

## Research & Data Fund

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### Overview

*The Economic Mobility & opportunity (EMO) Fund announces a \$2.3 million opportunity for organizations focused on research and data in support of advancing economic mobility and opportunity. Led by a 6-person advisory committee, this funding opportunity will pilot a participatory grantmaking process that centers diverse voices and lived experience within the research and data strategy of the economic mobility and opportunity field. Applicants can apply to one of the two funding opportunities: sustainability and capacity building and innovation and imagination. For complete program guidelines and application instructions, see additional information below.*

### About The Opportunity

This Research & Data funding (R&D Fund) opportunity seeks to support organizations and projects via general operating support that generate and contribute knowledge, such as research, data, or analysis, to the field of economic mobility and opportunity. Economic Mobility is the ability for individuals and families to improve their economic status over time, while economic opportunity refers to the conditions available for families and individuals to reach their economic goals. While often measured by economic success (e.g., income, assets, wealth) dignity and belonging and power and autonomy are [key dimensions](#) of economic mobility and opportunity. Systemic barriers, structural racism, and lack of supports like living wage jobs and high-quality education create barriers to economic mobility and opportunity.

The purpose of the R&D Fund is to support organizations across two funding opportunities: sustainability and capacity building and innovation and imagination.

### Sustainability and Capacity Building

Designed to strengthen the capacity, infrastructure, sustainability of organizations advancing research and data projects that deepen and sustain impact on economic mobility and opportunity. This opportunity supports the good work that is already underway, helping organizations to build the stability, systems, and resources needed to maintain momentum and continue driving meaningful change.

### Innovation and Imagination

Bold, forward-thinking projects that test, refine, or scale ideas to advance and reimagine economic mobility and opportunity. This opportunity is for research and data efforts that are novel or unconventional and grounded in our research principles. We are looking for work that pushes beyond traditional metrics and methods, sparks imagination and inspires new possibilities, and generates knowledge or data that can expand economic mobility and opportunity.

We strongly encourage submissions from underrepresented communities, including communities of color, Indigenous and Tribal communities, leaders with lived experience, and organizations rooted in the American South.



### **Participatory Approach**

The grant initiative takes a participatory grantmaking approach, in which an external Advisory Committee (AC) will review and make recommendations on which organizations receive funding and the amounts of each grant. This committee is comprised of individuals who bring both professional expertise and direct lived insight into the barriers and opportunities shaping the lives of our target communities.

### **Principles We Care About**

- An intersectional approach that reflects the lived experience of individuals across multiple identities and systems.
- Honor Distinct Worldviews in Research and Evaluation. Indigenous and Western approaches to research are rooted in fundamentally different worldviews—one relational and cyclical, the other linear and human-centered. Valuing both requires acknowledging diverse ways of knowing, being, and defining expertise, while also reflecting on one's positionality and committing to move at the speed of trust in partnership with communities.
- Demonstrated partnership with communities, especially those who are and have been historically marginalized.
- Expansive understanding of economic mobility- beyond financial outcomes - and includes the essential conditions of safety, dignity, belonging, agency, etc.
- Innovative uses of qualitative data (e.g., ethnography, storytelling & oral history, and community designed research) in partnership with communities to tell a richer and more holistic story.

### **About NEO Philanthropy**

NEO Philanthropy is a trusted bridge between funders and movement-building organizations in the U.S. As a 501(c)(3) public charity and philanthropic intermediary with a 40-year track record of providing critical infrastructure to a wide range of progressive social justice movements, NEO Philanthropy continues to deliver tailor-made support and innovative solutions in service of equity and justice.

### **About the EMO Fund**

The Economic Mobility & Opportunity (EMO) Fund is working to expand grant reach and engagement across the economic mobility field by piloting and learning from new grantmaking strategies and governance processes that focus on increasing the upward mobility for people in the U.S. whose annual incomes are below the federal poverty line.

The EMO Fund has three grantmaking programs with the following goals:

- Make and oversee smaller strategy-aligned grants that increase reach and accessibility to historically underrepresented networks and are a better fit for intermediary structures that can lessen burden on smaller organizations.
- Support the economic mobility and opportunity ecosystem by providing more flexible support to organizations that are influential and critical to the success of the economic mobility field.
- Pilot a participatory grantmaking process to bring in more diverse voices and lived experience within the research and data strategy of the economic mobility and opportunity field.



**Please Note:** This funding opportunity is part of the final round of support from the EMO Fund, as we are in the process of spending down and sunseting the fund. We encourage all interested applicants to apply, as future opportunities will not be available.

## Opportunity Details

### Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- **Nonprofit Status:**  
Be a U.S. based public charity with a valid tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or have a fiscal sponsor with such status at the time of application. Organizations must be in compliance with 501(c)(3) requirements.
- **Organizational Budget:**  
Have an annual operating budget of less than \$2 million.
- **Mission Alignment:**  
Conduct work that addresses critical gaps in knowledge and data infrastructure related to economic mobility and opportunity.
- **Location:**  
Organization must be located in and conducting work within the 50 U.S. States and/or District of Columbia.

### Key Dates and Deadlines

- Step 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) Opens: October 6, 2025
- LOI Deadline: October 31, 2025, at 11:59 pm EST
- Step 2: Declinations and Notification of Request for Proposals (RFP): December 2025
- RFP Deadline: January 2026
- Step 3: RFP Declinations and Notifications of Awards: March – April 2026
- Grant Start Date: April – May 2026

**Important: Be advised applications submitted after the due date will not be reviewed. Step 2 and 3 dates are subject to change.**

### Award Details

Awards will be structured as general operating support and will be made to organizations, not individuals.

Awards will range from \$100,000 - \$300,000. Grant duration will be for one year with possibility of no cost extension. This will be a one-time award, and no additional funding will be available.

The number of proposals recommended for funding will be determined at the discretion of the Advisory Committee, based on their evaluation of project merit, alignment with priorities, and available resources.

**Application Notification**

- All applicants will be notified by email.
- Applicants may be asked for additional clarification during the review period.

**Apply**

*Sustainability & Capacity Building*

<https://neophilanthropy.tfaforms.net/f/SUSTAIN>

*Innovation & Imagination*

<https://neophilanthropy.tfaforms.net/f/INNOVATE>

**Office Hours**

An optional informational office hour will be held on October 10, 2025 from 11:00 - noon EST.

<https://neophilanthropy-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/iAwyjyx0QFGHsvIxTFR2HA>

**Contact**

For questions, please contact [emigrants@neophilanthropy.org](mailto:emigrants@neophilanthropy.org)