

*Shared Voices: Charting a Course for Community Action*

## **01 INTRODUCTION**

### **Sasaki Foundation**

We leverage design to tackle global challenges—especially those that adversely affect historically underrepresented communities.

### **Call for Proposals**

If you have ideas on how to foster community building and wellbeing or how to tackle housing or transit inequities, displacement of residents, or climate adaptation, apply today for one of our design grants.

**The deadline to apply is May 3, 2023, at noon.**

See our most recent Design Grants winners here: <https://www.sasakifoundation.org/2022-design-grants-winners/>

## **02 WE NEED YOU**

**Are you a designer? Storyteller? Artist? Community Leader? Nonprofit? Activist? Organizer? Data Scientist?**

## **03 GRANTS**

### **Grants**

We will award \$15,000 Action Grants, \$7,500 Discovery Grants, and \$2,500 Exploration Grants. Grants include engagement with the Sasaki Foundation and access to design expertise from Sasaki professionals.

### **We Need You**

No matter who you are, we need your skills. We are looking for interdisciplinary, creative approaches to test new design concepts that address complex challenges in our communities.

*“What usually aids in the intelligent flowering of the design is the success of the collaborative effort of all.”  
—Hideo Sasaki, 1953*

## **04 THEME AND FOCUS AREAS**

### **The Call for Proposals—Shared Voices: Charting a Course for Community Action**

The challenges in addressing environmental resilience, displacement, affordable housing, access to mobility choices, meaningful public engagement, and other social equity considerations in planning and design are so broad and complex, they require a shared approach to facilitate all the necessary conversations and deliver actionable solutions. Most of these challenges faced by Boston communities are not limited to local neighborhoods—their effects are felt and shared across the Commonwealth and beyond. Multiple futures are at stake, and we can make a difference by acting now.

The Sasaki Foundation recognizes the need for interdisciplinary approaches, diverse community voices, and regional cooperation as key drivers to find shared solutions and create shared impact.

## **1: Creative Community Building**

We are seeking themes of collective memory and community storytelling, investment in historic neighborhood fabric, and local business development. Designing and planning for our communities can extend beyond the concept of placemaking to include the idea of placekeeping—the preservation of local identity through strengthening social bonds, celebrating neighborhood history, and developing strategies for enhancing neighborhood retail, food, and health services.

- How do we preserve cultural identity while reinvigorating the social and economic wellbeing of a given community?
- What vision do you have for how storytelling can help facilitate racial reconciliation for neighborhoods that have been damaged by past planning and design decisions?
- How can we build local capacity for economic development and promote local entrepreneurship?
- How can we better leverage technology to give power over design to marginalized voices and what opportunities do we have to create tools for better and more equitable decision making?

## **2: New Models for Housing**

We are seeking strategies to improve housing affordability, promote a more diverse housing stock, and address gentrification and displacement. Housing shortages in Massachusetts cities require innovative approaches to planning and design. Displacement of families, caused by economic and environmental forces, is exacerbated by the limited supply of affordable, family-oriented housing units.

- What is your innovative idea to provide better access to affordable housing and improve public health for more people?
- How are you strengthening existing networks in your community, as displacement increases?
- What is your radical idea for how cities can respond to increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness?

## **3: Innovation in Transit and Access to Mobility Choices**

We are seeking design strategies and solutions for existing challenges to reliable transit, strengthening public-private partnerships in expanding transportation choices and leveraging technology to provide greater access to transportation options by eliminating barriers. In Massachusetts, local mobility networks and regional systems have tremendous potential to improve accessibility and safety for users. Methods for leveraging private-sector innovation to increase transportation access for all communities present a powerful opportunity.

- What actions can improve your community's mobility choices and transportation access, particularly in communities of color and low-income communities?
- How could better access to technology improve mobility for your community?
- What are your community-led ideas for how to progress accessibility and disability rights in the connectivity networks of your city?

## **4: Innovation in Health and Wellbeing**

We are seeking efforts to enhance community health through the built environment. Equitable access to outdoor spaces, creative reuse of the public realm, and innovative and inclusive programming are integral to our collective community health. Codesigning innovative solutions to challenges within our built environment can begin to positively affect our physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing in cities across Massachusetts.

- How can your community expand access to open space and the public realm to allow for greater health and wellness?
- How might we positively impact access to health and wellness opportunities?
- What are your innovative solutions to cocreating community spaces that positively affect our physical, emotional, and mental health?

## **5: Proactive Approaches to Climate Adaptation**

We are seeking responses that address the impacts of climate change, including extreme heat, stormwater and flash flooding, and coastal and river flooding. Challenges associated with climate change, especially related to the urban heat island effect and flooding, disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities.

- What is your vision for a collaborative approach to mitigate the impacts of climate change?
- Are you doing something to increase climate resilience in your community that can scale to greater impact?
- What are your ideas for how to empower communities to advocate for environmental justice?
- What are your ideas for how to provide a just transition as communities implement adaptation measures to respond to extreme weather?

## 05 TYPES OF PROJECTS

### TYPES OF PROJECTS THE FOUNDATION WILL FUND

- product prototyping
- new technologies
- ecological approaches to climate change
- community-based installations

## 06 EVALUATION CRITERIA

### 1. Design

We seek proposals that utilize interdisciplinary thinking to challenge the status quo. We support design ideas that actively engage and contribute to communities. Winning teams will have actionable ideas. Proposals will be judged on both creativity and feasibility, and should address resilience and equity through the lens of one of the topics discussed in Section 04.

### 2. Equity

We seek proposals that benefit historically underrepresented communities through strategies aimed at eliminating systemic barriers. Winning teams will show how their projects will meet the unique needs of a community through a high level of collaboration with community representatives.

### 3. Inclusion

We value diverse perspectives and seek to find inclusive processes that make space for dialogue and difference. We especially encourage proposals from women; transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming individuals; members of racial or ethnic minorities; and individuals with physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

### 4. Innovation

We seek proposals that foster innovation, creativity, and interdisciplinary approaches to design. Special attention will be given to teams that propose forward-thinking, rather than reactive, concepts and ideas.

### 5. Impact

We seek proposals that can produce positive impacts within the communities they serve. Winning projects will exhibit scalability or replicability across other communities with similar characteristics.

### Jury

Our jurors will be representatives from design, transit, housing, and environmental organizations.

- Elaine Limmer, Jury Chair | City and County of Denver, CO & Sasaki Foundation
- Timothy Gale | Sasaki & Sasaki Foundation
- Wendell Joseph | Toole Design Group
- Penn Loh | Tufts University
- Lily Song | Northeastern University
- Dominick Tribone | Bluebikes & Lyft

## 07 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

### Access to Sasaki Designers

During the 10-month grant period, winning teams will have dedicated time to connect with Sasaki design professionals including architects, civil engineers, graphic designers, interior designers, landscape architects, planners, urban designers, and data analytics and visualization experts. Winning teams may also benefit from Sasaki's Fabrication Studio and design software.

## Community Focus

Equity is one of the cornerstones of the Sasaki Foundation's research, and all winning proposals must have a community focus located in Greater Boston, the Gateway Cities, or Metro West. A community advisor, such as a local leader, non-profit professional, designer, artist, business leader, or other individual from the project's focus community, must be an active member of the team.

## Team Approach

Applicants must be teams of two to four individuals. One of these individuals must be from the project's focus community. Teams may consist of individuals or representatives of nonprofits, civic, and community organizations coming together for the purpose of this proposal. We encourage teams to be multidisciplinary in their composition and thinking.

## Storytelling

We expect teams to create a compelling narrative describing how their design ideas or projects meet the specific needs of their community. Part of this narrative will include a plan for outreach and engagement for their focus community.

## Deliverables

Applicants will submit a plan of work, including projected use of funds and total projected budget. Winning teams will connect regularly with the Sasaki Foundation and Sasaki designers to support team needs. All teams will complete an executive summary, and Discovery and Action Grants will complete a final report, for inclusion in the annual Sasaki Foundation Design Grants Research publication (see: <https://www.sasakifoundation.org/2020-design-grants-research/>). Discovery and Action Grants also will include a final presentation.

## Open Source

To ensure the dissemination of the strategies generated through this effort, teams will commit to their project concepts and ideas being open source. Winning teams will focus on the development of design-thinking methods and digital tools that can help stimulate communities' abilities to express themselves and their needs, with an emphasis on collaboration and co-production.

## What to Expect

Teams will benefit from engagement with Sasaki's design professionals and technology, access to the Sasaki Foundation's network, and collaboration with the Design Grants cohort. During the grant period, the cohort will have regular access to Sasaki collaborators for project guidance.

*"G{Code} is honored to be a part of the inaugural Design Grants cohort and its mission to include equity and inclusion in planning and design. It takes a village to do this work that we hope will be impactful and life-changing."*

*– Bridgette Wallace, G{Code} House, 2018-2019 Design Grants cohort team*

Teams will participate in the following:

- Dedicated time with Sasaki designers that will help shape the projects
- Monthly cohort meetings attended by Sasaki designers (optional for Exploration Grants)

Teams will deliver the following:

- Project work plan and projected budget
  - Exploration Grants work plan should include research done to explore feasibility and interest in the focus community along with a plan for future programming.
  - Discovery and Action Grants work plans should include specific actionable deliverables, including but not limited to research, community engagement, design creation, pilot testing, and installations.
- Mid-grant presentation (optional for Exploration Grants)
- Executive summary of project outcomes, along with photographic documentation and visuals
- Final presentation (optional for Exploration Grants)
- Final report (Discovery and Action Grants only)

*Executive summaries and final reports will be available as open source on the Sasaki Foundation website and in the annual research publication (see: <https://www.sasakifoundation.org/2020-design-grants-research/>).*

## 08 TIMELINE

<b>February</b>	Call for Proposals issued – rolling submissions
<b>March 1</b>	Virtual office hours
<b>March 9</b>	Open House for prospective applicants conducted in person
<b>March 15</b>	Virtual office hours
<b>April 5</b>	Virtual office hours
<b>April 6</b>	Design Grants mixer for prospective applicants hosted in person
<b>April 19</b>	Virtual office hours
<b>May 3</b>	Deadline to submit applications (noon)
<b>May 18</b>	Finalists announced
<b>June 1</b>	Pitch Night for finalists, open to the public
<b>June 21</b>	Grant winners notified and announced
<b>September 2023 – June 2024</b>	Grant period

## 09 QUESTIONS

### Questions

An overview video is available, outlining the program and application requirements. Watch here: <https://youtu.be/e6J6u6uKWVM>

Questions can be submitted by email here: [info@sasakifoundation.org](mailto:info@sasakifoundation.org)

Frequently Asked Questions can be downloaded here: [https://www.sasakifoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023\\_Call-for-Proposals\\_FAQs.pdf](https://www.sasakifoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023_Call-for-Proposals_FAQs.pdf)

### Informational Events & Pitch Night

Virtual office hours for prospective applicants will take place at 1 p.m. on March 1 and 15 and April 5 and 19. The in-person Open House for prospective applicants will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 9. A Design Grants mixer to foster connections between prospective applicants seeking team members will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 6.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/sasaki-foundation-18233887966>

Pitch Night will be conducted on Thursday, June 1, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/547871156377>

## 10 APPLY

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7204351/2023-Call-for-Proposals-Application>