



INDY SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS

2024 Funders & Priorities

Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts & Humanities • Use of arts for expression, healing, beauty, and/or knowledge.
Arthur Dean Family Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Achievement, Youth Employment, Career Exploration • High-needs, high-potential children and youth who may have limited opportunities to access high-quality summer programming • Daily programming that prioritizes relationship-building with youth
City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth employment programs that serve low and moderate-income youth.
IU Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and wellness • Nutrition
Lilly Endowment, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic achievement • Arts enrichment • Career exploration • Leadership development • Mentorship • Recreation • Youth Employment • Health and wellness
Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs that provide safe and educational opportunities in neighborhoods affected by high crime and poverty. • Literacy programs • Youth employment

The Clowes Fund, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job skill training for youth with limited opportunities to access high-quality summer programming, including programs that primarily serve immigrant populations.
The Indianapolis Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs that serve a high percentage of BIPOC youth • Grassroots and BIPOC-led organizations • Programs that provide all-day care at low/no cost • Youth employment and skill development • Hands-on and exploratory experiences that close opportunity gaps for BIPOC youth • Programs shaped by youth voice and community residents • Through the Romine Fund, TIF also supports programs in the above categories that have a faith component
The Indianapolis Foundation Library Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer programs for youth at named Library Fund organizations (The Indianapolis Public Library, Marion County high schools, IUPUI, UIndy, and Marian University)

What We’re Looking For

Every year the Summer Youth Program Fund (SYPF) receives more than 200 applications to support summer programs in Marion County. While the SYPF funding partners appreciate the time and thought behind the development of each application, there are important qualities that are most frequently evaluated.

Important elements to consider when evaluating proposals and/or program effectiveness:

1. **Credibility.** Has the applicant developed core competencies in providing summer programming? Would it be a reliable grantee organization to both manage resources and execute the project effectively? Does evidence exist that indicates that the organization can achieve its goals?
2. **Capability.** Does the organization have the (qualified) staff and/or requisite skill sets to implement their summer program as proposed?
3. **Feasibility.** Is the program doable? Are adequate resources, training, staff and/or volunteers, and curriculum in place to provide for a positive summer experience?
4. **Importance.** Simply put, does this proposal support children and youth in a meaningful way and do they ultimately benefit from the program? Are children and youth better off as a result of their experiences with the program?

Qualities of Exemplary Proposals

The most effective proposals are succinct and clear, with summer programs being offered that meet genuine needs with realistic expectations and innovative ideas that keep children and youth engaged, safe, and enriched through their summer program. Capable people are doing the work and meaningful experiences are happening for children and youth as a result. The applicant organization will have allocated sufficient time, money, and staff to execute the summer program effectively – with measurable goals that are continuously evaluated. Additional hallmarks of exemplary proposals may include:

- **Energy.** The proposal reflects urgency, passion, and enthusiasm for your summer program.
- **Expertise.** The proposal's authors know what they are talking about and their plans for their summer program are practical, attainable, and meaningful for children & youth. These plans also acknowledge past and/or concurrent experiences and feedback loops that influence current program design.
- **Commitment.** The proposal reflects that summer programming is one of the organization's ongoing priorities and is not just another project. Additionally, the organization itself is investing its own resources in maintaining and advancing its summer programming work.
- **Clarity.** The proposal is clear about what the organization hopes to do, including core service implementation and evaluation.
- **Collaboration.** The organization has forged alliances with other organizations in order to leverage resources and provide comprehensive and varied summer experiences for children and youth.
- **Representation.** The youth being served have been incorporated into the planning process and partnerships augment their summer experience.
- **Benefit.** The organization is less interested in underwriting its own financial needs than in executing the summer program for the benefit of the children and youth served.
- **Comprehensiveness.** The summer program provides variety, continuous engagement, and well-planned days full of activities that engage youth.
- **Evaluation & Effectiveness.** Well-designed, ongoing evaluation applies practical tools and methodologies that capture and assess measurable outcomes for those served. A commitment to evaluation reflects how an applicant values program quality and measuring its impact – striving to continuously improve to achieve meaningful results for children and youth through summer programming.
- **Value.** Cost is a major barrier to summer program participation – research indicates that a high-quality summer program can cost between \$1,109 and \$2,801. The organization has worked at keeping costs affordable and subsidizing seats so that children and youth who may otherwise lack access can participate.

Common Problems

We rarely see perfect proposals. However, we frequently see similar issues and/or problems when reviewing proposals. Often, imperfections in proposals occur even in those that are successful, however, some are more important when assessing proposals than others.

Problems that may be cause for concern include:

1. **Financial information**, typically project budgets, are incomplete or incoherent.
2. **Evaluation plans** are limited, sketchy, or absent.
3. **Staff charged with implementation** lack the skills required to implement the project effectively or the child to staff ratio leads to conditions in which individual engagement becomes rare.
4. **Knowledge of subject matter and/or best practices** is limited and lacking the sophistication required to provide meaningful solutions to the complex problems at hand.
5. **Budget expenditures** are not justified, accurate, or sensible.

In Closing

Few, if any, SYPF proposals incorporate all these characteristics into a singular request. However, as SYPF funders we would like to share these broad thoughts with potential applicants to enhance their chances at receiving robust support to provide for high-quality summer programming.

We do, however, encourage all organizations to consider SYPF as **one source** of funding for your summer program. Given the demand for resources versus available funding, **SYPF rarely can fully fund a program's budget**. Please see the data below indicating demand for resources for summer funding in 2023:

- **Total Applications:** 232
- **Total Amount Requested:** \$5,915,192
- **Total Amount Awarded:** \$3,361,800
- **Average Request to SYPF:** \$25,496
- **Average Award through SYPF:** \$15,008
- **Average Gap in Requested vs. Awarded:** \$10,488

Thank you for your interest in the Summer Youth Program Fund. We are grateful for your service and commitment to the well-being of Marion County's children, youth, and families.