

## Proposal for Impact Focused Funding Pilot – Disability Inclusion

### *Grant type 2: addressing community-wide challenges*

#### Overview – “Radical Togetherness”

Inclusion is a challenge for many communities, and our local Jewish community is no exception. Many conversations have been held over many years to identify and begin to address cultural norms, attitudes and practices that have served to exclude from full participation in Jewish life people with disabilities, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ Jews, and other groups.

One of the longest-standing challenges for our community is inclusion of people with physical, cognitive and developmental disabilities. Despite good intentions (not to mention legal requirements) for inclusion, disabilities continue to exclude Jewish children, adults, and their families from full participation in Jewish life.

Recognizing this Pilot can focus on one aspect of inclusion, the Discovery Phase posed a visionary question: What would it take for Minneapolis to become a model of disability inclusion?

The visioning sessions on this question were emotionally charged, honest, and difficult. Additional conversations with the professionals and community members who live and breathe efforts to foster greater disability inclusion were equally passionate.

Unequivocally, the answer to that visionary question is: We have a very long way to go. We have such a long way to go that it’s difficult to know where to begin.

But by reflecting deeply on the Discovery Phase, we identified a fundamental community requirement that underpins the possibility of long-term, systemic change: **building trust**.

Without investment in an authentic process of cultural change and the empowerment of Jews with disabilities (and their families) to set priorities and participate in solutions, inclusion efforts will continue to be isolated, underfunded, and piecemeal.

By focusing on this area of investment for the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, we aim to spark the longer-term work it will take to become a truly inclusive community.

#### What does building trust look like?

One visioning session participant commented:

“We’ve been asking these questions for years, and the same people show up, and nothing changes.”

“Inclusion” has been treated as a “special interest” rather than a community concern. A requirement of building trust is that community leaders invest time in listening deeply to the lived experiences of people with disabilities and their families—authentic inclusion cannot be treated as a special interest.

Skilled facilitation and expertise in building trust is fundamental to a truly healing process. We propose to identify and engage consulting support to guide our efforts over the coming years. As a prerequisite of building trust, Jews with disabilities and their families need to be embedded in the identification and selection process, along with the community professionals and other stakeholders who understand the nuances of inclusion and exclusion from the inside out.

Under the guidance of a skilled expert, building trust can take place in many formats:

- Community listening sessions
- Experiential projects that make visible habits and systems of exclusion
- Expanded professional and organizational development to redress systems of exclusion
- Proactive inclusion of Jews with disabilities on boards and committees
- Community-wide “inclusion audit” to assess barriers and recommend solutions

## Funding

The Pilot on Impact Focused Funding will begin with seed funding to engage the right consulting expertise; based on the results of that process, we will be able to set targets for longer-term funding.

We propose a first-year fundraising target of \$12,000 for the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, following analysis in partnership with the Department of Philanthropy to assess sustainable giving capacity in our community.

To increase the community's impact on par with our commitment to inclusion without fatiguing or overextending our already generous funders, this proposal asks the Board of Directors commit to supplementing the initial target of \$12,000 with up to a 1:1 match, to create a total funding pool of \$24,000 available for Year 1.

Then, in the second and third years of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, it requests the Board to commit to similar matches to keep the funding pool to a minimum of \$24,000 for each of the years.

**Approval of these matching funds is at the discretion of the Board.** The intent is for the Board to determine a source and strategy for these matching funds that do not impact the annual campaign achievement and/or other philanthropic priorities.

## Approved use of funds

The initial pool of grant money is intended as seed funding for engaging a consultant/subject matter expert to support Minneapolis with:

- Assessing our community landscape with respect to inclusion
- Conducting an inclusive, collaborative process for naming and prioritizing the key areas of work for becoming a more inclusive community
- Recommending, designing and facilitating workshops, listening sessions and trainings to build trust across the disability community, organizations, and other community members

See “Process,” below, for more detail.

We anticipate that grant funds will be used largely for consultant fees, but they can also be used to support the convening of meetings, events, and experiences that contribute to the process of building trust and naming priorities (catering, needed materials, accessibility accommodations, etc.).

## Process

For the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, an advisory board will identify a consultant or subject matter expert who can:

- Help us articulate the most urgent community challenges in disability inclusion

- Design a collaborative, community-based process for convening, building trust, and setting goals
- Define measurable goals and ensure we are collecting the right data to assess impact
- Recommend priorities and next steps to advance inclusion.

At least half of the advisory board will comprise Jews with disabilities (or their families in the case of minors). The advisory board will also include community inclusion professionals and representatives of camps, synagogues, schools, and other institutions.

From June through December 2024, the advisory board will set criteria for hiring a consultant. MJF staff will support the board through hosting meetings, conducting needed research, preparing RFPs and other documents, and similar activities.

Potential consultants will be asked to prepare a project plan, budget and proposed metrics of impact. The advisory board will send its recommendation of a consultant to CISC in or around January 2024, to include in the funding request for Year 1 of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding.

The specific activities to kick off after April 1, 2024, will depend on the recommendations of the selected consultant. We anticipate that the scope of work may include:

- Focus groups, listening sessions, and interviews
- Observations of the rhythms of Jewish life and events in our community
- Presentation of analyses
- Collaborative work with relevant professionals.

MJF will administration of the consultant relationship with the guidance of the advisory board.

### Measuring success—what’s the impact?

In preparing proposals for this work, potential consultants will be asked to propose and justify the metrics by which we can assess progress towards impact at milestones throughout the 3-year pilot. These may include:

- Diversity of organizations and community members engaged in aspects of the work (e.g., representation from schools, synagogues, families, funders, etc.)
- Completed inclusion assessments by a range of community organizations
- Self-reported satisfaction of participants engaged in the process

Specific metrics and milestones for reporting will be included in the recommendation the advisory board makes to CISC for funding in Year 1.

### Timeline

Once approved, the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding will follow the timeline below. Process and timeline for Year 2 and beyond will depend on the scope of work approved for Year 1.



## **Proposal supplement: Beyond the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding**

The purpose of the Discovery Phase of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding is to identify a limited number of areas of investment focus for a three-year period. However, the process unearthed a range of creative ideas, needs, and opportunities for strengthening our community, now and in the future.

Although these opportunities lie beyond the scope of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, we will continue to explore and develop them through further partnership with organizations, community dialogue, and research.

### **Additional investments in inclusion**

We are committed to creative approaches to investing in inclusion across our community. Among the ideas shared during the Discovery Phase were:

- Career development and communal workforce integration of people with disabilities
- Establishment of partnerships to better integrate people with disabilities into Jewish life
- Disability-sensitive mental health and social support
- Defining minimum inclusion requirements for community professionals and organizations
- Expanding the vision of inclusion to address other marginalized groups, including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, interfaith families and more.

Additionally, we recognize that the Pilot will only scratch the surface of needs relating to disability inclusion, and we will continue to explore initiatives and grant opportunities to address those needs.

Additional areas of focus for inclusion be investigated, designed, and implemented throughout the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, based on community interest, funding and likely impact.