

# CATALYST FUND

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES

[The McNulty Prize Catalyst Fund](#), developed and managed by the McNulty Foundation in partnership with the Aspen Institute, recognizes **early stage ventures** with **significant momentum**. At a **critical juncture** on their path to creating meaningful change, all Catalyst Fund candidates should exhibit **high potential** to deepen or widen their impact, and have critical need for support.

### ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for the Catalyst Fund:

- You must be a Fellow of the Aspen Global Leadership Network, with a venture (or Action Pledge) influenced by your Fellowship experience in some way
- Your venture (or Action Pledge) must be operational and poised to continue for the foreseeable future
- You must hold a leadership role, where you have taken decisive action to lead against a societal challenge
- Organizations must prioritize social impact, whether they are nonprofit, for-profit, or hybrid models, and be able to receive grants

### APPLICATION FORM

If there is alignment with your venture, candidates will be asked to complete the following application.

#### 1. Narrative Statement

##### **A. Problem & Approach (300 words maximum)**

- What need or problem does your venture seek to address? What community or systems does this apply to?
- What is your venture's mission and why did it begin?
- What distinguishes your approach from others?

##### **B. Impact (250 words maximum)**

- Describe the impact of your venture on individuals and/or the community, including any key early metrics you track. How do you know the venture is embraced by those it serves?
- How are you poised to grow or deepen your impact, and how will you know when you are successful?

##### **C. Critical Juncture (200 words maximum)**—We want to understand the narrative and trajectory of your venture's journey, and what critical juncture your venture is at now and looking to the future.

- What milestones have you achieved in the last year, and what milestones do you anticipate in the next year?
- Critical need is a key criterion for the Catalyst Fund—how would funding and/or recognition make a difference for your venture at this specific stage in its development?
- How is the venture funded now, and how do you envision it will be sustained? What is your vision for the future?

#### 2. Success to Significance (150 words maximum)—The Catalyst Fund, like the McNulty Prize, celebrates the boldness and impact of AGLN Fellows using their expertise and platforms to address the world's toughest challenges.

- What is your title and role in the venture's achievements? How are you uniquely positioned to address this issue?
- In what way is the venture an outcome of your fellowship experience?

#### 3. [Optional] Additional Materials

##### **A. Supporting Documents.** You are invited but not required to share existing materials demonstrating your record of success.

Please upload as a single .doc or .pdf file, that is up to around 5 pages letter-sized (8.5 x 11 inches).

- Financial statements, annual reports or other reports to supporters or investors
- Press coverage and other recognition, photos or pamphlets
- Existing letters or testimonials in support of your venture
- Your CV

##### **B. Short Video.** Encouraged, not required—Youtube or Vimeo links accepted

- If you have one, please share an **existing** video that shows and tells about your venture.
- We are not looking for professional filmmaking but for a visual way to capture the power of the work.

The Catalyst Fund is administered in partnership with the Aspen Institute. If you are interested in being considered, please reach out to your Fellowship Director or contact us at [info@mcnultyfound.org](mailto:info@mcnultyfound.org)

**McNULTY  
FOUNDATION**

# Is your venture a better fit for the Catalyst Fund or the McNulty Prize?

We know that no two organizations are alike; however, we do recognize certain patterns among successful candidates. Below is a “cheat sheet” to help you decide if your venture has stronger alignment with the [McNulty Prize](#) or the [Catalyst Fund](#) criteria. These are not requirements, nor hard and fast rules, but rather tips to help you determine the best fit.

ALL APPLICANTS		
Leadership	Courageous, adaptive, entrepreneurial spirit, leads with values, integrity, and a culture of learning. We especially value the experience of leaders who have been directly impacted by the problems they are trying to solve, or are connected in some way to the communities they serve.	
Fellowship	Robust and active engagement with the Fellowship	
	<b>CATALYST FUND APPLICANTS</b>	<b>McNULTY PRIZE APPLICANTS</b>
Financial Need	Has <b>critical need</b>	Financial need is not a criterion for the Prize
Organizational Stage	Beyond piloting, and focused on <b>implementing, refining, strengthening</b> the model, and building traction from the community being served.  On average, has been in operation for 2-4 years.	Mid-stage ventures with a proven and effective model for change; may be focused on <b>scaling, institutionalizing, and exploring systems change.</b>  On average, in operation for 4 or more years.

## IMPACT

Growth, Reach & Depth	Anticipating key growth milestones, with high potential to deepen or widen their impact. <b>Expanding or deepening</b> the model to address unmet needs.  On average, may reach one or two markets.	Proven ability to <b>replicate or significantly deepen</b> existing impact.  On average, it reaches multiple markets.
Outcomes & Measurement	<b>Early evidence of impact is sensed</b> , exhibited, and captured. In general, can articulate what is being delivered, and the initial impact on individuals. Significant early momentum.	<b>Delivers consistent results</b> with regular evaluation. In general, can share evidence and measured results of how lives or communities are changed.

## LASTING CHANGE

Approach	Model considers root causes of the problem and agency of communities served.  <b>Tested</b> programs and strategies using an entrepreneurial and creative approach.	Addresses root causes of the problem and actively contributes to long-term solutions with partners.  <b>Well-designed and implemented</b> programs using a distinct approach, withstanding strains of growth.
Influence	In general, noted among peers as ‘one to watch’.	In general, the model is moving the needle on a challenging issue and is trusted by and influencing others in its sector.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Financial Health and Planning	Developed strategies to expand funding sources.  In general, relies on grants and seed funding.	General financial health with a more mature model and diverse funding sources.  In general, supported by grants, earned revenue sources, and other partnerships.
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