



# LANDAU FAMILY FOUNDATION

2026 Applicant Guide

*Advancing Justice  
& Fueling the Arts*

# INTRODUCTION / WELCOME

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The Landau Family Foundation is a private family foundation dedicated to supporting communities and organizations working to advance social, racial, and economic justice through activism and the arts. This guide is designed to help prospective applicants learn about the Foundation, understand our funding priorities, determine eligibility, and navigate our application process.

## ABOUT OUR APPROACH

The Landau Family Foundation believes that the people closest to injustice hold deep wisdom about how to dismantle it and that the most effective solutions emerge when foundations are guided by local expertise, community knowledge and grassroots innovation. Our philanthropic work is built on open dialogues focused on learning and building long-standing relationships with the individuals and organizations leading that work. We focus on civic activism and the arts as engines of social transformation, particularly for communities historically harmed by racial, social, and economic injustice. We do not just fund this work; we believe in it and trust it.

## OUR FUNDING RELATIONSHIPS

We deeply value the long-term partnerships we have built with many of our grantees over time. While we have a history of multi-year funding, we do not intend to support organizations in perpetuity, and we actively encourage all partners to engage in ongoing organizational sustainability planning. The Foundation will generally not fund any single organization for more than seven consecutive years.

## WHERE WE FUND

Since our founding, the Foundation has been deeply rooted in Chicago, directing the majority of our funding toward organizations and initiatives serving the Chicago metropolitan area. In 2026, we are excited to expand our geographic footprint to Oakland, CA - a community with a rich history of activism, arts, and justice movements that closely reflect our values and areas of interest. As part of this expansion, we will launch an open call for Letters of Introduction from organizations based in or primarily serving Oakland, CA, beginning in the spring of 2026. For Chicago, all 2026 grantmaking will be by invitation only. We aim to support approximately 15-20 organizations per region each year.

**Oakland, CA – First call for Letters of Introduction (LOI) – Opens May 12, 2026**

**Chicago, IL – By Invitation Only in 2026**

**Important:** The Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals. All LOIs and Applications must be submitted through our online grants portal.

## PROGRAM FUNDING AREAS AT A GLANCE

Fund	Grant Range	Duration	Focus Areas
Arts & Justice Fund	\$10,000-\$25,000/year	1, 2, or 3 years	Community Arts Learning, Arts & Activism, Housing Justice, Workers' Rights
Mission Sustainability & Renewal Fund	\$10,000-\$20,000	12-24 months	Capacity building, staff wellness, technology, strategic planning, strategic partnerships
Amplification Fund	\$10,000-\$25,000	1, 2, or 3 years	Coalitions, movement hubs, emergent issues, policy tipping points

*For full descriptions of each fund including who should apply and what is funded, please refer to the [Program Area Funding Guides Overview document](#).*

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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All applicants must meet the following baseline requirements to be considered for any Landau Family Foundation grant.

Criterion	Requirement
Nonprofit Status	501(c)(3) nonprofit or fiscally sponsored initiative
Geography	Based in or primarily serving Chicago, IL or Oakland, CA and surrounding areas. Organizations operating in the Bay Area must be seeking support for their work that is predominantly implemented in and is to primary benefit of residents in Oakland, CA.
Budget	Annual operating budget of \$5 million or less (based on most recently completed fiscal year board approved financials/audit)
Community Accountability	Programs and leadership centered on and accountable to directly impacted communities
Applicant Type	Must be an organization; individual applicants are not eligible

**What We Do Not Fund:** We do not fund religious activities, individual scholarships or fellowships, fundraising events or galas, direct service programs without advocacy or organizing strategies, or organizations with annual operating budgets exceeding \$5 million.

## 5 STEP APPLICATION PROCESS

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1. **Confirm your eligibility.** Verify that your organization meets all core eligibility requirements.
2. **Review this guide and the companion [Program Funding Area Guides](#).** Identify the fund that best aligns with your work and goals. Organizations can apply to only one fund per twelve-month period.
3. **Consider attending the Oakland Area Information Session** to be held via zoom on May 22, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. PT. Register via our website or by clicking on the [Oakland Area Info Session Registration Link](#).
4. **Submit a Letter of Introduction (Oakland open call launched May 12, 2026).** All organizations must submit their LOI through our online grants portal accessible via our website or at [Oakland, CA LOI Portal](#) for Oakland applicants. Chicago applicants are by invitation only.
5. **Await an invitation to submit a full proposal and submit your application and related materials by the deadline dates outlined under grantmaking timeline.** If your LOI is advanced, you will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal. Some Chicago-based organizations with a prior funding history with the Foundation may be invited to bypass the LOI process and submit an application for funding consideration utilizing our new process, framework and program funding areas.

**Please note that organizations may only submit one application, for only one fund, per twelve-month period.** Organizations submitting to multiple funds within a twelve-month period will not be considered.

## SELECTION CRITERIA & WHAT WE LOOK FOR

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The Landau Family Foundation reviews all prospective partners through a two-stage process. The first stage is a Letter of Introduction, which is reviewed on a 100-point rubric across four areas: organizational fit, community connection, program funding alignment, and impact potential. Organizations that score 85 points or above are invited to submit a full proposal, which is reviewed in greater depth across the same core areas. At both stages, we are looking for the same essential qualities: specificity, authenticity, strategic focus on results with a clear demonstrated commitment to the communities at the center of your work.

Our scoring and rubric review process is advisory and is not mechanical. We recognize that the most transformative organizations are often those with the least infrastructure and visibility, and we actively seek them out. What matters most to us is the depth of your community rootedness, the clarity and honesty of your self-assessment, the outcomes of your efforts, and the degree to which the people most impacted by the issues you address are leading and shaping your work. Across all funds and at every stage of review, the following qualities distinguish the most competitive applicants.

- Your organization is led by and accountable to the communities most directly impacted by the issues you address, with specific and structural evidence of how community members influence your leadership structures, programs, and decision-making.
- Your mission, programs, and approach are clearly aligned with the goals and values of the foundation.
- Your programs are described with specificity, including who you serve, what you do, how often, and what participants gain and leverage towards personal or community change. Vague or general program descriptions do not score well at either stage.
- Your organization demonstrates a credible pathway from its work to community-level or systems-level change, supported by concrete examples of past impact or strong potential for future impact, rather than descriptions of activities alone.
- Your finances are stable. If a deficit exists, a credible plan to address it is clearly described.
- Partnerships and collaborative relationships are described with specificity. Your organization's role in any coalition or movement ecosystem is clearly defined. A listing of partners with no connection to how you are working together or what your specific role is in the partnership limits our ability to understand your potential for impact.
- Your application is complete, honest, and grounded. Reviewers build trust in organizations that acknowledge their limitations alongside their strengths, and that present realistic goals with a clear approach to measuring success. This work is challenging; your application and approach should reflect it, not disguise it. Be honest about scale. A smaller, deeper impact often reads stronger than inflated claims of broad reach.

**For Community Arts applicants**, programming is tuition-free or significantly subsidized, sequential rather than one-time, and connects artistic skill-building to social justice themes and civic development for young people ages 5 to 21.

**For Arts and Activism applicants**, the arts and organizing are genuinely integrated. Specific artistic forms, campaigns, and systems change goals are named, and the rationale for using creative expression as a strategic tool is compelling and clear.

**For Housing Justice and Workers' Rights applicants**, organizing and advocacy are central to your work. Specific housing justice or workers' rights issues are clearly named, and the scope of organizing work is well defined with a viable pathway to influence change. Active organizing strategies and campaigns are described in meaningful detail rather than simply referenced.

**For Mission Sustainability and Renewal Fund applicants**, proposed projects include specific activities, deliverables, and measurable, time-bound goals, supported by a realistic timeline, relevant supporting details such as consultant plans or supply lists, and a budget clearly tied to the proposed work. A strong application also makes a compelling case for how the investment will strengthen the organization's programs and community impact over time and why it is urgent and mission critical.

For Amplification Fund applicants, proposed partnerships must have a significant or sole presence in Chicago, IL or Oakland, CA and clearly describe their coalition, movement hub, pooled fund, or emergent issues, along with a compelling and time-sensitive policy moment or campaign opportunity grounded in community power. A strong application names all key partners and their roles, demonstrates that decision-making and power are meaningfully shared across the collaborative, identifies how funding or programmatic decisions are made and identifies specific goals, policy targets, and clear markers for measuring progress.

## 2026 GRANTMAKING AND APPLICATION REVIEW TIMELINE

Fund / Cycle	Stage	Timing – 5 p.m. CT for all deadline dates	Region
Arts & Justice Fund, Mission Sustainability Fund, Amplification Fund – Summer Cycle '26	LOI Open & Accepting Submissions	May 12 – June 5th	Oakland open call, Chicago (invitation only)
	LOI Review Period	Late-May through Mid-June	Both Regions
	LOI Status Notifications	Late-May through Mid-June	
	Full Proposals Submittal Period	Late-May through July 17	Both Regions – (invitation only)
	Grant Decisions & Notifications	By August 31	Both Regions
Arts & Justice Fund, Mission Sustainability Fund, Amplification Fund - Fall Cycle '26	LOI Open & Accepting Submissions	July 13 – August 14	Oakland open call, Chicago (invitation only)
	LOI Review Period	August – September	Both Regions
	LOI Status Notifications	August – September 7th	
	Full Proposals Submittal Period	August 31 - October 9	Both Regions – (invitation only)
	Grant Decisions & Notifications	By October 30	Both Regions

LOI and Proposals are reviewed on a first come, first reviewed basis with applicants encouraged to submit their LOI or application prior to the final submission period date. LOIs or applications after the first 100 received may be transferred to a future funding grant cycle. Organizations are encouraged to submit their LOI or application prior to the deadline date. **All deadline dates are at 5:00 p.m. CT.**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

P.O. Box 577880, Chicago, IL 60657  
<https://www.landaufamilyfoundation.org>

Follow our [LinkedIn page](#) and visit our [website](#) quarterly for the latest updates on grantmaking priorities and open calls.