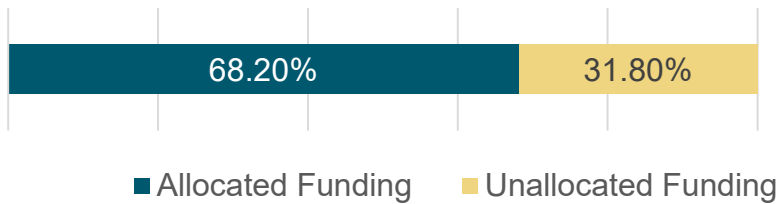


Overview

The Community Building Fund was established in 2024 using funds from the dissolution of the Diversity Council. This program supports projects, programs, and events within the City that actively promote social equity. By providing financial support to these initiatives, the Community Building Fund aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable community for all residents. This report details the program’s progress and impact so far, including an overview of approved applications.

Fund Progress

The Community Building Fund Program received \$50,000 for 2024 applications. As of August 1, 2024, \$34,100 (68%) of the funding has been distributed to 11 approved applications. It is important to note that approved applications do not always receive the full amount of funding requested. In total, \$43,600 was requested by the approved applications, and \$34,100 was awarded.



\$50,000
Total Program Funding
\$34,100
Total Allocated
\$15,900
Funding Unallocated

Program Website

More information, including the program’s eligibility requirements, rubrics, an application, are available on the City’s website at www.rochestermn.gov/dei (located under the Community Building Fund dropdown).

Approved Applications

The following pages provide summaries of approved applications.

Art Engagement & Community Building

Organization: [Griot Arts](#)

Funding Amount: \$5,000

Project Timeline: Launched in 2024 and runs through end of December 2024

Description: Griot Arts is a new community arts hub centering on Black art, literature, and cultural expression in downtown Rochester. This project aims to bring the community together through arts and literature by hosting a series of events, including open studio events, poetry readings, creative workshops, and youth-centered programs. These events will prioritize Black and Brown voices and experiences.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Foster a stronger sense of community, joy, and belonging through arts and literature.
- **Target Audience:** Black and African American community members from different backgrounds.
- **Success Measurement:** Post-event surveys and focus groups to evaluate the sense of belonging, community, joy, and well-being.
- **Future Plans:** Continuation of programs in partnership with other community organizations and businesses beyond December 2024.



Back-To-School Block Party & Parade

Organization: Community Collaboration (Sports Mentorship Academy as Fiscal Host)

Funding Amount: \$2,500

Event Date(s): August 17, 2024

Description: Rochester's Fourth annual back-to-school block party and parade will provide free school supplies, haircuts, food, and family-friendly activities, with support from local organizations and businesses.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** The event creates a space for students and Rochester Public Schools staff to connect and build relationships prior to the school year. It helps reduce financial burdens on families by providing essential school supplies and services.
- **Target Audience:** Underserved and underrepresented students in Rochester, MN, including school-age children and youth.
- **Future Plans:** Continue to grow the event and maintain it as one of the most anticipated summer events. Sustain the project through meticulous record-keeping and fundraising, ensuring the continuation of the event for years to come.



Black History Travelling Exhibit

Organization: Sports Mentorship Academy

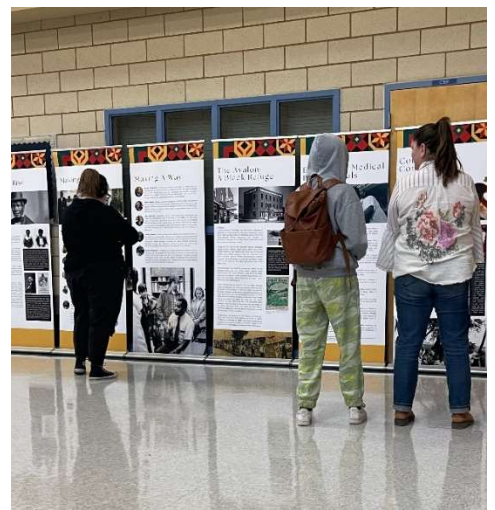
Funding Amount: \$5,000

Project Timeline: May 31, 2024

Description: Still We Rise: Rochester's Black Legacy is a travelling exhibition of key figures and events that have shaped the local Black community in Rochester, Minnesota and the city's history. The exhibit is an ongoing community project to preserve and honor local Black history.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Compile, educate and share key people and events that have shaped the local Black community to elevate voices and experiences of Rochester's Black community. This education can inform systemic decisions as the community grows.
- **Target Audience:** Community members, partners, organizations, and institutions of all races, genders, and ages.
- **Future Plans:** The travelling exhibit continues to grow as additional research is completed. Launched at City Hall ([view the event video](#)), the exhibit has travelled to Rochester Art Center, Gibbs Elementary, Mayo High School, John Marshall High School, Rochester Public Library, Dakota Middle School, Olmsted County, Rochester Public Utilities, Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester International Airport and United Methodist Church. The exhibit will continue to travel.



Post-event Feedback:

"After implementing this idea and scheduling the locations, we found that many other entities wanted this at their locations. The education piece of this was the most important part."

"This idea was a success because it educated so many people young and old about the history of people of color that live and lived in Rochester."



Fresh Produce Aggregation to Local Food Shelves

Organization: [The Village Agricultural Cooperative](#)

Funding Amount: \$5,000

Project Start Date: July to Mid-October 2024

Description: The Village Agricultural Cooperative operates 6 urban farms and a farmers' market in Rochester, MN. This project aggregates fresh produce from immigrant community members' farms and delivers it to smaller local food shelves. The initiative promotes food sovereignty by providing culturally relevant foods and supporting local farmers.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Promote economic growth, cultural exchange, and healthy lifestyles through fresh food access.
- **Target Audience:** Diverse communities including African, Asian, and Latin/Hispanic groups.
- **Success Measurement:** Data collection on economic gains, food delivered, and food shelf access; farmer surveys at the end of the season.
- **Future Plans:** Secure sustaining funding and expand land lease or purchase for continued growth.



Housing Web Portal

Organization: [OpenBeam.net](https://openbeam.net)

Funding Amount: \$600

Timeline: November 2024 launch

Description: The Housing Web Portal project aims to increase housing stock and expand Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) home ownership in Rochester by providing a comprehensive online platform. The portal will showcase each sector's housing projects, funding streams, and efforts. It will display community-wide housing statistics and provide a side-by-side comparison of project statuses, similar to the existing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion portal.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Enhance understanding of housing disparities in the BIPOC population and increase transparency of housing efforts in Rochester.
- **Target Audience:** BIPOC leaders and their communities represented by organizations such as CMRC, NAACP, IMAA.
- **Success Measurement:** Number of visits to the portal, feedback from users, and tracking housing trends.
- **Future Plans:** The portal will be built on top of the Community Beam infrastructure. Continuous support will be solicited from the technical community to co-create a culture of shared opportunities and responsibilities.



Juneteenth Jubilee Breakfast

Organization: Barbershop Talk

Funding Amount: \$3,000

Event Date(s): June 19, 2024

Description: Barbershop Talk hosted an inaugural Juneteenth Jubilee Breakfast to honor the Holiday in Rochester. The breakfast featured reflections on freedom and local Black legacy, a keynote speaker, music, and opportunities for community connection.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Celebrate Freedom Day, educate attendees about its significance, and strengthen community bonds.
- **Target Audience:** Community members, partners, organizations, and institutions of all races, genders, and ages.
- **Success Measurement:** Number of attendees and feedback from the community on the event's content and impact.
- **Future Plans:** Outreach to community partners, organizations, and institutions for partnership or sponsorship for future events.



Post-event Feedback:

"The event went amazingly well. We had around 160 people there. We got some great feedback from many City leaders and community members."

"This was very successful because we were able to not only have large attendance, but we were able to educate all that attended about the meaning of Juneteenth and the importance of unity in our community."



Latino Fest 2024

Organization: Alliance of Chicanos Hispanics and Latin Americans ([ACHLA](#))

Funding Amount: \$2,500

Event Date(s): September 14, 2024

Description: Latino Fest is a vibrant celebration of Latino heritage, featuring music, dance, traditional cuisine, and cultural displays. The event aims to bring people together to appreciate and learn about Latin American traditions.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Foster a sense of belonging for Latin American, Hispanic, and Chicano community members and promote cultural understanding among the broader community.
- **Target Audience:** The event is open to all, with a focus on highlighting the Latin American communities.
- **Future Plans:** Grow sponsorship base and build lasting relationships to ensure the event remains a community cornerstone.



Organization: Rochester Pride <https://www.rochmnpride.org/>

Funding Amount: \$2,500

Event Date(s): May 31, 2024

Description: Rochester Pride aims to provide Pride events for the gender-identity and sexual-orientation minority communities and their allies; that inspire, educate, commemorate and celebrate our diverse community; in order to promote an environment for advocacy, outreach, inclusion, and equity for gender-identity and sexual-orientation minorities.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Foster a sense of belonging and acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals and promote understanding and inclusivity within the broader community.
- **Target Audience:** The vent is open to all, with a focus on celebrating and supporting the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Future Plans:** Expand community outreach and partnerships to increase participation and ensure the event continues to be a pivotal celebration of diversity and inclusion in Rochester.



Somali Community Gathering Event

Lead Organization: Rochester Somali Community Center

Funding Amount: \$2,500

Event Date(s): July 17, 2024

Description: The Rochester Community Gathering event was a vibrant celebration of joy, culture, and unity. It brought together community members to celebrate shared achievements, strengthen bonds, and look forward to a brighter future. Attendees reflected on milestones, honored dedicated members, and discussed exciting future plans. The event featured inspiring speeches, engaging discussions, and opportunities to connect with friends and neighbors. Festivities included joyful music and captivating cultural dance performances, showcasing Somali heritage and community spirit.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** The event fostered a deeper sense of unity, cultural appreciation, and collective progress among the Somali community in Rochester. It strengthened community bonds, preserved and celebrated cultural heritage, and inspired community engagement.
- **Target Audience:** Somali families, elders, youth, the broader Rochester community, and local businesses and vendors.
- **Future Plans:** Establish the community gathering event as an annual tradition, boost local businesses, and enhance civic engagement through networking and collaboration.



Somali Independence and Cultural Day

Lead Organization: Pamoja Women Organization

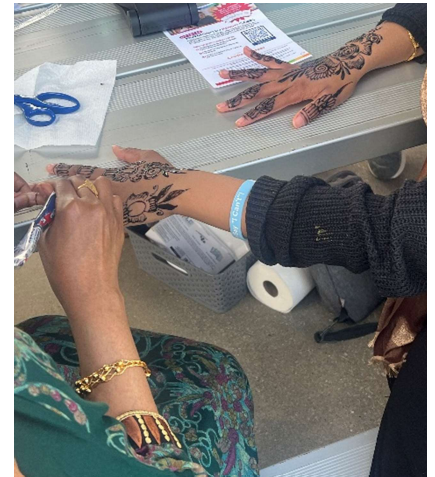
Funding Amount: \$2,500

Event Date(s): July 10, 2024

Description: The Somali Independence and Cultural day showcased the rich culture of East Africa. The event went beyond commemorating Somali Independence; it provided an opportunity for the Somali community and the broader Rochester community to come together, celebrate their journey, and promote unity and inclusion. The festival also served as a platform for artists, young entrepreneurs, and local vendors to showcase their talents and businesses

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** The event aimed to bring the community together, fostering a sense of unity and pride in sharing the culture and heritage of the East African community living in Rochester MN. It empowered youth, promoted gender equality, and boosted local businesses.
- **Target Audience:** Somali community members, the broader Rochester community, and local businesses.
- **Future Plans:** Double the number of participants from last year, increase the event space, and add community resource tables. Plan for future events to continue fostering community unity and cultural celebration.



Post-event Feedback:

"I learned the power of bringing the community together and celebrating each other's cultural and diversity. We were an entire community of Rochester who came together to celebrate each other."

"The idea was a success, due to the large number of people that attended. We estimated for around 300 people but in return we had over 600+ people attending, both from the immigrant community in Rochester and the mainstream community."



Walk Around the World

Lead Organization: Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association ([IMAA](#))

Funding Amount: \$3,000

Event Date(s): July 1, 2024

Description: Walk Around the World, hosted in collaboration with History Center of Olmsted County, celebrated refugees and immigrants and promoted cultural awareness and social and community development. The event featured multicultural dance performances, activities at various booths, ethnic food vendors and products, storytelling, and community service providers.

Impact & Goals:

- **Primary Impact:** Increased awareness about the cultures and experiences of refugees and immigrants in Rochester, promoted inclusivity, and provided a space for cultural exchange and learning.
- **Target Audience:** Refugee and immigrant communities, the broader Rochester community, and local businesses and vendors.
- **Future Plans:** Continue organizing the event annually with the support of sponsorships and grants. Implement new elements to enhance cultural celebration and community engagement.



Post-event Feedback:

"Despite postponing the event to the rain date of 6/23, we still had a successful turnout. An estimated 500 attendees came out."

"Walk Around the World has existed for several years to recognize World Refugee Day and honor and recognize refugee and immigrant cultures. The event was successful in bringing together different cultures in the community through dance, food, music, and vendors. This year, IMAA partnered with History Center of Olmsted County (HCOC) for the first time, and the new location and partnership was a success."

