

PHILADELPHIA CITY FUND / INNOVATION ADVISORY GROUP

Spring 2024 Innovation Fund Grant Guidelines

The following guidelines concern the application process, eligibility, and criteria for Innovation Fund grants awarded to City of Philadelphia departmental projects, as described below.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Innovation Fund is a grant opportunity funded by the Philadelphia City Fund and managed by the Public Technology and Innovation team in the City's Office of Innovation and Technology. The Innovation Fund provides grants to launch pilot initiatives proposed by City employees that have the potential to improve the services and functions of municipal government.

The Innovation Fund application process is coordinated by the Innovation Advisory Group – a cross-departmental advisory team of City employees who are trained and invested in seeding innovation – and all final funding decisions are made by the Philadelphia City Fund's Board of Directors.

The Innovation Fund's application process is unique and is meant to be inclusive, equitable and accessible to any City employee who would like to request funding for a pilot or proof of concept project.

As of March 2024, the Innovation Fund has \$25,000 to award. Projects can receive up to \$10,000, with most awards ranging from \$6,000 - \$8,000.

The Innovation Fund will prioritize proposals for ideas and projects that:

1. Have never been tried before in Philadelphia
2. Pilot something that is new and different for a given department
3. Push Philadelphia to be the first city to solve a broader problem in a unique way
4. Leverage partnerships and stakeholder collaboration, either internal or external to City government
5. Focus on delivering services more effectively, equitably and efficiently to all residents

ELIGIBILITY

Please note: in order to be considered for funding, applications must be submitted according to the deadlines, eligibility, and format as set forth in these guidelines and on the online submission forms.

- All City of Philadelphia departments and agencies are eligible to apply. As part of the application process, City applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the funding requested cannot be supported through the City's budget, or solely by the City's budget. Applicants will also be expected to demonstrate their Department Leadership's commitment to the proposed project.
- Requests may not exceed the Innovation Fund's maximum grant award amount of \$10,000. Please be aware that the average grant amount ranges from \$6,000 to

\$8,000. For the Spring 2024 cycle, the Innovation Fund has a total of \$25,000 to distribute.

- The Innovation Fund will not support:
 - Proposals that seek multi-year funding
 - Grants for lobbying or political activity
 - Proposals for activities or services taking place outside of Philadelphia
 - Proposals that do not satisfy the Eligibility Criteria or Timeline described in these guidelines; or
 - Proposals from applicants that previously received a grant from the Fund and did not submit a final report or did not fulfill grantee requirements.

Additionally, grants must fund future projects and will not reimburse past expenses.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Innovation Fund has a unique evaluation process that aims to help employees think strategically about their potential initiatives. While we value the opportunity to fund a select group of projects, we also strive to provide structure and guidance, allowing applicants to critically examine all components of their idea, connect with relevant stakeholders, use funds effectively, and create realistic and impactful outcomes.

By design, the Innovation Fund supports ideas which may not always fit cleanly in the City’s procurement and contracting channels. Applicants are encouraged to begin thinking about a fiscal administration plan for the project in the early stages of the application process in order to avoid any financial or legal issues that can slow or temporarily halt a project. A **fiscal administrator** is the City office—or outside organization such as the Philadelphia City Fund or other fiscal sponsor—that holds your grant dollars and takes responsibility for managing procurement, contracting, and incoming and outgoing transactions.

Applicants will not be required to submit a full fiscal administration plan in the initial application stage, however applicants who are invited to the later stages of the application process will be asked to incorporate fiscal administration into their proposal. You can read more about our fiscal administration policies [here](#).

Although not all projects will receive financial support from the Innovation Fund, we will do our best to offer feedback and support to all applicants.

Monday, April 1 st , 2024	<p>Initial submission form is due; applications must be submitted via the online submission form linked below.</p> <p>Innovation Fund Application is HERE.</p> <p>All submissions will be reviewed by the Innovation Advisory Group and the Philadelphia City Fund staff.</p>
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	Please direct any questions or issues to Innovation@phila.gov .
Week of April 15 th , 2024	Applicants are notified of status. High-scoring applicants will be invited to attend a <i>mandatory</i> virtual Pitch Session where they will workshop their proposal with members of the Innovation Advisory Group.
Monday, April 22 nd – Wednesday, May 1 st	<p>Virtual Pitch Sessions will be held during the following windows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday, April 22nd 10am-12pm - Tuesday, April 23rd 1pm – 3pm - Thursday, April 25th 11am - 1pm - Tuesday, April 30th 2pm – 4pm - Wednesday, May 1st 10am – 12pm <p>Please note: these pitch sessions are mandatory and <u>must</u> be scheduled during one of the available dates / times.</p> <p>Applicants must be prepared to share a slide deck and / or visual component during their pitch session.</p>
Week of May 6 th , 2024	Applicants are notified of status. A select group of submissions will be invited to submit a full proposal to the Advisory Group for funding consideration. We will provide further instructions about the full proposal in this email.
Wednesday, June 5 th , 2024	<p>Full proposals should be sent to Stephanie Orlando (stephanie.orlando@phila.gov) by 11:59pm EST.</p> <p>Full proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the Innovation Advisory Group and the Philadelphia City Fund Board of Directors. Applicants will be notified of final funding decisions by June 30th.</p>