Strengthening Local Community Cohesion: Request for Proposals

Background
The Walmart Foundation, in conjunction with Walton Arts Center, is issuing this request for proposals from nonprofit organizations serving Northwest Arkansas to support projects that will further community cohesion and inclusion.

Today more than ever, we see a need to further invest in strengthening community cohesion – to work towards a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; and a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued.¹

We recognize that locally based organizations often hold critical knowledge and can often best address local challenges. As we talk to leaders of these organizations, many highlight challenges faced by the complexity of these issues, but also express a sense of renewed hope and optimism. Through this RFP, we hope to support organizations seeking to take the next step in fulfilling their vision and whose work can serve as examples for the country to follow. The Walmart Foundation estimates it will award up to $75,000. In addition, proceeds from “An Evening with the O’Jays” will be distributed by the Walton Arts Center to support selected grantees.

Proposal Focus Areas
Proposals will be considered that address one or more of the following:

1) Building a common vision and sense of belonging for all members of the community
2) Facilitating meaningful face-to-face dialogue and connection to break down barriers amongst different community groups
3) Identifying root cause issues which reduce community cohesion and directly address them in schools, workplaces, public sector and/or neighborhoods

Examples of this work might include:

- A series of community led discussions that include key community leaders looking to develop constructive next steps,
- Training and development of community leaders on how to build inclusive societies and address specific issues in their community,
- Expanding a program that has been successful in creating cooperative approaches between law enforcement and the broader community,
- Working across multiple organizations to build coalitions to best serve all members of the community,
- Creating or expanding inclusion based programming in schools, the workplace and the broader community

While we understand the need for support for regular operating costs, this RFP is meant to support new initiatives or expand already successful efforts looking to increase community cohesion and build a more inclusive society. We encourage organizations to research best practices around inclusion and leverage the expertise of other groups, which can include retaining professional services of experts in the field regardless of where they are located.

**Eligibility**

Before applying please note:

- All applicants must be 501c(3) organizations that are recognized as described in Section 501(a)(1), 509(a)(2), or 509(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (other than a Type III Supporting Organization). Supporting organizations may be asked to provide documentation as to their tax status.
- Only organizations or efforts operating within, and serving, the Northwest Arkansas community of Washington and Benton Counties. The minimum grant amount is $25,000. The maximum amount is $75,000.
- All proposed work must be completed by December 31, 2016. An impact report will be due at the end of the grant period.
- The grant amount requested cannot exceed 20% of an organization's annual operating budget.
- We favor collaboration. Organizations are strongly encouraged to work jointly or as part of coalitions, working together on a programmatic goal. If applying as a coalition, one organization must serve as the lead grantee when submitting an application. Any proposed sub-granting of funds should be clearly outlined in the proposal.

**Proposal Review Process:**

A strong proposal will include, but is not limited to, the following information: 1) a description of the specific need you want to address, 2) review of the research regarding best practices in addressing this need, 3) outline of action your organization will take to meet the need, 4) detailed funding use, 5) impact you expect to be provided by the grant and how that will be measured, 6) sustainability of the program after the grant has been used, 7) description of what this grant will allow that was not previously possible, and 8) why your organization is uniquely positioned to fulfill the outlined need.

Review Criteria will include:

- Proposal’s design and plan to make long-term impact on the region
- Sustainability of program
- Organization’s capacity and history of impact
- Budget efficiency
Applications will be accepted August 13, 2016 through 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) September 3, 2016.

To apply visit www.cybergrants.com/walmart/Local_Initiatives, using the invitation code “NWARFP” (minus quotation marks). Please notate “Community Cohesion” as part of the program title. Only applications submitted online will be accepted. If you have any questions please contact WMFDRFP@walmart.com.

Organizations will be notified of funding decisions no later than September 19, 2016.

The Walmart Foundation and the Walton Arts Center reserve the right to modify this RFP and the program’s guidelines, submission deadlines and notification dates without prior notice.

About the Walmart Foundation
The Walmart Foundation’s mission is to create opportunities so people can live better. The Foundation has a tradition of supporting communities where Walmart operates. In Northwest Arkansas, our home community, we focus special attention on supporting a positive quality of life for all.

About Walton Arts Center
Walton Arts Center brings great performing artists and entertainers from around the world to Northwest Arkansas, connecting and engaging people through inspiring arts experiences. The Arts Center is nationally recognized for its innovative approach to presenting the performing arts - providing access to great arts and entertainment experiences that are integral to the identity of our community.