

# Capacity Building Initiative Applicant Guide



## Summary

MRG's new Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) is a three-year pilot project that pairs multi-year funding with intensive technical assistance and peer learning opportunities for ten grassroots, social change groups across Oregon. In order to be eligible to apply, groups must have received a General Fund or Travel Fund grant from MRG since July 1, 2010 and have a budget under \$300,000. Please keep reading for more information!

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## Timeline

**Friday, July 31, 2015 – Application Deadline:** Proposals must be postmarked on or before this date and sent to:

MRG Foundation  
1235 SE Morrison Street, Suite A  
Portland, OR 97214

***Or, you may hand-deliver your proposal by 5pm on 7/31/2015.***

We will NOT accept faxed, emailed, or late proposals.

**September – Site Visits** with semifinalists.

**November 7, 2015 - CBI Cohort Welcome and Orientation Session** in Eugene, OR

**December 1, 2015 - Grant Funding Begins**

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## Questions?

After reading through this guide, please contact us if you have any questions. We can help your group determine its eligibility and guide you through the application process.

Call Stephan Herrera, Capacity Building Director at **1-800-489-6743** or **503-289-1517** (in Portland area). Or email [stephan@mrgfoundation.org](mailto:stephan@mrgfoundation.org)

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## Overview

**Q:** *Can we still apply to MRG's General Fund if we are selected to participate in the CBI?*

**A:** No. If your group is selected to participate in the CBI, you will not be eligible to apply to our General Fund for the duration of the CBI.

However, if you apply for the CBI but are not selected, MRG will transfer your application to the General Fund, as long as you didn't receive a grant in June 2015.

MRG Foundation has been making grants to community change-makers for nearly 40 years. Since 1976, we've moved over \$14 million to Oregon's social justice movements: to groups that are led by those most directly impacted by the critical social justice issues they are addressing; to groups that wouldn't be able to attract funding from other sources; to groups that are challenging the root causes of injustice and creating real change in their communities.

Over these four decades we have taken great pride in being an early funder, as well as a consistent funder. We've seen our grantees achieve incredible success and we've seen a lot of potential go unrealized and get bogged down by a lack of funding, a lack of internal capacity, and a lack of relevant technical assistance.

MRG's new Capacity Building Initiative is a partnership with Meyer Memorial Trust, designed to address these needs and strategically respond to our grantees growth challenges.

The CBI will identify and engage a cohort of ten grassroots social change groups in a three-year pilot project to provide groups with a combination of funding, peer-learning opportunities, and focused technical assistance. All participants will have received an MRG General Fund or Travel grant since July 1, 2010.

CBI participants need to have a clear vision for the impact their work could have on a larger scale but have been unable to achieve their desired growth. This includes both newer groups that are trying to gain traction and established groups that have encountered a significant hurdle that has blocked their sustainability or growth. Groups that are already on a strong growth path or that have significant fundraising and operational capacity aren't best suited for this initiative.

The majority of groups selected will be based in communities of color and/or rural communities.



## Details

**Multi-Year Grants:** On average, groups will receive \$35,000 in Year 1 and Year 2 and \$20,000 in Year 3. This amount will vary based on participants' budget size and organizational assessment. A portion of the grant can be used for general operating expenses, with the remainder earmarked for capacity building needs.

**Peer Learning:** MRG will host two overnight convenings each year focused on skill development, peer learning, and relationship building. CBI participants will be required to attend all convenings.

CBI participants will also have the opportunity to attend additional workshops and form peer support cohorts as additional shared needs are identified. Cohorts might include: executive directors and operational leaders, program staff, and/or fundraising and communications staff.

**Coaching & Technical Assistance Consulting:** MRG's Capacity Building Director will provide one-on-one coaching and coordinate other consulting and technical assistance opportunities as needed for each CBI participant. The technical assistance provided will span three core areas:

- ✿ Governance, Operations & Financial Management - including board of directors, staffing, financial systems, and technology.
  - ✿ Programs & Planning - including planning & evaluation, leadership development, relationship & coalition building.
  - ✿ Fundraising & Communications - including development planning, grant writing, individual fundraising, board engagement, communications strategies and tools.
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## Process

**CBI Selection Committee** will consist of community based organizers, social justice capacity builders, and program officers from other foundations.

The CBI staff and selection committee will assesses each proposal and determine semi-finalists based on MRG's Funding Criteria. They will then conduct site visits with semi-finalists and make final selection recommendations to MRG's Board of Directors in early October.

Once CBI participants have been selected, MRG's Capacity Building Director will meet with each participant and use their organizational assessment to help strategize the most effective way to allocate their CBI grants. For example: adding fundraising staff, developing a strategic plan, getting a database, updating a website, or any number of other projects with long-term capacity impacts.

**November 7, 2015 CBI Cohort Welcome and Orientation Session** - MRG will launch the new cohort with a CBI Cohort Welcome and Orientation Session. This gathering is designed for grantees to learn about one another's work and to develop new relationships. Tentatively plan on having representatives there in case you are invited to attend. This gathering will take place in Eugene, OR.

**December 1, 2015 CBI Grant Funding Begins**

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## Forms

The electronic version of the application is available on our website at [www.mrgfoundation.org/apply/cbify16/](http://www.mrgfoundation.org/apply/cbify16/).

If you have any trouble, email [stephan@mrgfoundation.org](mailto:stephan@mrgfoundation.org).

## CBI CRITERIA

Applicants must:	MRG assesses proposals by asking:
<p><b>1) Have received MRG funding in the last five years</b></p> <p>MRG’s Capacity Building Initiative is committed to building the capacity of groups we have a strong relationship and deep familiarity with.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has this group received an MRG General Fund or Travel Fund grant since July 1, 2010?</p>
<p><b>2) Have a budget under \$300,000</b></p> <p>Your Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year’s actual expenses, the Current Fiscal Year’s budgeted expenses, <u>AND</u> Next Fiscal Year’s budgeted expenses must <u>all</u> be under \$300,000.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Are this group’s Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year’s actual expenses, the Current Fiscal Year’s budgeted expenses, <u>AND</u> Next Fiscal Year’s budgeted expenses <u>all</u> under \$300,000?</p>
<p><b>3) Not be receiving significant government funding</b></p> <p>The financial and operational capacity required to apply for, secure, and manage grants from governmental sources is a good indicator that a group does not need this level of intensive capacity building support.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the group currently receiving government funding?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How long ago was the most recent government funding?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How significant is the government funding?</p>

***Tip: Writing a strong application...***

Look at the questions in the right column. **These are the questions the grantmakers use to assess whether or not your proposal is a strong fit with our criteria.**

Ask someone who isn’t very close to your work to read through your proposal and see if it addresses all the questions we ask. This is the best way to identify places in your proposal where you need to clarify, add information, or take out information.

## CBI CRITERIA

Applicants must:	MRG assesses proposals by asking:
<p><b>4) Be Dismantling Oppression</b></p> <p>Institutionalized oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism are the primary tools used to perpetuate injustice.</p> <p>Regardless of the issue area, inequality, oppression, and discrimination create significant barriers to social justice.</p> <p>MRG funds groups that understand how privilege and oppression impact their group and issue, and are proactively confronting privilege and dismantling oppressive structures both within their own organization as well as in the broader community.</p> <p>We recognize that this commitment looks different in different communities and issue areas.</p> <p>We prioritize funding to groups based in rural areas, and groups led by people of color, LGBTQ people, low-income people, women, immigrants and refugees, people living with disabilities, and youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is this group led by and/or accountable to those most directly affected by issues of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does this group have an understanding of the role that privilege and oppression play in their group and issue area?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How proactively is this group confronting privilege and dismantling oppressive structures both within their own organization as well as in the broader community?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for ally groups:</b></p> <p>Ally groups are not expected to be led by those most directly affected. However, MRG does expect your group to be accountable to these communities.</p>
<p><b>5) Be Strategic</b></p> <p>MRG's Capacity Building Initiative will focus on supporting groups that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ have or hold the potential to have a deep impact in their community and issue area;</li> <li>~ have unmet growth or sustainability goals;</li> <li>~ have limited access to relevant and appropriate capacity building support; and</li> <li>~ believe our support will play a critical role in moving their social change work forward.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How significant will this group's impact be?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is this group's issue area, community, and/or geographic location particularly strategic?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does this group have unmet growth or sustainability goals?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does this group have significant access to relevant and appropriate capacity building support?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will CBI support play a critical role in moving this group's social change work forward?</li> </ul>

## CBI CRITERIA

Applicants must:	MRG assesses proposals by asking:
<p><b>6) Commit to Full Participation</b></p> <p>MRG’s Capacity Building Initiative will support groups that can fully commit to this three-year initiative and that have enough capacity to make the best use of this capacity building opportunity.</p> <p>We will look for groups that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ have paid staff or volunteers who commit at least 10 hours per week;</li> <li>~ have a clear understanding of the barriers to achieving their growth or sustainability goals;</li> <li>~ are open to the organizational change that may be necessary to reach their goals; and</li> <li>~ have a strong commitment from their board and staff leadership to allocating the organizational time and energy needed to fully engage in the CBI process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does this group have paid staff or volunteers who commit significant time?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are group’s leaders committed to identifying and understanding the barriers to achieving their growth and sustainability goals?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are this group’s leaders committed to implementing solutions to achieve their growth and sustainability goals?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is this group committed to fully engaging in the CBI process for all three years?</li> </ul>
<p><b>7) Be Movement Builders</b></p> <p>Grassroots, community-based groups achieve much greater success when they are part of a broader movement for social justice.</p> <p>Effective movement building first requires that groups understand how their work fits in with other social justice issues and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does this group have an understanding of how their work fits in with other social justice issues and communities?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is this partnering with other groups who are working on the same or similar issues?</li> </ul>



**Tip: Use the blank spaces...**

If there are more demographics that are important to your work, include them in the grid. i.e. Renters, Farmers, Seniors, Muslims, Veterans, Farmworkers, etc.

Any information that shows us that you are led by your constituents is useful information.

**Why we ask for it:**

MRG is helping build a strong, progressive movement that is led by and accountable to people who are most directly affected by social, racial, environmental, and economic injustice. This involves supporting the leadership of people of color, women, LGBTQ people, immigrants and refugees, people living with disabilities, low-income people, and youth.

The Identity Grid provides us with some overall demographic information about your group's leadership, while your Board and Staff list paints a fuller picture of who your leaders are.

**We look for meaningful leadership of and accountability to the people who are most directly affected by your social justice issue.**

We are not looking for "a check in every box" or for groups to tokenize their leaders.

**Definitions:**

Staff: Those paid on an ongoing basis by the group (not consultants)

Board: Governing body of the group; other titles might include steering committee or core group

Active

Volunteers: Volunteers who are regularly active with your group. Do not include Board members or non-active members.

**Completing the grid:**

Use whole numbers. Do not use percentages or fractions.

Make sure the totals for each section are the same, with the exception of the gender section, which may vary. For example, if you have 3 staff then the staff *sexual orientation* section should add up to 3, and the staff *race* section should add up to 3.

Do not mark multiple boxes in one section for one individual, except as needed in the gender section. (Refer to the comment box in the excel spreadsheet for more information on gender.) For example, if someone is multi-racial, mark either the race they most identify with or add a new heading that fits their identity.

There are blank rows in each section. You can use these rows to include any additional identities that are relevant to your work.

# MRG's Identity Grid

Use whole numbers, not percentages or question marks. Incomplete grids will not be accepted.  
Blank rows are included so you can add any additional identities that are relevant to your group.

	Staff	Board	Active Volunteers	Totals
<b>Gender</b>				
Female identified	6	6	14	26
Male identified	2	2	7	11
Trans* Identified			1	1
Gender queer	1			1
<b>Total Gender/ Sex</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>				
Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual/ Trans/ Queer/ Questioning (LGBTQ)	4	2	9	15
Heterosexual	5	6	13	24
<b>Total Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Race</b>				
African/ African American/ Black	1	1	5	7
Asian/ Pacific Islander		2	3	5
Euro American/ White	2		11	13
Latino/ Latina	1	3	1	5
Middle Eastern/ Arab				
Multi-Racial				
Native American/ American Indian/ Alaskan Native			1	1
African American/Multi-racial	1	1		2
API/Multi-racial	1		1	2
African/Latin @	1	1		2
African American/Native American	1			1
Native American/White	1			1
<b>Total Race</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Additional MRG Required Information</b>				
Immigrant/ Refugee	0	0	8	8
Living with a Disability	0	0	3	3
Low-Income	0	0	5	5
Youth 24 and younger	1	0	1	2

<b>Additional Applicant Defined Information</b>				
Outside Portland Metro Area	0	4	7	9
				0

FYI – This is MRG's current identity grid. We provide our own information as the sample.





## Budget

**Q: Where do we request a specific grant amount?**

**A:** After participants have been selected, the Capacity Building Director will meet with participants to develop budgets that closely match your group's technical assistance and capacity building needs.

*The budget section can be challenging. Pay close attention to the instructions and samples. Contact us if you have any questions.*

For the CBI, use the Organizational Budget Form **or** your own budget format. If you use your own format make sure it fits on one page and includes all of the information we request.

The information we need applies to **your fiscal year**. A fiscal year can be any 12-month period but is most typically either the calendar year or the 12-month period between July 1 and June 30. Identify your fiscal year on the budget form and in the column headings, e.g. "Year Ending 2015".

### **Provide the following information:**

**a) Current Fiscal Year Organizational Budget:** the organizational income and expenses you have budgeted for your current fiscal year (the fiscal year you are in right now).

**b) Next Fiscal Year Organizational Budget:** the organizational income and expenses you have budgeted for your next fiscal year (the upcoming fiscal year).

**Note:** If you are less than 6 months into your **Current Fiscal Year**, you **don't** need to provide the "Next Fiscal Year Organizational Budget". For example, if your fiscal year begins July 1<sup>st</sup>, you are less than 6 months into your Current Fiscal Year so you will not need to provide your organizational budget for Next Fiscal Year. However, if your fiscal year begins January 1<sup>st</sup> you are more than 6 months through your Current Fiscal Year so you will need to provide your organizational budget for Next Fiscal Year.

### **Capacity building project budget not needed (yet):**

While this is a capacity building initiative, we aren't asking for a specific capacity building budget yet. If you are selected as a CBI participant, MRG's Capacity Building Director will meet with your group before the grant starts to help you strategize the most effective use of the CBI three-year grant.

**Double-check all your numbers. Make sure everything adds up correctly.**

# Organizational Budget

**SAMPLE**

INCOME	TOTAL ORGANIZATION INCOME BUDGET	
	Current Fiscal Year Ending 2015	Next Fiscal Year Ending 2016
Line Items		
Donations from Individuals	20,000	22,000
Member Dues	8,000	9,000
Services		
Foundations/ Including MRG	52,000	60,000
Government Grants & Contracts		
Other (itemize)		
1.		
2.		
3.		
<b>TOTAL EACH COLUMN</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>91,000</b>

Check one  
 Our fiscal year is:  
 Jan 1 - Dec 31  
 July 1 - Jun 30  
 Oct 1 - Sept 30  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSES	TOTAL ORGANIZATION EXPENSE BUDGET	
	Current Fiscal Year Ending 2015	Next Fiscal Year Ending 2016
Line Items		
Personnel - Itemize positions and salaries, indicate full or part time		
Executive Director - Full Time	32,000	34,000
Organizer - Half Time	15,000	
* Organizer - 3/4 time		23,500
Payroll Taxes & Benefits	12,000	14,000
Office Supplies & Postage	2,000	2,000
Printing/Copying	6,000	6,000
Rent/Utilities	4,800	4,800
Phone & Internet	2,000	2,200
Travel	750	1,000
Equipment	1,200	800
Other (itemize)		
1. Fundraising Consultant	2,000	
2. Tech Consultants	1,250	1,250
3.		
4.		
5.		
<b>TOTAL EACH COLUMN</b>	<b>79,000</b>	<b>89,550</b>

Budget Notes:  
 \* Next Fiscal Year our organizer's hours will increase to ¾ time.



### Before printing your proposal, make sure of the following:

- All application questions have been answered completely. Incomplete proposals will **not** be accepted.
- Your narrative does not exceed seven pages. Proposals exceeding seven pages or longer will **not** be accepted.
- Organizational Capacity Assessment:** Submit your organization's assessment information online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/cbify16](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/cbify16) . Also, make sure to complete and submit only **one** assessment per organization. If you have trouble accessing Survey Monkey, contact Stephan Herrera at (503)289-1517.
- Budget:** All columns on the budget add up correctly and you have double-checked all your numbers.
- Identity Grid:** All columns on the identity grid add up correctly and you have double-checked all your numbers.
- Font is 12 point.** Proposal must be **typed**. If necessary you may handwrite the Cover Page, Identity Grid, Foundation and Government Sources List, and Budget. Everything else must be typed.
- Margins are one inch.**
- Page Layout:** Be sure your proposal is printed in **Portrait** layout, not landscape.
- You have included all the **required attachments**.

### Submitting your proposal:

- One copy on **white paper and single-sided** of the:
  - Cover Sheet
  - Narrative Identity Grid
  - Board and Staff List with short bios and contact information
  - Foundation List
  - Profit and Loss Statement for your most recently completed fiscal year
  - Balance Sheet for your most recently completed fiscal year
  - Budget
- Paperclip** the proposal. Do not use staples or any other type of binding.
- One copy of your 501(c)(3) tax-exemption letter if you have one.
- If you are using a fiscal sponsor:
  - one copy of a signed letter from them stating their agreement to serve as your fiscal sponsor; and
  - one copy of their 501(c)(3) tax-exemption letter.
- Ensure your organizational assessment has been submitted on-line
- No additional attachments included.