

Press Forward



Program Guidelines: Catalyst Funds for Local Chapters

The Catalyst Fund is open for proposals from Press Forward Locals on an ongoing basis starting February 20, 2024.

Press Forward Locals are an emerging network of chapters across the country where funders are bringing donors and foundations together to expand resources for local news. These chapters are an opportunity to create place-based initiatives and move from individual grantmaking strategies towards a shared vision and coordinated action.

Through these grants, Press Forward aims to provide local chapters with financial support to develop their funding strategies and carry out critical activities that meet the unique information needs of their communities.

Only approved Press Forward Locals are eligible to apply for Catalyst Funds. To learn more start the local chapter application process, please visit pressforward.news/locals.

Please carefully review the full program guidelines that include application instructions, proposal questions, and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). All further questions should be directed to grants@pressforward.news.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed quarterly.

Connect

Email: grants@pressforward.news

Website: <https://www.pressforward.news>

Eligibility

Only approved Press Forward local chapters can apply for Catalyst Funds. To learn more about establishing a chapter, please visit pressforward.news/locals.

Application

Applications open for submission on February 20, 2024, will be accepted on a rolling basis, and evaluated quarterly.

Approved local chapters will be invited to create a profile and submit an application on JustFund, our grants management platform that takes a "[common application](#)" approach to grantmaking.

The full list of application questions can be found later in the program guidelines.

Grant Features

Catalyst Funds aim to support Press Forward Locals as they launch or expand their efforts to build a funder collaborative and invest in a healthy local news ecosystem.

Catalyst Funds are designed with flexibility in mind and have the following features:

- Grant amounts will be scaled based on the geographic scope of the chapter.
- Awards will be structured as two-year grants to give chapters longer term support.
- Awards will be given as general operating support.

Local chapters should be able to clearly demonstrate how this funding will support a vision that is shared by other funders and community stakeholders.

Catalyst Funds can be used to support a wide range of potential Local Chapter needs including but not limited to the following:

- Supporting ecosystem research and/or a landscape scan
- Regranting to media organizations in your community
- Investing in fundraising or programmatic capacity
- Incentivizing funding from local donors
- Hosting a summit that brings new funders to the cause
- Gathering partners to create a shared vision

Generally, Catalyst Funds should not be designated to fund just a single news organization. Funding will be provided as general operating grants, allowing for grantees to determine how to best use funds in response to local need(s) and local context(s). Funding will be distributed over two years.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following parameters within the context of a given chapter's ecosystem type (nascent, expanding, and flourishing):

- Does the chapter have a thoughtful, but realistic, approach to expanding local fundraising efforts?
- Does the chapter exist in a community that is generally considered underserved by news outlets and journalism funders?
- Does the chapter have a committed and strong backbone organization(s)?
- Have new local funds been committed from multiple donors? *Note, it is expected that at least \$25,000 in new local funds are committed at the time of application.*
- Had a landscape scan been completed and/or are there plans to complete one?

Press Forward has defined the following ecosystem types:

Ecosystem Type	Access to information features	Funder features
Nascent	News deserts and/or limited access to information.	Donors are first-time journalism funders. In the phase of conducting landscape and building the case.
Expanding	Dynamic, yet undercapitalized local news outlets.	Donor community needs to be expanded to support a growing ecosystem.
Flourishing	Established ecosystem, ready to guide other chapters.	Donors needs to be re-energized to provide longer term support.

Award Sizes and Duration

Grant awards will be determined based on the above evaluation criteria within the context of the scope of the local chapter and its ecosystem type.

Expected grant ranges are outlined below. Press Forward reserves the right to award amounts outside of these ranges.

- A city/county chapter is eligible for up to \$100,000
- A regional chapter is eligible for up to \$175,000
- A state chapter is eligible for up to \$250,000

About Press Forward

Press Forward is a national movement to strengthen our democracy by revitalizing local news and information. A coalition of funders is investing more than \$500 million to strengthen local newsrooms, close longstanding gaps in journalism coverage, advance public policy that expands access to local news, and to scale the infrastructure the sector needs to thrive.

All Press Forward activities will support the following four strategic pillars:

1. Strengthening local newsrooms that have the trust of local communities
2. Accelerating the enabling environment for news production and dissemination
3. Closing longstanding inequalities in journalism coverage and practice
4. Advancing public policies that expand access to local news and civic information

The work of Press Forward is grounded in a set of shared values:

1. Prioritize transformation
2. Center community needs
3. Enable growth with equity and diversity of thought
4. Ensure accessibility
5. Independence and interdependence

For more, visit pressforward.news.

About Press Forward Local Chapters

Press Forward Locals are a network of chapters across the country where funders are bringing new donors and foundations together to expand resources for local news. These chapters are an opportunity to create place-based initiatives and move from individual grantmaking strategies towards a shared vision and coordinated action.

All Press Forward Locals have committed to:

- Supporting local journalism beyond existing commitments
- Bringing new donors to the local effort
- Representing Press Forward in their communities
- Convening local stakeholders to conduct research and advance the mutual understanding of the local information ecosystem
- Establishing or supporting pooled funds or funding collaborations that build common purpose and strengthen the local news ecosystem
- Tracking and reporting grantmaking activity and other metrics to Press Forward
- Sharing models, tools, and lessons learned with other Press Forward Locals

For more, visit pressforward.news/locals/.

Application

Approved local chapters will be invited to create a profile and submit an application on JustFund, our grants management platform that takes a "common application" approach to grantmaking.

There are two parts to the JustFund Common Application[™] - the Profile and the Application. The Profile is visible to all funders on the JustFund platform. The Application is visible only to Press Forward.

Please answer all questions in the application as it relates to your Press Forward Local Chapter and see special direction below on how to answer specific questions.

Section 1: Profile

Basic Information

1. Organization Name - *List the name of your approved Local Chapter*
2. Year Established - *Share the year your Chapter was established*
3. Street Address / City / State / Zip - *Include the address of the lead organization*
4. Mission Statement - *Share your Chapter's mission statement*
5. Organization Description - *Describe the work your organization (LOCAL CHAPTER) is doing and your expected outcomes. Who is your work benefiting? How will you monitor progress and evaluate success?*
 - a. *PRESS FORWARD ADDITION - How is your work engaging and supporting communities who have been historically marginalized?*
6. Team Description - *Share information about the members of your team engaged with the work: staff, volunteers, or board.*
 - a. *PRESS FORWARD ADDITION - Include information about your organization as the backbone as well as about your partners (funding partners, community stakeholders, etc.) and the role each partner is serving in advancing the work of your Local Chapter. Please share how you are coordinating with partners and others on this project.*

Profile Filters

1. Focus Areas
2. BIPOC-LED? (yes / no)
3. Priority Strategies (select up to 6)
4. Communities Engaged (select up to 6)
5. Organization Scope (select up to 6)
6. States You Work In (select up to 6)
7. Contact Information - Primary contact for the lead organization
8. Annual Budget - 2024 Budget for the Local Chapter
9. Check Information - Information for the lead organization

Section 2: Application

1. Describe the local news ecosystem in your community and the specific ways that your chapter intends to support it. Please provide details on any underrepresented audiences you plan to serve or information gaps you plan to address, as well as information gaps you also have as a chapter that this funding could help fill.
2. What is the philanthropic landscape for funding local news like in your community? Describe how you plan on bringing more funders together to do so. Are there any unique aspects of your philanthropic community that are important to know about?
3. Grant Amount Requested - *See the expected grant ranges*
4. Financial Need - *What would funding from Press Forward enable for your Local Chapter and why is this the right point in time for you to receive funding?*
5. Attachments
 - a. Chapter fundraising to date. Click here for template.
 - b. Landscape Scan, if available, or Local Chapter Project Plan/Time.
6. (Optional) Notes - *How can Press Forward help? Are there areas that your coalition could benefit from additional coaching, guidance, lessons, as well as money, from the Press Forward community?*
7. (Optional) Additional Attachments - If you have additional information you would like to share, please do so here. You may include multiple attachments and a website link.

Press Forward Frequently Asked Questions

What is Press Forward?

Press Forward is a national movement to strengthen our democracy by revitalizing local news and information. A coalition of funders is investing more than \$500 million to strengthen local newsrooms, close longstanding gaps in journalism coverage, advance public policy that expands access to local news, and to scale the infrastructure the sector needs to thrive.

How does Press Forward operate?

Press Forward is a coalition of funders committed to revitalizing local news across the country. All investments are guided by the four funding priorities found on our [website](#).

Press Forward operates primarily in three ways at this early stage:

- **Aligned Grantmaking:** Funders give directly to local news initiatives, projects, and media outlets in alignment with Press Forward's four funding priorities.
- **Pooled Fund:** A number of Press Forward coalition partners have come together to contribute to a national pooled fund for local news, housed at The Miami Foundation. For national funders without dedicated journalism program officers, the pooled fund model provides a seamless giving channel and a way for donors of all sizes and types to partner in a shared effort.
- **Locals:** These emerging chapters offer a new opportunity for funders to work together to address specific, local information needs. Each chapter has committed to supporting a local pooled fund or investing in news collaborations that build common purpose and strengthen the local news ecosystem.

Where does the funding for Press Forward come from?

Press Forward is made up of a coalition of more than two dozen donors (to date) who have agreed to supporting local news and information with an infusion of more than a half-billion dollars over the next five years.

I am an approved local chapter. How do I apply for Catalyst Funds?

All approved local chapters will receive an invitation to create a profile on JustFund and apply to the open cycle. If you have not received an invitation to apply, please reach out to grants@pressforward.news.

I am in the process of becoming an approved local chapter. Will I be able to apply?

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, and evaluated quarterly. Once your chapter is approved, you will receive an invitation to apply for funding.

I am not an approved local chapter. Am I eligible to apply for funding?

Unfortunately, this round of funding is only for approved local chapters. There will be future funding opportunities for other local news efforts – additional details are forthcoming. In the meantime, you can create a searchable profile on [JustFund](#). This allows you to share your organization's mission with potentially interested Press Forward aligned donors, local donors, and other funders outside of the Press Forward network.

Does my chapter need to have other funding to apply?

Approved chapters need to have raised \$25,000 to be eligible to apply for Catalyst Funds.

Press Forward Frequently Asked Questions continued

I have more information I want to share about my organization. How can I share that information?

You should submit all supplemental information via the “Additional Attachments” section at the end of the application on JustFund. You may include multiple attachments and a website link.

I am interested in becoming a local chapter – how do I apply?

Visit [Pressforward.news/locals](https://pressforward.news/locals) to initiate the application process.

Who is eligible to create a local chapter?

Foundations or foundation partners (local news funder collaborative) are eligible to create a local chapter. At this time, we are not approving chapters started by any one individual news outlet.

What is JustFund?

JustFund is Press Forward’s new grants management platform partner. JustFund was created to remove traditional barriers in philanthropy and to simplify the grants application process for organizations. JustFund is a platform that offers a common grant application and was designed to save applicants time and give them access to multiple funding opportunities. Learn more at justfund.us/how-it-works/for-grantseekers/.

How do I get a profile on JustFund?

All approved local chapters of Press Forward will receive sign in credentials from JustFund. Once successfully logged into JustFund, you will be prompted to complete the Common Application. If you have not received sign-in credentials, please reach out to grants@pressforward.news.

What information is needed to complete the Common Application?

The Common Application is made up of your organization’s profile and financial information. You can see the full application [here](#).

How long does it take to complete a profile on JustFund?

Creating your profile and answering the Press Forward specific questions should take between three and four hours. You can see an instructional video of the Common Application being filled out [here](#).

Who will see my profile exactly? Will it be available to the general public?

When an organization submits a profile on JustFund, that profile is also available to all Press Forward coalition members plus the hundreds of donors, program officers, and philanthropic advisors that utilize JustFund to find and fund new grantees.

What happens after I submit my profile?

After you submit and publish your profile, it will be visible and searchable to all funders utilizing the JustFund platform, increasing your chance of new funding. You will be able to also apply for funding to any open cycle JustFund grant cycle, including open Press Forward grant cycles, which will require answering up to three additional questions.

Can I receive funding more than once from Press Forward?

In this early phase, we ask that approved local chapters apply only once but that may shift in the future.



Press Forward >>

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