

PREVENTING AND REPAIRING HARM: HEALING LEARNING COMMUNITIES THROUGH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Request for Proposal

October 17, 2022



Photo by John Diez

About Us

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is committed to using our power and privilege as a philanthropic institution to advance racial equity in public education. We champion efforts to prioritize community goals that challenge racial inequities and advance excellent, student-centered public education for all New England youth. We are focusing our work strategically on addressing structural racism and white supremacy in our education system, so that all youth have access to an excellent and equitable public education.

Background

During the 2021-2022 school year, there was a significant increase in school-based violence in public schools across America. According to [The Washington Post](#), “school shootings rose to the highest number in 20 years.” As most students returned to in-person learning after more than 18 months of remote virtual learning, many public school districts quickly realized that students’ social and emotional needs outweighed the resources schools offered, which resulted in an influx of school-based incidents and violence.

Specifically, throughout the [New England region](#), a significant uptick in school violence forced many school districts to create safety plans that significantly impacted teaching and learning. And oftentimes, violence that occurs within schools spills out into the community and reinforces a cycle of trauma that catastrophically impacts the mental health and wellness of young people. At the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, we believe that no young person should have to go to school and be forced to prioritize their physical and psychological safety over learning. We also believe that many students who engage in violence have often experienced harm and trauma firsthand and deserve support in healing, repairing, and restoring their relationships within their community.

According to Zehr (2002), restorative justice is a process used to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible. Restorative practices are ideal for educators, youth, and communities to use as a way to collectively understand and interpret the root causes of cyclical violence and develop preventative interventions that are sustainable. Additionally, [The Little Book of Restorative Justice](#) advocates that communities need the following components to form justice and repair harm:

1. Attention to the concerns of those who have been harmed;
2. Opportunities to build a sense of community and mutual accountability; and
3. Encouragement to take on their obligations for the welfare of their members, including people who have been harmed and people who have done harm, and to foster conditions that promote healthy communities.

It is with this mind that the Foundation offers this Request for Proposals which seeks to support projects that center Restorative Justice by providing opportunities to create safe spaces for young people to acknowledge and repair harm, especially collaborative spaces between youth and adults to develop and implement violence prevention practices, strategies, and policies.

Through intentional activities that are centered on restorative justice, we believe that young people will be able to heal themselves as they repair and strengthen their relationships with each other and thrive in social and academic settings.

Funding Priorities and Examples

The Foundation will support projects that focus on Restorative Justice activities for school-aged youth. The following are some examples of projects that will be considered for funding. It is not an exhaustive list but is meant to provide a picture of the types of projects the Foundation seeks to support. Please read the Criteria and Eligibility sections carefully for more details. **Requests should not exceed \$25,000.**

- Community building circles for K-12 students and educators focused on culture and climate
- Relationship building activities for K-12 students
- Conflict resolution, mediation, and reconciliation trainings and services
- Youth-Led Short-Term Violence Prevention Projects that include arts and crafts, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), or youth action campaigns
- Awareness and prevention events
- Short-term peer support and/or healing groups

Proposal

Please respond briefly to the following on the application portal. There is a 2,500-character limit for the response to each question (see portal access instructions in the Submission section below).

1. Briefly describe the youth you serve (include some demographics) and what is happening locally. What is helping your work? What is hindering your work?
2. Please share why your organization needs funding, how it connects to public education, and why it is in a position to lead this project. How do the proposed projects align with the mission of your organization?
3. Describe the project. What would this funding specifically be used for and what do you hope to accomplish? How were youth directly and meaningfully involved in the project development? How will

they be involved in the implementation? If this grant would support a planning process, describe how the resulting plan will be implemented and sustained.

4. If the requested amount is less than the total budget, briefly explain how the remaining budget needs will be met.

Criteria for Selection

- Proposal aligns with the priorities of the Fund.
- Grant request must respond to a time-sensitive need, unanticipated event, or urgent challenge in communities. ***This grant is not intended to support ongoing programs and projects.***
- Organizations have an established focus on providing support for young people living in vulnerable communities.
- Organizations serving Black, Indigenous, and youth of color will be prioritized.
- Organizations serving low-income communities will be prioritized.
- Youth serving in leadership roles of the project development and implementation will be compensated for their time.
- Projects should be completed by June 30, 2023. Given the timing of the RFP release, projects that start in December 2022 or January 2023 are welcome.

Rapid response funding will not support the following requests:

- Capital campaigns
- Scholarships or fellowship programs
- Debt reduction or cash reserves
- Building construction or renovation
- Operating support or on-going programs. However, staff time to manage a short-term project is an allowable expense if the project is outside the staff person's established responsibilities.

Eligibility

- Organizations that received a previous Centering Joy: Celebrating LGBTQIA+ Youth and their Allies Rapid Response Fund grant are not eligible.
- This RFP is limited to community-based organizations and public schools including public charter schools. School Districts are welcome to apply if young people are directly involved in the decision making and implementation of the proposed project.
- Higher education institutions are not eligible.
- Organizations must be directly serving youth enrolled in K-12 public school.
- The project takes place within New England (MA, RI, NH, VT, ME, or CT)
- The Foundation funds 501(c)3 educational organizations that fall under the tax designation 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2) and have an education focus, as evidenced in their articles of incorporation. Due to the

Foundation's tax status, private foundations (described in section 509 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code) and supporting organizations (described in section 509 (a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are NOT eligible grantees.

Additional Information

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The deadline for proposals is Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. EST or until the limited pool of resources is exhausted. Please check our [website](#) to make sure funds are still available. The Foundation aims to review proposals, and if selected, disburse funds within three weeks of receiving the proposal.

If you have questions about the RFP, please contact Michael Williams at mwilliams@nmefoundation.org.

Proposal Submission Directions

Applications will be accepted using our [online application portal](#). Sign up for an account if you are a new user. Once you are logged in, navigate to the "Grants Opportunities" tab and select the "Preventing and Repairing Harm: Healing Learning Communities through Restorative Justice" opportunity to start your application. If you need assistance submitting a proposal or have questions about the portal, please contact Stephanie Cheney at scheney@nmefoundation.org.