Call for Proposals

Q1: **Is this opportunity focused on design ideas for the built environment only, or does it include other problem-solving approaches, such as community education, workforce development, or organizing as ways to overcome systemic challenges?**

A1: The focus of the Sasaki Design Grants program is using the power of design for communities to create more vibrant places, buildings, landscapes, and public realms. "Design" to us is a broad idea. At its core, it's a creative process that is about imagining new ideas. Design usually results in a tangible, physical outcome in a community (for example, a pilot project for a new stormwater paver system to improve ADA accessibility during downpours). Design can also lead to, for example, a community program, creative communications campaign, or other non-physical products. Projects should focus on approaches that shape and influence the built environment with attention to social equity.

Q2: **Given that there are four grants under consideration and four categories, will one for each topic area be awarded?**

A2: There will not necessarily be one grant in each category. All proposals will be evaluated based on the established criteria, and the strongest proposals will be selected, possibly resulting in more than one project in the same focus area.

Q3: **If the focus of our project does not fall within the four topic areas, will it still be considered?**

A3: Yes. While we are encouraging proposals in the four topic areas, if you have a project that uses design to address equity and helps strengthen and empower communities, we will review it.

Q4: **Does your recent funding announcement for resilience include Chelsea and Lynn?**

A4: The 2019 Call for Proposals is seeking projects that engage communities in the Gateway Cities, Metro West, and Greater Boston. All Gateway Cities are eligible. The Gateway Cities include: Attleboro, Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Peabody, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester.

Note the Incubator at Sasaki is in Watertown, MA, and the grant program includes a requirement for winning teams to collectively spend a minimum of 10 hours per week in the Incubator as part of the cohort of research teams. This time enables teams to work together and benefit from design guidance from Sasaki professionals.

Q5: **What does it mean to have an implementable or action-oriented proposal?**

A5: The intent of this criteria is to propose a project or strategy that will address the needs of the community and benefit from the project team's time in the Incubator. The proposed project should be designed and implemented within the 9-month time period. The action-oriented proposal should result in a project or program that will serve the community.

Q6: **Are there any assumptions that the proposed projects will be developed from existing clients or should projects be new?**

A6: We are open to both existing projects and new projects that are community focused. That may include a project that has already started; however, the work outlined in the proposal must be completed during the residency in the Incubator (September 2019–June 2020).

Q7: **What is the relative focus of research/technology versus community activity?**

A7: We've tried not to be too prescriptive here; it is up to you to determine that balance. The ultimate goal is for these projects to improve communities, and this can be achieved in a variety of ways including both research/ technology as well as community activity. We have created a wide spectrum of possibilities, so that you may define your creative interest.

Q8: **In the application should you foreground the research problem? Or just the project?**

A8: Yes, the project should clearly describe the challenges you are addressing and your process/methodology for achieving your desired outcomes.

Q9: **Is it okay if the project is part of a larger ongoing process?**

A9: Yes! The proposal can be part of a larger project as long as the work articulated in the proposal can be completed during the 9-month Incubator residency period. We do expect that work funded by the grant will have independent and measurable outcomes. Applications should explain how the grant will directly support meaningful outcomes in a community during the 9-month timeframe that would not be possible otherwise.

Q10: **Did Watertown get involved at all with the idea of the Incubator?**

A10: Sasaki has employees who live in Watertown and they are involved in the process. In addition, the Foundation is actively engaged with the planning department in Watertown as well as the school department. The Watertown School Department has brought high school students to the Incubator for a tour and we are doing joint programming.

Q11: **How have you broadcast this to the world? I learned about this through the BSA.**

A11: The Foundation has used a variety of outreach vehicles, including our Sasaki Foundation website, a mailing list database that includes over 2,000 people, the networks of our Sasaki Foundation Advisory Council, the Sasaki Foundation's blog, and social media channels. In addition, the Foundation has developed over 60 program partners in the last year and is encouraging them to promote the work of the Foundation.

Program Guidelines

Q12: **My co-teacher and I are wondering if we can apply for this grant for our studio class, but are not sure if it will fit the requirements. Are studios eligible?**

A12: The grants will be awarded to small teams of 2 to 4 people and are not intended for studios in design schools.

Q13: **If we are forming a team to apply for the Sasaki Foundation Design Grants, is it required that we have worked together before?**

A13: Any proven success working together as a team adds strength to your application; however, it is not a requirement.

Q14: **Can different people on the team be in the Incubator at different times?**

A14: Yes. Depending on team size, one or two members of the team should expect to be in the Incubator a minimum of 10 hours a week collectively. It is fine for different team members to be in the space working on the project on different days.

Q15: **On the team front, can teams have a SWAT team stationed at the Incubator, with a broader team elsewhere?**

A15: Yes, though we want to have a consistent group of team members in the Incubator to help foster relationships and promote cross-pollination of ideas. The Incubator may be utilized by extended teams with prior approval from Alexandra Lee, Executive Director of the Sasaki Foundation. As space may be limited, we would like to avoid larger groups coming in without prior authorization.

Q16: **Will you fund projects or research by individuals?**

A16: The Call for Proposals requires teams of 2 to 4 people to apply for a grant as a team. The grant is not intended for individuals. The winning teams will form a cohort, supporting broader exchange of ideas across teams. In addition, teams will have opportunities to share ideas and collaborate with design professionals at Sasaki.

Q17: **Can a project be proposed that also leverages other funding sources?**

A17: Yes. Projects that have other funding sources can be proposed, but keep in mind the requirement of your team's presence in our Incubator is important. Sasaki is a 290-person firm with resources you can tap into, and internal Sasaki research teams are working on the same topics in the Incubator, and we are seeking an exchange of ideas between teams.

Q18: **What are the operating hours of the Incubator?**

A18: The Incubator is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and the required 10+ hours per week in the Incubator should be scheduled for business hours. Once the winning teams complete orientation, additional hours will be available.

Q19: **Is the Incubator always available to the project teams during the business hours?**

A19: The teams are always welcome in the space, and from time to time there will be programs in the Incubator that teams may attend. These include a monthly cohort Lunch and Learn (required), the Sasaki Foundation Speaker Series, and several forums throughout the residency period. Attendance at these programs may be counted toward the time requirement.

Q20: **What does the relationship with the firm look like? Is it direct "I need help with this" or is it rubbing shoulders in the kitchen?**

A20: The firm will provide consulting on ideas where the teams are seeking guidance. The firm is not providing pro bono design services; rather, it is offering to stimulate conversation and help generate ideas around specific topics.

Q21: **Are there other creative uses of the space that are possible, such as rehearsals or performances?**

A21: Anything is possible! The Incubator is a coworking space and most teams will be heads down. It is essentially one large shared space. Be respectful. After hours, the Incubator can be used for events within reason, and we are working to make it a fun and creative space.

Application Details

Q22: **How do we find out about the grant funding opportunities of the Sasaki Foundation? What is the application process and the relevant criteria?**

A22. All of the criteria for the Sasaki Foundation Design Grants program can be found at www.sasakifoundation.org on the Call for Proposals page. This page includes all of the evaluation criteria, the topic areas for proposals, the deliverables, the schedule, and the application form.

Q23:   **What is the format of the application?**

A23:   If you go to the Call for Proposals page at www.sasakifoundation.org, you can scroll to the very bottom and find the online application form. The application can be saved along the way, allowing you to progress through your application at your convenience. You will also have the option to download a PDF of the application if you prefer to mail in a hard copy. All applications must be received by noon on May 10, 2019.

Q24:   **Is the $15K restricted?**

A24:   The $15,000 is unrestricted; however, a detailed budget is required as part of the application and grantees will be required to provide financial progress reports. We will work with winning teams to determine the most efficient way to manage the funds disbursement process.

Q25:   **Is it ok to submit my proposal before the May 10 noon deadline?**

A25:   Yes, proposals may be submitted any time before noon on May 10.