

# Program Overview

Racism and racial biases are deeply embedded in the criminal legal system, leading to disproportionate harm to communities of color. People of color, particularly Black people, experience arrests and vehicle and pedestrian stops at higher rates than white people. Moreover, Black people are detained at higher rates than white people and incarcerated for longer periods. Even brief incarceration can result in lost employment and housing, burdensome fines and fees, and destabilized family relationships. Criminal legal system involvement exacerbates existing challenges for many people of color and contributes to a compounding cycle that criminalizes them.

Local organizations are at the forefront of systemic change in the criminal legal system. Improving communities' access to relevant data and technology can help them inform and improve policies and practices that make the criminal legal system more equitable. They can share their experiences and programs using technology in a variety of ways, including to analyze, visualize, and share data in support of organizing, advocacy, and programs.

The [Urban Institute](#) and [Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative](#) are collaborating on the Catalyst Grant Program to help organizations use data and technology to advance racial equity and reform at the front end of the criminal legal system.

We are seeking project proposals that advance the focus areas of the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative, which include supporting policies, programs, and practices that **prevent** unnecessary system involvement and decrease racial and ethnic disparities in **policing** and **prosecution**. We are building on the [two previous cohorts](#) that consisted of 39 grantees across the country.

Goals of the Catalyst Grant Program include the following:

- Create a space for locally embedded nonprofit organizations to implement data- and technology-focused projects to advance racial equity and reform in the criminal legal system in the focus areas of prevention, policing, and prosecution.
- Enhance the technological and data capacity of nonprofit organizations focused on promoting justice and racial equity through technical assistance, peer-learning opportunities, and financial support.
- Disseminate innovative practices and lessons learned during implementation to stakeholders throughout the criminal legal reform community.

Those selected to participate in the Catalyst Grant Program will benefit from

- a funding award of \$40,000 to support project implementation expenses during the performance period;

- light-touch expert technical assistance on data, policy, and community engagement from Urban as needed;
- access to Microsoft technology for nonprofits and related support as needed (see appendix B);
- virtual peer-learning opportunities with Urban, Microsoft, and other awardees; and
- amplification of their work through public-facing communications such as blogs, webinars, or conference panels.

## Eligibility

### Lead Applicant Organizations

We are seeking lead organizations that are locally embedded with demonstrated relationships and connections to the communities project activities will take place in. Understanding that inequities in the criminal legal system disproportionately affect people of color, particularly Black communities, we also have a focus on organizations that reflect these communities by having people of color in staff leadership positions and trusted relationships with communities of color. We encourage small community-based organizations to apply. Each organization may submit only one application. Eligibility requirements for lead applicant organizations are as follows:

- Lead applicants must be 501(c)(3) organizations based in the United States. Colleges and universities are not eligible to be lead organizations.
- Individuals are not eligible to apply as lead organizations.
- Any organization that received a 2022 Catalyst Program Grant or will be receiving funding through another Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative grant as of January 2, 2023 is not eligible to be a lead applicant but can be a partnering organization with another lead organization (see below).

### Partnering Organizations and Individuals

- A partner is any organization or individual outside of the lead applicant organization that is providing personnel or expertise necessary to key project tasks or deliverables, whether paid or unpaid.
- All partner organizations or individuals playing key roles in the activities must be on the application.

- As part of the application, you must provide a **letter of support from partners (paid or unpaid)**, whether organizations or individuals, that confirms their participation consistent with their role in the proposal.
- Organizations eligible to be partners include
  - » local nonprofits, with or without 501(c)(3) status (including current Microsoft grantees);
  - » national or global nonprofit organizations;
  - » colleges or universities (public or nonprofit);
  - » local or state governments; and
  - » for-profit organizations.
- Individuals and the above organizations can receive funding as part of the grant except local and state governments and their employees; they can be partners in proposed projects but cannot receive funds.

## Project Topic Requirements

Proposed projects and activities must do the following:

- Advance racial equity and reform at the front end of the criminal legal system, for instance, in
  - » prevention, including preventing law enforcement contact, diverting people from arrest or incarceration, interrupting violence in communities, and enabling alternative responders;
  - » policing, including decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in policing and community safety programs, policies, and practices; and
  - » prosecution, including decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in prosecution programs, policies, and practices.
- Focus on adults (18 and older).
- Incorporate data and technology.
- Be locally focused, meaning focused on a specific neighborhood, city, county, or tribal area where the lead organization is already embedded.

Grants will not be given to projects that specifically focus on

- people younger than 18,
- people who are currently incarcerated,

- people returning from incarceration, or
- activities at the state or national levels.

Organizations that undertake these activities as part of their missions are eligible for the Catalyst Grant Program, as long as their proposed projects do not include these populations and activities. Additional information about these project eligibility criteria is available in the FAQs.

## Role of Data and Technology in Projects

We are open to creative strategies for using data and technology, but examples of ways projects could incorporate them include the following:

- data acquisition (e.g., collecting, extracting, cleaning)
- data analysis (e.g., descriptive statistics, calculating point-in-time statistics, examining disparities by race or geography, interpreting indicator trends)
- data visualization and design (e.g., designing online tools, automating fact sheets, designing data-focused education and engagement materials)
- technology development and implementation (e.g., setting up an application programming interface [API], creating an app, customizing technology to help with program operations such as intake)

Projects are not required to use Microsoft technology, but projects that do so in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for additional in-kind technology access and support. See appendix B for details. Independent of this grant program, there are additional Microsoft for Nonprofits programs that provide donated and discounted technology offerings to all nonprofits.

Below are examples of activities that could be supported by this program, assuming they meet the criteria listed above. This list is far from exhaustive, and Urban and Microsoft welcome creative and innovative projects focused on using data and technology to advance racial equity and reform in the criminal legal system. We encourage you to review the [grant website](#) to see previous grantee projects.

### Use data or technology to inform and organize communities.

- Train community members on how to use public sources of criminal legal system data.
- Coordinate local residents in data collection or technology development.
- Create and/or launch data-informed education campaigns for your community to highlight criminal legal system disparities.

- Use technology to collect, organize, or share primary data on experiences of people in your area most affected by racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system.
- Engage community stakeholders by creating and disseminating fact sheets that reflect data-driven insights and incorporate data analysis and visualizations, as well as toolkits for advocacy.

Use data or technology to facilitate justice reform among government officials.

- Develop and/or implement data-driven reports and recommendations to inform government policy or the decisionmaking of local elected officials and agency staff.
- Work with local government to demonstrate the need for and value of investing in criminal legal system data and in making such data public and usable.
- Collect, organize, and/or analyze data related to identifying or raising awareness of racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system.
- Develop systems to enable data-driven transparency and accountability of law enforcement agencies for the communities they serve.

Use data or technology for program operations, monitoring, or performance management.

- Improve one or more aspects of data management (extraction, transformation, loading, quality assurance, cleaning, etcetera) with technology.
- Analyze program data to improve your organization's capacity to address racial and ethnic disparities in prevention, policing, and prosecution.
- Use technology to improve a process in program operations that is inefficient, inaccurate, or perpetuates racial bias.
- Develop or improve systems to allow data sharing among organizations, for instance, for coalitions, cross-organization service delivery, etcetera.

## Use of Funds

Funds from this award must be used for the proposed project activities. Allowable uses of funds include but are not limited to: salaries for staff undertaking qualified project activities, internship or fellowship stipends, payments to consultant or partner organizations for project activities, fees for data and technology training relevant to project activities, meeting costs, supplies, and other direct project expenses such as hardware or software licenses. Funds may not be used for political activities. Lastly, awardees may allocate up to 20 percent of their award budgets to cover overhead expenses.

# Expectations of Awardees

Awardees will be expected to do the following:

- Commit to participate in the Catalyst Grant Program and advance proposed projects over the project performance period.
- Engage with Urban experts and other grantees, including engaging with the Urban technical assistance teams through periodic calls and email communications and participating in three or four virtual peer-learning opportunities, which may include giving informal presentations to other grantees.
- Complete reporting requirements (a final report to Urban and Microsoft and periodic brief feedback surveys from Microsoft).
- Develop a plan for how ethical standards for using data and technology will be followed, including responsibly protecting individuals and data as appropriate for the proposed activities and data sources (and, if needed, identifying and receiving approval for research activities from an institutional review board). See appendix C.
- If using Microsoft technology, engage as needed with available in-kind expert assistance. (More information is available in appendix B.)

## To Learn More

### Webinars and Workshops

To inform applicants' proposals, Urban and Microsoft will host an RFP overview webinar and technology workshops. In the webinar, we will describe the Catalyst Grant Program and application process and answer questions about applicants' proposals. A recording of the webinar and a list of FAQs will be posted on the grant application website.

In the technology workshop, which will be offered twice, we will demonstrate relevant Microsoft technologies and provide an overview of the additional in-kind technology access and support offered to those using Microsoft technology for their projects. This will include examples related specifically to nonprofits. Applicants will also be able to ask questions about their data and technology needs. Like the webinar, the workshops will be recorded and uploaded to the grant application website.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the webinar and workshops for their own benefit, but not attending will not affect eligibility, scoring, or the selection process.

### RFP Overview Webinar

- October 25, 2022, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. eastern time ([register here](#))

### Microsoft Technology Learning Opportunity Workshop

- October 27, 2022, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time ([register here](#))
- November 2, 2022, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. eastern time ([register here](#))
- Each workshop session will cover identical material; the workshop is being offered twice for schedule flexibility.
- Interested organizations should consider having data or technology staff participate in the workshop (e.g., IT personnel, data scientists, program evaluators, program managers) in addition to whoever will be drafting the proposal.

## Questions

General questions about this opportunity are welcome and should be directed to [catalystapplications@urban.org](mailto:catalystapplications@urban.org) or (202) 261-5868. Questions about project topics, eligibility, and other RFP content must be submitted by **November 23, 2022, at 8:00 p.m. eastern time**, and we will regularly post FAQ updates to the grant application website. The Urban Institute will continue to answer technical questions about submission until the proposal deadline (8:00 p.m. eastern time on **December 2, 2022**). Also, see FAQs about applicants' accounts and using the website at [SurveyMonkey Apply FAQ](#).

## Application Process

Please submit your proposal by following the instructions on the application website at <https://catalystapplications.urban.org> by **Friday, December 2, 2022 (8:00 p.m. eastern time)**.

You will need to register on the grant application website to apply. After registering, you will receive an email to verify your email address. Upon logging in, you will be asked questions to determine whether your organization meets the eligibility criteria listed above. You may postpone answering, but completing this section is required before creating an application. If your organization is not eligible, you will not be able to create an application.

If your organization is eligible, you may start an application. You will need to complete the following parts:

- [Verify 501\(C\)\(3\) status](#)
- [Part 1: Organizational and project information](#)

- [Part 2: Narrative questions, where you describe how your project and your organization align with Catalyst Grant Program goals](#)
- [Part 3: Budget template and narrative](#)
- [Part 4: Additional organizational information](#)

Applicants must complete all required sections as part of their proposal and use our standard Excel budget template, which can be downloaded from the grant application website. All questions and instructions are provided (for reference) in [appendix A](#). Given the word limits for the 10 narrative questions, application responses are expected to total roughly five pages.

We will only accept completed proposals that are submitted by the deadline. Because we want to treat everyone with fairness and respect, proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. We encourage you to submit your proposal well before the deadline so that any unforeseen difficulties, such as technical problems, can be addressed. Microsoft is not obligated to award an agreement based on this RFP and is not committed to paying any cost incurred in preparing and submitting a proposal.

## Notice of Awards and Program Timeline

Organizations selected for funding will be notified in April 2023 and will be required to engage with Microsoft payment processes, including providing W-9 and payment-related information, to accept the grant. **Failure to begin the grant payment process and provide the necessary documentation within 10 business days after notification will result in revocation of the award offer.** The grant funds (\$40,000) will be paid to the grantee shortly after the payment process steps are completed.

Organizations will be encouraged to begin preparatory activities related to their projects, such as staff hiring, data agreements, and initial steps to access in-kind Microsoft technology benefits, as soon as funds are received.

A public announcement of the awards is expected in mid-July 2023.

Ongoing technical assistance from Urban experts and cohort activities for grantees will run from July 1 to December 31, 2023.

Final reports on the supported projects will be due February 1, 2024.

## Selection

We anticipate providing awards to around 30 organizations. Reviewers will assess the quality of the applications based on

- projects' alignment with the grant program's goals of advancing racial equity and reform in the criminal legal system;
- whether project activities are reasonable in scope and timing and meet the program's goals for integral use of data and/or technology;
- organizational and staff capacity;
- organizations' connections and trust with local communities of focus; and
- projects' feasibility (including timelines and budgets).

Understanding that inequities in the criminal legal system disproportionately affect people of color, particularly Black communities, we are also prioritizing organizations that reflect these communities, as shown by having people of color leading the organization and trusted relationships with communities of color.

We welcome projects that require new data to be collected and/or accessed that may contain personally identifiable information (PII). When reviewing proposals, the selection team will consider how, as appropriate for the proposed type of activities and data sources, the organization plans to responsibly protect individuals and data, including managing sensitive data, research, or PII (see appendix C). For example, these protections might be minimal if all the data are public but more extensive if an organization proposes collecting sensitive data from participants or analyzing confidential data. In addition, projects that will be using Microsoft software to implement machine learning or artificial intelligence may be subject to additional review for ethics and responsible use.

In addition to evaluating the quality of the individual proposals, Urban and Microsoft will consider the characteristics of the overall portfolio in selecting the final grants. Every effort will be made to recruit and include applicants representing places large and small, urban and rural, and in different regions of the country. We will also select a cohort that uses data and technologies in varied ways.

## About the Catalyst Grant Program

### About the Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides data and evidence to help advance upward mobility and equity. We are a trusted source for changemakers who seek to strengthen decisionmaking, create inclusive economic growth, and improve the well-being of families and communities. For more than 50 years, Urban has delivered facts that inspire solutions—and this remains our charge today.

Urban's Justice Policy Center seeks to inform solutions to crime and safety challenges in the interests of promoting effectiveness in criminal legal systems and operations; addressing the harms of victimization and system involvement; reducing racial and other inequities; strengthening community-led approaches to

safety; and promoting justice, dignity, and well-being for all. We conduct objective, rigorous, interdisciplinary research, evaluation, and policy analysis and deliver data-driven recommendations, training, and technical assistance. In carrying out our research, we seek to center the voices, experiences, and perspectives of the people, practitioners, and communities most affected by crime and the criminal legal system.

### **About the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative**

The Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative works to empower communities and advance racial equity in the justice system by providing grants to organizations as they support community members and policy makers working to prevent unnecessary justice system involvement and eliminate racial disparities in policing and prosecution practices. More information about the Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative is available at [Microsoft.com/JRI](http://Microsoft.com/JRI).

### **Catalyst Grant Advisors**

The design of this request for proposals has greatly benefited from the insightful feedback provided by Evelyn F. McCoy and Rod Martinez of the Urban Institute.

# Appendix A: Full Application Process and Content

Applicants will be prompted by the application portal to answer questions about eligibility when registering for the site. Note: if an organization is not eligible, the application system will share a note that the organization is not eligible for the program and will not allow the user to create an application.

## Eligibility Questions

- Is your organization based in the United States, including US territories? (Y/N)
- Is your organization a nonprofit with IRS-approved 501(c)(3) status? (Y/N)
- Please enter your Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Is your organization a local or state government? (Y/N)
- Is your organization a college or university? (Y/N)
- Are you a 2022 Catalyst Grant Program lead recipient? (Y/N)

## Application Tasks

Applicants must complete all required sections as part of their proposal.

- Verify 501(c)(3) Status
- Part 1: Organizational and Project Information
- Part 2: Project Narrative Questions
- Part 3: Budget Template and Narrative
- Part 4: Additional Organizational Information

### Verify 501(c)(3) Status

The system will verify your organization's 501(c)(3) status by checking your EIN against the IRS database. If your EIN is not found, you will not be able to submit an application. If you receive a response that your EIN is not found and you believe it is incorrect, please email [catalystapplications@urban.org](mailto:catalystapplications@urban.org).

- Enter Employer Identification Number

## Part 1: Organizational and Project Information

### Organizational Information

- Organization name
- Optional: Legal name (if different than operating name)
- Organization street address
- Organization city
- Organization state
- Organization zip code
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Optional: Organization website
- Optional: Organization Twitter
- Primary point of contact: first name
- Primary point of contact: last name
- Primary point of contact: phone number
- Primary point of contact: email
- Secondary point of contact: first name
- Secondary point of contact: last name
- Secondary point of contact: phone number
- Secondary point of contact: email
- Optional: Project point of contact: first name
- Optional: Project point of contact: last name
- Optional: Project point of contact: phone number
- Optional: Project point of contact: email

Note: A partner is any organization or individual outside of the applicant organization that is providing personnel or expertise necessary to key project tasks or deliverables, whether paid or unpaid. A support letter will be required from all partners.

- Will you partner or subcontract with any other organization for the proposed work?  
(Y/N) [repeated as needed for second partner organization]

If yes, please complete:

- Partner organization name (if relevant)
- Partner organization street address
- Partner organization city
- Partner organization state
- Partner organization zip
- Partner organization point of contact: first name
- Partner organization point of contact: last name
- Partner organization point of contact: phone number
- Partner organization point of contact: email

Partners, whether organizations or individuals, must provide a letter of support confirming their participation consistent for their role in the proposal.

- Button to upload support letter or letters.

#### **How did you find out about the Catalyst Grant Program?**

- Check all that apply.
  - » LinkedIn
  - » Twitter
  - » Facebook
  - » Urban Institute Justice Policy Center Newsletter
  - » Urban Institute National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) Newsletter
  - » Urban Institute External Affairs Newsletter
  - » Other newsletter
  - » Group outreach email
  - » Referral from Microsoft staff
  - » Referral from Urban staff
  - » Referral from another individual
  - » Other (fill in)
  - » If you recall the specific person, organization, or network from which you heard about it, please list here (fill in)

## **Project Title**

Please enter the title of the project that you are proposing to carry out in your application.

- Project Title

## **Project Focus Area**

The Catalyst Grant Program supports projects that aim to advance racial equity and reform in the criminal legal system in the focus areas of prevention, policing, and prosecution. Please complete this section for the specific project activities you are proposing. We acknowledge that your project proposal may be narrower than your overall organizational mission.

- What is the criminal legal system focus area for your project? (Check all that apply)
  - » Prevention
  - » Policing
  - » Prosecution

## **Project Geography**

We welcome projects that focus on a neighborhood, city, county, or tribal area. Please enter the information below about the location of the project activities. If your activities cover more than one city, county, or tribal area, please list them here and describe in the project narrative.

- County where proposed project is located
- State where proposed project is located
- Optional: City where proposed project is located
- Optional: Tribal area where proposed project is located

## **Project Use of Microsoft Technology**

Use of Microsoft technology is not required, but projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for additional grant benefits and in-kind support (see appendix B of the RFP for more details). We recognize that you may not yet know exactly how you could be using Microsoft products, and that you may use multiple products, but this question will preliminarily help Microsoft anticipate support needs. The answer is not used in evaluating your proposal.

Please select which Microsoft technology product you anticipate being the most central to your project activities, or indicate whether you do not intend to use any Microsoft products. (Check all that apply.)

- PowerBI and/or Excel
- Microsoft Forms

- Azure
- PowerApps
- Other (fill in)
- Not using any Microsoft products

## Part 2: Project Narrative Questions

This section includes questions in which you will describe your project, its purpose, and your organization's qualifications. There are 10 questions below with word count limits; the total text to be submitted will total roughly five pages or less.

### Description of Project

1. Please provide a brief overview of your proposed project, noting your community of focus, and explain how it advances racial equity and reform in the criminal legal system. [up to 300 words]

This should be a summary of your project so reviewers can understand the basics of your proposal.

What we are looking for: a compelling case for how your project advances front-end system reform in any of the Microsoft focus areas (policing, prosecution, and/or prevention), and a clear discussion of the relevant racial and ethnic disparities and how your project contributes to advancing equity.

2. Please provide more detail on the key activities you propose to undertake with this grant. [up to 500 words]

What we are looking for: a description of activities you plan to do during the grant period that are aligned with Catalyst Grant Program goals and that are clear and reasonable in scope and timing.

3. Explain how data and/or technology will be used in the context of your project. [up to 400 words]
  - If relevant to your activities, what specific data source(s) will you use, and do you currently have access to those data?

What we are looking for: a strong case of how data and/or technology will be integral to the project and whether you have any proposed data in hand or a reasonable plan to access them.

4. What key software, platforms, or applications do you plan to use to implement your project's data/technology activities? Indicate whether your organization or your partner(s) have experience using the technology. Please include Microsoft and non-Microsoft technologies, if applicable. [up to 200 words]

What we are looking for: a brief description of the software and technology you plan on using and good relevant experience.

5. If proposed activities include collecting or accessing sensitive data or personally identifiable information (PII), please describe how you will responsibly protect individuals and data. See appendix C for background. If not relevant, please list "not applicable." [up to 200 words]

What we are looking for: a thoughtful plan to protect sensitive data or PII used in your project. See appendix C of the RFP for more details.

6. Please list key milestones and timing for the proposed activities over the grant performance period. [up to 250 words]

What we are looking for: milestones and timing for the activities you plan to do during the grant period that are clear and reasonable in scope and timing.

### **Qualifications**

7. Please describe how your organization develops and maintains connections and trust with the community of focus for the proposed work. [up to 250 words]

What we are looking for: strong connections and trust with relevant communities of focus (for instance, engaging in locally embedded activities, having partnerships with relevant individuals or organizations, or having staff members from those communities).

8. Please describe your organization's (or your partners') past experiences or current activities that are relevant to the proposed activities. [up to 150 words]

What we are looking for: strong organizational ability and experience to implement the proposed work.

9. What are the qualifications and experience of the key project staff in your organization that will complete the proposed work? Please specifically address those skills related to the data/technology components. [up to 250 words]

What we are looking for: a description of staff members' skills and experience related to implementing the proposed activities.

10. If relevant, what are the qualifications and experience of the key project staff in the partner organization(s) to complete the proposed work? Please specifically address those skills related to the data/technology components. If not relevant, please list "not applicable." [up to 250 words]

What we are looking for: a description of partner staff members' skills and experience related to implementing the proposed activities.

## Part 3: Budget Template and Narrative

This section relates to the proposed budget for your proposed activities. The application will require you to upload a completed version of the budget in the provided Excel template and to provide a narrative explanation of the costs.

Total costs should not exceed \$40,000 and all should fall under the allowable expenses (see the "Use of Funds" section in the RFP).

### Budget Template

Download and save the budget template from the [grant application website](#) to your computer so you can fill in your budget, and then upload the completed budget template here.

- Upload completed budget template [Upload a file]. Acceptable formats: \*.xls, \*.xlsx

### Budget Narrative

In the narrative section, please provide bullets that correspond to the line-item cost components in your uploaded budget spreadsheet.

Responses only need enough detail for reviewers to understand the costs.

Please include the following categories if they are included in your submitted budget. [up to 1,000 words]

- Salaries/Wages: Detail each grant-funded position and person's role in your project. Note: This section should include personnel employed by your organization only; staff from partnering organizations, consultants, and other contractors should be detailed in the Subcontract/Consultants line item.
- Subcontracts/Consultants: Cost of staff or services from partnering organizations or individuals, consultants, and other contractors should be detailed here.
- Hardware Costs: If your program involves the purchase of any hardware (laptops, tablets, physical devices, etcetera), including but not limited to Microsoft hardware, those costs must be reflected in your budget and budget narrative, as Microsoft cannot purchase any hardware products on behalf of a grantee.
- Software Costs: If your program involves the purchase of any Microsoft software, please refer to appendix B when determining whether to include these costs in the budget and budget narrative, as some costs are covered by Microsoft's Tech for Social Impact program. If your

program involves non-Microsoft software, please include those costs in the budget and budget narrative.

- Other Direct Costs: Provide information on other requested costs, such as events or meetings, internship or fellowship stipends, participant costs, or technology training, and please include the purpose and frequency.
- Overhead Costs: Provide your overhead rate, which is subject to a cap of 20 percent of the total requested amount.
- Funding Sources other than the Catalyst Grant: If you are applying for or have secured funding from any other sources for these activities, please briefly describe the source, status, and amount. Do not include this amount in the budget spreadsheet.

## **Part 4: Additional Organizational Information**

Note: These questions do not relate to eligibility and will not be used to evaluate the quality of your proposal; they are intended to help the core project team as they select the final portfolio of projects. Reviewers scoring your application will not see your responses. We understand the questions are intrusive. You may decline to answer them.

### **Part 4, First Question**

Communities of color, particularly Black people, are the most affected by inequities in the criminal legal system. We understand that these communities bring critical expertise to the reform of the system. We are also aware that organizations with leaders of color have historically been excluded from many philanthropic opportunities. In response to this, the Catalyst Grant Program strives to prioritize funding organizations that have leaders of color and organizations with trusted relationships with communities of color.

After the application is scored, the core project team will consider the leader's demographic information, along with other factors, as it selects finalists and decides on the awardees, in service of our goals of granting to organizations with leaders of color.

What racial or ethnic group or groups does your organization's executive director (or equivalent) identify with? (Check all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Asian or Asian American
- Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American

- White
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Another race or ethnicity (fill in)
- Prefer not to answer

#### **Part 4, Second Question**

We recognize people with lived experience in the criminal legal system bring critical expertise to the reform of the criminal legal system. After the application is scored, the core project team will consider this information, along with other factors, as it selects finalists and decides on the awardees.

Does your organization have leadership or key project staff who self-identify as having been incarcerated, arrested, convicted, or affected by the incarceration of a loved one?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

## Appendix B: Microsoft Technology Benefits

There is a wide array of Microsoft technology that may enable your proposed projects. Some examples include Excel and Azure Cognitive Services for data collection and analysis, Power BI for visualization, Microsoft Forms for data collection and stakeholder engagement, Power Apps for building apps to streamline processes and manage collaboration, Azure/Cloud Data Solutions for secure data storage and sharing, and more.

The above examples are not exhaustive; Microsoft has a complete list of granted or highly discounted technology available to nonprofits and a wide array of technology solutions that may be relevant to your project. More information regarding these and other Microsoft solutions can be found on [Microsoft for Nonprofits](#).

**As noted in the RFP, projects are not required to use Microsoft technology, but projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities will be eligible for additional in-kind benefits and support.** This appendix describes

- how you can learn more about Microsoft technologies and their use in the Catalyst Grant Program,
- how the use of the Microsoft technology should affect your budget preparation,
- the additional in-kind assistance available to projects using Microsoft technology, and
- how all eligible nonprofits can access discounted technology and assistance from Microsoft (independent of the Catalyst Grant Program).

### **How can I learn more about Microsoft technologies and their use in the Catalyst Grant Program?**

Microsoft will host a **workshop** to demonstrate some relevant technologies (see the first paragraph of this appendix), with specific nonprofit use examples, and provide the opportunity for attendees to ask questions. See the “Learn More” section in the main RFP for dates and registration links. Interested organizations should consider having data or technology-centric staff participate in a workshop (e.g., IT personnel, data scientists, program evaluators, program managers) in addition to whoever will be drafting the proposal.

### **How will the use of Microsoft technology affect the budget submitted in the application process?**

The licenses and credits for Microsoft technology that are currently granted to all eligible nonprofits, and hence to all Catalyst Grant awardees, are:

- 10 Microsoft 365 Business Premium licenses (Office applications including Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint, Forms, and more)
- 10 Power Apps licenses on the subscription “per user” plan.
- Nonprofit discount for Power BI Pro licenses; Power BI Desktop is free to download

- \$3,500 annual Azure grant credit

Since these costs are covered through Microsoft, **budgets submitted with the application should NOT contain the above Microsoft technology costs.** Technology costs beyond what is listed above may be included in the budget if needed.

Note that access to the licenses and credits described here is contingent upon active 501(c)(3) status. If a grantee organization's 501(c)(3) status is revoked or changes during the project, the organization will no longer have access to these resources.

#### **What in-kind support and assistance can I receive?**

Participants in the Catalyst Grant Program will be considered for additional in-kind assistance to help you implement or adopt Microsoft technology.

In onboarding support, assistance can be provided with Microsoft technology setup, user license registration, activation and configuring of grants and licenses, and associated troubleshooting.

In project-specific support, projects that use Microsoft technology in ways that are integral to the proposed data and technology activities, Microsoft technology experts can provide additional targeted assistance.

This may include discussing and identifying the best applications and services to use, identifying technical requirements, creating a technology project plan, providing product-specific guidance and training, and helping document the solution.

For some projects, more comprehensive levels of support related to project architecture, development, and deployment may be available.

Overall, the goal of the Microsoft technology in-kind assistance is to build your organization's technology capacity and equip you with the skills and resources needed to successfully implement and maintain the Microsoft technology-related elements of your project.

The exact structure and amount of in-kind support for each project will depend on the type of activities, the capacity of the grantee organizations to execute them, and the specific technology used in relation to key project activities. The information in this RFP is current as of September 2022, and the final details of provision of in-kind support are subject to Microsoft's discretion.

While organizations may use non-Microsoft technology as part of the grant, the technology support team is only available to assist with implementing Microsoft technologies.

#### **What if I am not awarded a Catalyst Grant or want to use Microsoft technology for work beyond my proposed project?**

You can still benefit from the discounted licenses and grants available through Microsoft Tech for Social Impact. Below is a list of Microsoft resources available to all nonprofits, regardless of participation in the Catalyst Grant Program.

All eligible nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status (exceptions are listed [here](#)) can access granted and discounted Microsoft solutions; offers are listed below. These granted licenses remain available as long as your nonprofit status remains active.

#### Microsoft for Nonprofits

- 10 Microsoft 365 Business Premium licenses (Office applications including Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint, Forms, and more)
- 10 Power Apps per-user licenses
- Nonprofit discount for Power BI Pro licenses; Power BI Desktop is free to download
- \$3,500 annual Azure grant credit

To access these offerings, go to <https://www.microsoft.com/nonprofits> and validate your nonprofit status. There are also other resources for nonprofits offered through this site.

For reference, Microsoft technology solutions often of interest to nonprofits include:

#### **Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit:**

- Connects the intelligent and integrated capabilities of the Microsoft cloud to the most common nonprofit organizational scenarios, including Fundraising and Engagement, Volunteer Management and Engagement, and Microsoft Community Training.

#### **Modern Workplace / Microsoft 365**, which includes:

- **Office apps:** Windows, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word and more
- **Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive:** Cloud-based platforms to streamline teamwork and enable data sharing and collaboration with partner organizations.
- **Power Platform**, which includes:
  - **Power BI:** Helps connect, clean, and model your data, without affecting the underlying source; facilitates the discovery, visualization, and presentation of important insights.
  - **Power Apps:** Provides an accessible tool for building custom web and mobile applications, requiring minimal coding skills, to engage and manage stakeholders, for example.

#### **Azure / Cloud Data Solutions**, which includes:

- **Azure:** Cloud-based data storage, rather than local computers and servers, that keeps data secure and allows access from anywhere, plus a host of additional functionality.

- **Azure Cognitive Search:** Use cognitive skills for vision, language, speech, or custom machine learning models to uncover insights from all types of content. Built-in AI capabilities include OCR, key phrase extraction, and named entity recognition.
- **Nonprofit Data Warehouse Quickstart:** A pre-packaged, "one-click" setup, Azure-based warehouse for storing data specifically designed for nonprofits.
- **Microsoft Community Training:** Supports personalized learning for a large-scale mobile-based community. It is affordable, easy to manage, and provides robust security and privacy protection through an easy-to-use interface, or can be integrated with existing systems via REST APIs.

## Appendix C: Expectations for Equitable and Ethical Data Use

The Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative and the Urban Institute are strongly committed to the ethical and equitable use of data and technology. In the Catalyst Grant Program, we expect our grantees to maintain respectful relationships and trust with communities of focus. In support of this, we encourage and support grantees to learn about and follow the principles of ethical and equitable data and technology use, especially for any activities involving people.

Below we describe some elements of responsible data stewardship. We expect Principles for Equitable Use of Data to be relevant to most proposed projects, while protecting personally identifiable information and submitting research projects to an institutional review board will be relevant for a smaller subset.

As part of proposal reviews, the selection team will consider how, as appropriate for the proposed type of activities and data sources, the organization plans to responsibly protect individuals and data, including managing sensitive data, research, or personally identifiable information (PII). These protections might be minimal if, for example, all the data are public, but more extensive if an organization proposes collecting sensitive data from participants or analyzing confidential data. In addition, projects that will be using Microsoft software to implement machine learning or artificial intelligence may be subject to additional review for ethics and responsible use.

After grantee organizations are selected, they will be required to develop plans for how they will follow ethical standards and consider equity as they use data throughout their projects (collecting, analyzing, publishing, etcetera), especially how they will protect people participating in research. Urban will be available to review and advise on these plans as a technical assistance partner.

### Principles for Equitable Use of Data

Principles for equitable use of data require people, including Catalyst grantees, to consider how any collection, analysis, and publishing of data and related products during a project will affect the people and communities reflected in the data. As a reference, Urban Institute's "[Principles for Advancing Equitable Data Practice](#)" offers a framework and examples for thinking through the equity implications of your data-related activities. These principles include the following:

- Maximize benefits and avoid causing harm to the extent possible, even if it is not a formal or legal requirement. This requires considering risks and benefits holistically.
- Uphold people's power to make decisions that are in their best interest and to protect people who do not have that power. People can make informed decisions when they have information, the capability to understand it, and the freedom to act on it.

- Fairly distribute burdens and benefits among people. This principle underscores that communities and people who bear risks and burdens deserve to benefit. It also emphasizes the responsibility to ensure that undue burden is not put on people unlikely to benefit.

## **Protection of Personally Identifiable Information**

We expect all grantees to follow any data governance policies that their organizations, or partner organizations, have established and to have procedures in place for protecting any personally identifiable information (PII) (such as names, social security numbers, or personal characteristics), used in their projects.

For reference, Chapter 4 of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's [Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information \(PII\)](#) provides recommendations on the ways PII data should be protected. Organizations should implement safeguards for any PII they house, such as by

- creating policies and procedures to protect PII,
- minimizing the use, collection, and retention of PII,
- de-identifying information, and
- storing and sharing the data securely.

## **Submission to an Institutional Review Board to Approve Data Collection**

As one mechanism to protect the rights and welfare of people participating in data collection, organizations, such as colleges, universities, and hospitals may have institutional review boards (IRBs) to review data collection procedures, risk to research subjects, and data security plans for research projects. These boards review proposed research projects and have the authority to approve, require modification of, or disapprove research activities.

Projects that support the operations of a program or service are less likely to fall into the category of research and hence less likely to be appropriate for an IRB review. If your project is a research study involving the collection of individuals' private or identifiable information, such as through a survey or interviews of community members, IRB review may be beneficial to ensure you are protecting participants appropriately. Research projects that may not need an IRB review according to federal standards are those accessing data, documents, and records that are publicly available or collecting data in such a way (e.g., through an anonymous survey) that the subjects cannot be identified, either directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

**If your project is a research study collecting or accessing data with personally identifiable information, we strongly recommend you explore undertaking IRB review in the interest of protecting the people represented in the data.** If you are partnering with an academic institution or other research organization in data collection, we recommend that you inquire whether their procedures require an IRB review for your project.

**If an IRB is appropriate for your project, any anticipated IRB costs and time for review should be factored into your proposed project's budget and timeline.** We will recommend that grantees pursue the submission as soon as they are notified of the award.

Nonprofit organizations without their own IRBs may use the IRB of a local partner or university or contract with a commercial IRB available to review proposals for a fee. The US Department of Health and Human Services provides an advanced search of its [online directory](#) that can suggest institutions with accredited IRBs in your area that you can reach out to and inquire about external submissions.

If you are unsure whether your intended activities might merit an IRB review under this grant program, you can contact the Urban team to discuss your proposed project, though Urban cannot issue any legal decisions related to IRBs. Given the implications for budgets and timelines, we recommend you reach out as early as possible in the proposal process. After grants are awarded, Urban Institute staff will be available to provide technical assistance to grantees submitting their projects to IRB review.