



# Guidelines for Equality Fund Call for Applications



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**The Equality Fund is accepting applications from women’s rights and feminist organizations.**

From **September 10 to October 5, 2020**, submit your Organizational Profile to be considered for funding under our ‘Catalyze’ program. Organizational Profiles submitted now will remain in our system through October 2022.

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## Section I: General Information on the Equality Fund

### Introduction

This is a historic moment in the global fight for equality. Women’s rights organizations and feminist movements around the world are at the forefront of change—holding the line, resisting against rights violations, addressing the visible and invisible impacts of COVID-19, demanding equality, and driving solutions to get us there. The Equality Fund invests in the brave work to build a more equal world, together.

The Equality Fund is an international feminist fund based in Canada. It is a [groundbreaking collaboration](#) harnessing diverse actors to catalyze new momentum for women’s rights and feminist movements. Building on the experience of The MATCH International Women’s Fund and with significant contributions from the Government of Canada and other donors, we provide resources to women’s rights and feminist organizations working from the grassroots level to the regional and global stage. Women’s rights organizations and feminist movements are leading the change in their communities. The Equality Fund’s strategy is to support the priorities that they identify.

### ‘Design and Build’ Phase of the Equality Fund and Feminist Accountability

The Equality Fund is a new source of feminist funding. The current plan is to introduce four grantmaking streams over the next five years to support the ecosystem of women’s rights and feminist organizations at multiple levels, from emerging to established groups around the world.

This September 2020, we are launching the first call for Organizational Profiles under our “Catalyze” program—the direct funding stream for women’s rights organizations (see Section II below for more details). In subsequent years, three additional grantmaking streams will be launched:

- **Activate:** to support women’s and feminist funds;
- **Connect:** to fund collective action and movement building through consortia; and
- **Prepare and Respond:** to move resources to women’s rights and feminist organizations working in challenging crisis contexts.

If you wish to stay informed about these future funding opportunities, please sign-up to receive news and updates [HERE](#).

Consultation with feminist organizations and movements—and accountability to their agendas and priorities—is key to the Equality Fund model. In May 2020, the Equality Fund concluded a global consultation process in partnership with the Association of Women’s Rights in Development (AWID). We heard important [recommendations from feminist leaders and activists](#) that are informing our grantmaking approaches, such as the need for accessibility of application processes, tailoring levels of funding and requirements to a diverse range of organizations, and incorporating elements of participatory grantmaking to shift power in our decision making and responsive design. The Equality Fund is committed to transparency, active listening, and learning as we build feminist accountability and activist participation in our grantmaking processes over time. We may not have all the answers right now, but we will reflect and adapt along the way as we strive incrementally towards that goal.

## Investing in Organizations that Drive Change

Our grantmaking focuses on the most difficult and complex challenges of our time. Time and again, data shows that putting money directly into the hands of women, youth, girls, and non-binary people who are most impacted by inequality is the most effective way to solve problems—because they are the best positioned to drive meaningful change.

## How We Fund

Our goal is to shift power and flexible resources to women’s rights and feminist organizations so they can advance their own priorities and agendas. Please see the [Feminist Funding Principles](#) we have jointly articulated with other Equality Fund partners.

- The Equality Fund provides core support grants, which can be used for operating expenses as well as specific program activities or projects. We provide multi-year grants for up to three years. Emerging organizations or groups we have not supported before may be offered a one-year grant.
- Equality Fund grant sizes range from \$10,000 CAD/year to \$100,000 CAD/year for some of the larger organizations. The maximum yearly grant size may not exceed 50% of your organization’s highest annual revenue in the past three years.
- The Equality Fund is open to supporting informal, unregistered groups of activists or networks, working through a fiscal sponsor (organizations are required to identify their own fiscal sponsors).

## Where We Fund

- Countries on the OECD-DAC list of countries eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA eligible) in the Middle East, Asia and The Pacific, Central and South America and Eastern Europe
- **What about Africa?** The Equality Fund works in collaboration with trusted partners of the Equality Fund Collective such as the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF)—a Pan-African grantmaking organization supporting women’s rights and feminist groups throughout the African continent. Organizations based in Africa should apply [to AWDF directly](#). AWDF accepts grant applications all year round, but only processes applications twice a year. Their next call for proposals will be in February 2021 for grant decisions in April/May 2021.
- **What about the Caribbean?** The Equality Fund is currently funding women’s rights organizations and LGBTQI groups based in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and is therefore not accepting Organizational Profiles from the region at this time. Learn more about the [Women’s Voice and Leadership- Caribbean program](#) or contact the team at [wvlcaribbean@equalityfund.ca](mailto:wvlcaribbean@equalityfund.ca).

## Section II: This Call for Applications

### Inaugural Call for Organizational Profiles and Initial Grant Opportunity

Please note the Equality Fund application process involves two stages:

Starting on September 10, 2020, the Equality Fund will be accepting Organizational Profiles (Stage 1) from women's rights and feminist organizations that meet our General Eligibility Criteria (see next section - Who Can Apply). These Profiles will be valid for two years, and over that period the Equality Fund will periodically invite organizations to complete an Advanced Application (Stage 2) to be considered for a grant. Our commitment is to mobilize resources on an ongoing basis, but due to funding limitations, the Equality Fund is able to fund only a small proportion of eligible groups.

For the first round of funding, organizations will be invited to submit Advanced Applications this November 2020. Approximately CAD \$1.3 million will be provided through this inaugural round to about thirty (30) eligible organizations. Please see [Annex 1](#) for more details about specific eligibility criteria and funding priorities for this first round of grantmaking.

### Who Can Apply - General Eligibility Criteria

The Equality Fund is seeking Organizational Profiles from women's rights and feminist organizations that:

- are primarily governed, led, and directed by local women, youth, girls, and/or non-binary people (i.e. women, youth, girls, and/or non-binary people make up a majority of the organization's staff and board or coordinating committee);
- have the promotion of women, youth, girls, and non-binary people's rights as their primary mission—and not only as the focus of part of their programmes;
- work from a feminist and/or women's rights perspective for structural change on issues affecting women, youth, girls, and/or non-binary people;
- are committed to feminist movement building and collaborating with other women, youth, LGBTQI, and/or Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) organizations;
- are able to complete proposal documents, narrative, and financial reports in English, French, or Spanish (additional language capacity will be added in the future);
- have been working for at least one year at the time of filling out their Organizational Profile;

- are registered/headquartered in an ODA- eligible country<sup>1</sup> in the Middle East, Asia and The Pacific, Central and South America and Eastern Europe. For groups based in Africa or CARICOM countries, please see the ‘Where We Fund’ section for more details;
- are able to demonstrate the organizational capacity to accept, manage, and report on funds directly or through an established relationship with a fiscal partner;

Political parties, religious institutions, government bodies, for-profit organizations, academic institutions, and individuals are NOT eligible for funding.

Please note that Equality Fund grants cannot be used to make other grants (on-granting activities).

## **What We Fund - General Funding Priorities**

The Equality Fund provides resources and accompanying support to organizations across intersections of feminist work to advance women’s rights and gender equality. Groups may work in one or several thematic areas depending on their priorities and agendas—such as addressing different forms of violence, furthering economic security and justice, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, working on environmental justice, advancing the rights of LBTQI people, fostering feminist leadership, participation, and movement building etc.

### **Under these broad themes we prioritize organizations that:**

- address issues that are under-funded or contested;
- are led by women, youth, girls, and non-binary people most at the margins and facing multiple forms of discrimination (including but not limited to Indigenous women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual and trans (LBTQI) populations, and sex workers).

## **Specific Funding Priorities**

Through consultations with women’s rights and feminist activists, grantees, and allies around the world, the Equality Fund is committed to constantly assessing the areas where there is the greatest need for funding, within the framework of our general funding priorities. We adjust our program strategies and specific thematic and administrative criteria for each application cycle and periodically invite organizations to submit Advanced Applications. Please see [Annex 1](#) for more details about specific eligibility criteria and funding priorities for the first round of invitations this November 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> If your organization is led by diaspora women and you are headquartered in a non-ODA eligible country, but work exclusively in a country that is ODA eligible, please contact [applications@equalityfund.ca](mailto:applications@equalityfund.ca) for a case by case assessment.

***Examples of the work we currently support or groups we have supported previously:***

- Yazidi women and girls in Turkey and Syria sharing their stories of surviving sexual violence in hopes of bringing the perpetrators to justice
- Young women in South Sudan working to end child marriage, harmful traditional practices, and bringing their voice to peace and security issues facing young women
- Women fighting for rural land rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the midst of a climate crisis
- Indigenous women living with disabilities in Nepal who are rebuilding their communities after a major earthquake
- Migrant workers in Argentina organizing for their rights and economic well-being in a new country
- An LBT group in Uganda establishing underground networks for health care, support, and safety

## **Our Application Process**

We have heard from organizations around the world that they spend too much time preparing proposals that may not get funded. In recognition and appreciation of your valuable time, we have split our application process into two stages.

### **Stage 1: Submitting an Organizational Profile**

- In this stage, register your organization's interest in receiving funding by submitting an Organisational Profile that provides key information about your vision, mission, and work to advance women's rights and gender equality. We recognize and appreciate the time that you will take to share this information, and value the opportunity to get to know more about the work of your organization and the people it represents.
- To be considered, all organizations must submit an Organizational Profile via the Equality Fund online application portal after successfully completing the Eligibility Quiz. In exceptional circumstances, we are able to accept Organizational Profiles by email.
- Your Organizational Profile will be valid for two years and will be considered for future invitations to the Advanced Application stage over that period depending on the specific thematic and administrative criteria for each application cycle. There will also be opportunities to update your Profile during this time.

- Our first call for Organizational Profiles will run from September 10 to October 5, 2020. There will be additional opportunities to complete and submit an Organizational Profile over the next two years, but we encourage organizations to register now.
- If your questions are not answered in this Guidelines document, please direct them to [applications@equalityfund.ca](mailto:applications@equalityfund.ca).
- [Check our website](#) and social media for news about upcoming grantmaking cycles.

## Stage 2: Submitting an Advanced Application when your organization is invited

- If you fit the specific selection criteria and priorities of the grantmaking cycle, your organization will be invited to submit an Advanced Application. You will be asked to provide further details about your context, your organization's priorities, strategies and proposed actions, as well as a budget and supporting documents (such as registration if available, financial statements, etc).
- This stage also includes providing names and contact information for:
  - references from other organizations or funders who have worked with or funded you; and
  - endorsements from other activists who are familiar with your organization's work.
- Organizations shortlisted for our first round of Advanced Applications will receive an invitation in early November 2020 and will have 4 weeks to complete the proposal. See [Annex 1](#) for more details about the specific eligibility criteria and funding priorities for the upcoming round of invitations.
- Our second round of invitations to Advanced Applications is tentatively planned for May/June 2021, with details forthcoming.

# OUR FUNDING PROCESS

## STAGE 1: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

### OPEN CALL FOR FUNDING

Online application portal opens for registration of Organizational Profiles

*There will be additional opportunities to submit an Organizational Profile over the next two years, but we encourage organizations to register now*



## STAGE 2: ADVANCED APPLICATION

### COMMUNICATING TO SHORTLISTED ORGANIZATIONS

Equality Fund sends invitations to shortlisted organizations to submit Advanced Application for first round of funding



## Section III: How to Apply

After carefully reviewing the General Eligibility Criteria to assess your eligibility, visit our online application portal (<https://equality-fund.smapply.io/>) to create an account and complete the Eligibility Quiz. If your organization is eligible, you will then be invited to complete your Organizational Profile. Refer to our Online Application Help Guide (see below) for step-by-step instructions in using our online application portal.

The Equality Fund online application portal will be open from September 10 to October 5, 2020 to accept Organizational Profile submissions in English, French, and Spanish. In exceptional circumstances, we are able to accept Organizational Profiles by email; please contact [applications@equalityfund.ca](mailto:applications@equalityfund.ca) by September 28 to inquire about this option.

Interested organizations should visit [our website](#) to access the following guidance material in English, French, and Spanish:

- a. **Application Guidelines** (*this document*) with details about our criteria, themes, and processes;
- b. [Online Application Help Guide](#) for the Equality Fund's online application portal to help you navigate the steps in creating an account, filling out the Eligibility Quiz and submitting your Organizational Profile.
- c. [Organizational Profile template](#): Profiles must be submitted through our online form. As we know many groups prefer to collaborate on applications offline, we have provided this complimentary copy.

## Annex 1: Specific Eligibility Criteria and Funding Priorities - November 2020 Advanced Applications

The Equality Fund has a commitment to funding a diversity of organizations working on multiple themes and of varying sizes and organizational structures. We provide core support grants, which can be used for operating expenses as well as specific program activities or projects. Depending on funding opportunities, grant cycles may focus on specific themes, emerging or more experienced organizations, etc.

While all organizations that meet our General Eligibility Criteria outlined above are invited to complete an Organizational Profile this September, **organizations must meet the following specific criteria to be considered for our first round of invitations to complete Advance Applications in November 2020:**

- have been active for three or more years;
- have a track record of managing funds of \$150,000 CAD or more in a fiscal year within the last 3 fiscal years;
- be able to work with a minimum annual grant of \$40,000 CAD to a maximum grant of \$100,000 CAD;
- be currently working to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the thematic areas described below. If you work outside these priorities you are still invited to submit a profile to be considered for other upcoming grant cycles.

More information on upcoming grant cycles will become available in January 2021.

### Specific Funding Priorities (November 2020)

Through consultations with women's rights and feminist activists, grantees, and allies around the world, the Equality Fund is constantly assessing areas where there is the greatest need for funding and refining program strategies.

Given the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on both the ongoing and future challenges and opportunities facing women's rights and feminist organizations globally, our first round of invitations to our Advanced Application stage in November 2020 will invite proposals from organizations **working on the impacts of COVID-19** and with a focus on the following themes:

- **Building strong, intersectional feminist movements:** Our feminist responses to the pandemic must be anti-racist, anti-colonial, intersectional, intergenerational, and inclusive. Priority will be given to organizations led by women, youth, girls, and non binary people advancing racial and Indigenous justice movements and agendas.
- **Resisting the closing of civic spaces and supporting women, youth, girls, and LGBTQ human rights defenders:** In many regions, governments are imposing new restrictions on public mobilization in the name of a COVID-19 response. The safety and security of many women's rights and feminist organizations are at risk. Priority will be given to organizations responding to rights crackdowns and developing innovative strategies to support women and LBTIQ human rights defenders—including, but not limited to, digital security and collective care strategies.
- **Responding to the 'shadow pandemic':** Sheltering at home during COVID-19 poses dangers and risks when home is not safe. Rates of violence against women, youth, girls, and non-binary people have risen alarmingly during the pandemic. Priority will be given to

organizations addressing this 'shadow pandemic' at multiple levels including services for survivors, outreach and education, and policy change.

- **Recognizing care work and strengthening economic rights:** COVID-19 has shone a bright light on gender imbalances in the work and services needed to keep societies and economies running during the pandemic. Health care, childcare, domestic work, and garment factories all rely on female labour, and it is often female migrant workers who occupy a majority of these jobs. Priority will be given to organizations working on reimagining economic policies and programs to value care work, in particular organizations led by female migrant and domestic workers.

## **Annex 2 : Application Timelines and Decision Making for Inaugural Grantmaking Process**

*See Section II for an explanation of our 2-Stage application process (Organizational Profiles and Advanced Applications) designed to reduce the burden on applicants.*

**September 2020:** Our online application portal will be open between September 10 and October 5, 2020 for the Equality Fund's inaugural call for Organizational Profiles. These Profiles will be valid for two years and will be considered for all grantmaking cycles over that time. There will be additional opportunities to complete and submit an Organizational Profile over the next two years, but we encourage organizations to register now.

**October 2020:** The Equality Fund team will review the Organizational Profiles against specific criteria and priority themes.

**November 2020:** Organizations shortlisted for our first round of Advanced Applications will receive an invitation in early November 2020, and will have four weeks to complete the proposal.

**December 2020 and January 2021:** Equality Fund staff will review Advanced Applications, supporting documents, and endorsement letters. Applications will be assessed in accordance with criteria and priority themes noted in this guide. The decision making process will include the following participatory elements:

- The Equality Fund will request applicants to submit endorsement letters from two women's rights or feminist activists in their contexts who know the work and track record of the organization as a key step

- A global panel/committee of advisors from different backgrounds and regions—made up of women’s rights and feminist activists, feminist funders , and other feminist allies—will be brought together to assess shortlisted Advanced Applications in accordance with the general and specific criteria and make grantee selection recommendations

**February 2021:** Grant approvals will be communicated mid-February 2021 with final steps including signing of a contract and disbursement of funds completed by March 31, 2021.

### **Future Grantmaking**

- There will be additional opportunities to complete and submit an Organizational Profile over the next two years, but we encourage organizations to register now.
- The timing of future invitations to submit Advanced Applications will be announced early 2021, with a next round tentatively planned for May/June 2021.

**Canada**

The Equality Fund is made possible in partnership with the Government of Canada.