

## Proposal for Impact Focused Funding Pilot – Young Adults

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

#### Overview – Deep Listening

*L’Dor v’dor*—generation to generation—is a concept most commonly applied in our community to connections between young children and elders. But it is equally applicable to how our community integrates each generation of rising adults into our institutions, leadership circles, events, and collective Jewish life.

There are currently four distinct generations of adults active in the Jewish community: Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and the newly coined Generation Z (first birth year 1997). As has been well-documented, each of these generations has its distinct culture and attitudes towards community, religion, philanthropy, identity, and social connections.

For the 2019 Twin Cities Jewish Population Study (Krasner Aronson, Boxer, and Brookner 2020), the youngest adults were defined as those ranging in age from 23 to 34. The results of the study demonstrate that this cohort is neither more nor less active in the Jewish community than older cohorts. But they do exhibit different behaviors and preferences in terms of types of participation, personal relationship to Jewish identity, and culture of giving.

Today’s boards, leadership circles, and strategy task forces are majority-led by Boomers and Gen Xers. When considering outreach to Millennials and Generation Z, these groups often ask, “How do we get young adults engaged?” Our community goals would be better served, however, by framing the question differently, for example:

- “How ARE young adults engaging?”
- “How do young adults define community? How do they build community?”
- “What do young adults want in their Jewish lives and experiences?”
- “How are we inadvertently maintaining barriers that inhibit integration of young adults and the established Jewish community?”

The Discovery Phase of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding tested a method to enable deep listening to the perspectives and experiences of young adults. From this process emerged two immediate needs:

1. **Integrated planning:** Building *l’dor v’dor* requires integrated planning. For programs and events designed specifically for young adults, this may mean closer attention to content and format. For all community organizations and events, it means incorporating the ways young adults find meaning in Jewish life into the foundations. And, more broadly, it means sharing the knowledge of successful integration efforts and how to build upon them.
2. **Deep listening:** A handful of young adults shared their perspectives in the Discovery Phase, and a limited number of community members heard them. This needs to be only the beginning of commitment to deep listening to the rising generation, and young adults need to be at the center of setting the agenda, timing, and format for this community work.

The biggest lesson of the Discovery Phase, however, is that we need a much longer and thoughtful process of research, dialogue, and collaborative visioning. The Pilot on Impact Focused Funding proposes

a longer-term, expert-led community process of exploration and analysis to develop a community strategy.

### What's Needed: Expertise and Access

As an MJF-led project, the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding has struggled to engage with young adults beyond those who are already involved in established community life.

To develop an accurate community-wide understanding of today's young adults and develop a strategy for meaningful engagement, we need:

- Guidance of a skilled subject-matter expert in multigenerational communication and collaboration
- Access to young adults who are engaged with Jewish life outside of the established community.

One of the biggest initial hurdles is that we don't even know what we don't know. By identifying and working with a consultant experienced with multigenerational experiences, we bring in the needed expertise to overcome this hurdle and generate a much different – and more productive – collaboration across adult generations in our community.

Several observations have emerged from the Discovery Phase that will be instructive moving forward:

- Well-facilitated conversations in small groups are needed
- Some conversations need to be exclusive to young adults, while others need to have representation from all generations
- Events, programs and conversations that are not overtly associated with established Jewish community institutions may be more effective for bringing in different voices
- We need to “go where they are” – online, in professional affinity groups, in other programs/environments where young adults naturally meet

These observations can serve as a starting point for finding the right expertise to help us refine and work towards our goals.

### Funding

The Pilot on Impact Focused Funding will begin with seed funding to engage the right consulting expertise; based on the consultant's recommendations, we can then set targets and parameters for future funding.

We propose a 2023 fundraising target of \$6,000 for the first year of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, following analysis in partnership with the Department of Philanthropy to assess sustainable giving capacity in our community.

To reflect our community's commitment to cultivating the integration of young adults into community organizations and events without fatiguing or overextending our already generous funders, this proposal asks the Board of Directors to supplement the initial target with a 1:1 match, to create a total pool of \$12,000 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 \$12,000 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 young adult and multigenerational engagement
- Designing a community strategy and a holistic plan for working towards it
- Recommending, designing and facilitating workshops, listening sessions and trainings as needed to act on the strategy

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:

- Assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Design and run a collaborative, multigenerational process for setting priorities and goals
- Define measurable goals and ensure we are collecting the right data to assess impact
- Recommend priorities and next steps to advance young adult and multigenerational engagement.

At least half of the advisory board will comprise young adults between the ages of 22 and 35. The advisory board will also include community professionals, lay leaders, donors, and other stakeholders.

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?

For the first year of the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, we will use activity-based metrics to determine success. These may include:

- Diversity of organizations and community members engaged in aspects of the work (e.g., representation from schools, synagogues, families, funders, etc.)
- 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 results of 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 young adults](#)

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

- Investigating and tapping into existing corporate networks and affinity groups involving young adults
- Career guidance resources for young adults considering work in the Jewish community
- Intern/adjunct/paraprofessional programs to activate the skills, energy and commitment of young adults across all organizations in our community
- Expanding dialogue, opportunities and inclusion for interfaith, new-to-the-community, disabled, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ young adults

These programs will be investigated, designed and implemented throughout the Pilot on Impact Focused Funding, based on community interest, funding and likely impact.