

2027 Grant Information & Guidelines

The Lenny Zakim Fund
BRIDGING COMMUNITIES



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in The Lenny Zakim Fund (LZF). This document outlines our grantmaking priorities, eligibility requirements, application process, and expectations for grantee partners. Please read **carefully** before applying. All application materials can be found on our website linked [here](#).

Eligibility & Application Requirements

- Be a Massachusetts based nonprofit with IRS 501(c)(3) status, or have a qualified fiscal sponsor
- Operate programs based in and serving Eastern Massachusetts
- Be an independent, grassroots organization (no local chapters of national organizations) with leadership representing or reflecting the community served
- Have an annual operating budget under \$350,000
- Attend a required online information session prior to applying (see dates and registration below)
 - Wednesday, June 24, 2026 @ 12:00pm ([Register here](#))
 - Tuesday, July 14, 2026 @ 10:00am ([Register here](#))
 - Thursday, August 13, 2026 @ 2:00pm ([Register here](#))

Application deadline: Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 11:59 PM (EDT) via Foundant only (**NOTE:** Access is available only after attending an information session).

Required Materials:

All applications **must** include the following:

- Cover Page & Organization Information
- Narrative
- Board of Directors List
- Fiscal Sponsor Agreement (if applicable)
- Financials (Budget, Actuals, IRS Form 990)
- Funders List

Application Deadline

Full Proposals Due Via
Foundant:
Tuesday, September 1
@11:59 pm EDT

Incomplete or incorrect applications will not be reviewed. For questions or assistance, please contact Tiffany Lau, Deputy Director, at tlau@thelennyzakimfund.org by **Wednesday, August 26, 2026**.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allison E. Picott".

Allison E. Picott
Executive Director

Geographic Catchment Area & Funding Areas

The Lenny Zakim Fund supports organizations based and delivering programs in Eastern Massachusetts. LZF does not fund local chapters of national organizations.

LZF prioritizes organizations that demonstrate the following:

- **Strong grassroots impact**, including:
 - Staff and board that reflect the communities served through geographic proximity and/or lived experience).
 - Programs focused on direct service and/or community organizing.
- **Readiness to engage** in LZF’s capacity-building offerings
- **Limited access** to larger institutional funders.

We strongly encourage applicants to review our list of [current grantees](#) for examples of the types of organizations we support.

Funding Areas:

The Lenny Zakim Fund’s seven funding areas are:

- Child and Youth Development and Education
- Access to Food, Housing, and Economic Opportunity
- Health Promotion and Accessibility for All
- Organizing and Support for Immigrants and Refugees
- Violence Prevention, Criminal Justice Reform and Family Outreach
- LGBTQIA Community Support and Organizing
- Civil and Human Rights Advocacy and Support

Grant Sizes and Types

- **Type:** Unrestricted general operating support
- **Amount:** Up to \$20,000 per grant year (typically \$5,000–\$10,000 for first-year grantees)
- **Term:** Up to 5 years (subject to an annual renewal process and approval)
 - After 5 years, organizations are no longer eligible for grant funding but remain part of the LZF community and continue to access LZF capacity-building offerings.

Not funded:

Events, sponsorships, one-time projects, individuals, scholarships, research/planning grants, private foundations, start-up funds, or capital campaigns.

Challenge Match Grants:

During an organization’s 5-year cycle with LZF, they will be awarded at least one Challenge Match Grant, in addition to or in place of the annual grant. Challenge match recipients are asked to raise up to the amount of the challenge match in [new or increased gifts](#) before LZF will distribute its challenge match grant.

Reporting & Engagement

Reporting:

Grantees are required to submit a year-end report to be eligible for renewal funding the following year. Grant reports are made available on October 1st of every year, and due no later than December 1st of that same year. *Funded organizations will receive a grant award notification letter that will detail the reporting term and corresponding deadlines.*

Engagement Expectations:

- LZF values strong, trust-based relationships and believes impact is greatest when grantee partners are connected and in community with one another.
- Grantee partners are required to demonstrate genuine engagement in our community by:
 - Attending our Annual Awards Ceremony in Boston on Thursday, February 11, 2027
 - Attend our Annual Learning Institute in Boston in June 2027 – Exact Date TBD
- Grantee partners are expected to respond to LZF email or phone outreach. LZF may request to schedule up to three (3) check-ins annually.
- LZF staff and board members are eager to be in community with our grantee partners and encourage them to keep us informed of upcoming public events.

We understand that the work of our grantee partner organizations is very demanding and that emergencies may occasionally arise. Additional events (workshops, socials, and learning sessions) may count toward the requirement if primary events cannot be attended.

We require engagement because community building is a core aspect of our grantmaking practice, and that requires us to show up for one another. All engagement opportunities are designed to be welcoming, accessible spaces that support learning, networking, and relationship-building across the LZF community.

Grant Cycle Timeline

- **Wednesday, June 24, 2026 @ 12:00pm:** 2027 Grant Cycle Information Session #1 ([Register here](#))
- **Wednesday, July 1, 2026:** Online Grant Application Portal Opens
- **Tuesday, July 14, 2026 @ 10:00am:** 2027 Grant Cycle Information Session #2 ([Register here](#))
- **Thursday, August 13, 2026 @ 2:00pm:** 2027 Grant Cycle Information Session #3 ([Register here](#))
- **Tuesday, September 1, 2026:** Online Grant Application Portal Closes; Applications Due
- **Late October 2026:** Notification of Advancement to Site Visits
- **Mid-November through Mid-December 2026:** Site Visits
- **Early February 2027:** Notification of Grant Awards
- **Thursday, February 11, 2027:** Annual Awards Ceremony at WBGH

Contact Information

Victoria Shepeluk, Grants & Programs Coordinator | vshepeluk@thelennyzakimfund.org | 617-406-5945