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, disability, citizenship, sexual orientation or veteran status.