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# Civics in the City

## Request for Proposals

### Winter 2025

The *Civics in the City* initiative supports efforts to prepare students to become informed and committed participants in the civic life of New York City. Grants of varying amounts, ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000 over a 24-36 month period, will be made to each funded project participating in this initiative. The size of the grant will be based on the scope of the project. We expect this grant program will remain open for approximately three to five years. Concept papers for the initiative are due **August 1, 2025**.

#### **Goals**

The goals of this initiative are to improve the civic knowledge of New York's undergraduate students and prepare them for lives of communal and civic commitment. It is our hope that students who receive Teagle-funded civic education will graduate from college with the desire and capacity to sustain and improve our shared city.

The mission of the Teagle Foundation is “to support and strengthen liberal arts education, which we see as fundamental to meaningful work, effective citizenship, and a fulfilling life.” Since 2005, the Foundation has made an explicit commitment to advance this mission in New York City. *Civics in the City* is a continuation of this commitment, informed by the Foundation’s experience in civic education, most recently advanced through a five-year national funding program called *Education for American Civic Life*.

The Foundation is particularly invested in the form of civic education that teaches an understanding of American history and democratic principles while providing opportunities to practice public service, stewardship, and problem solving. Through *Civics in the City*, the Foundation will fund institutions of higher education in New York City that offer this form of civic education in order to build an ethos of civic commitment and public service in their institutions and among the students they serve. The Foundation is focused on connecting civic knowledge learned in the classroom to opportunities for students who aspire to serve the

people of New York by working through government or non-governmental organizations on the city's infrastructure and on solutions to vexing problems.

### **Criteria for Project Proposals**

The Teagle Foundation welcomes the participation of a diverse array of institutions—community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive and research universities—in this initiative. Grants of varying amounts ranging from \$100,000-\$300,000 over a 24-36 month period will be made to each funded project participating in this initiative. Requests from single institutions as well as multiple institutions partnering together will be considered. The size of the grant will be based on the scope of the project. Planning grants in the range of \$10,000-\$25,000 over 6-12 months will also be considered.

Through this initiative, the Foundation seeks ambitious projects that close gaps in students' civic knowledge and prepare them for the demands of civic participation and leadership in New York City. Successful proposals will promote primary source learning on topics such as the formation of the American republic, the history of New York City, foundational documents in American democracy, and the political history of the city and the citizen. Civic education is strongest when it is not treated as a subject in isolation but becomes part of the student's experience of the place in which they live. For this reason, many successful proposals move students from the classroom to the neighborhood and the city, offering opportunities where students can help care for New Yorkers, steward New York's land and infrastructure, or work on alleviating some of the city's most vexing challenges.

Successful proposals advance two or more of the following four educational goals:

1. Strengthen preparation for public service in New York City
2. Introduce students to civic knowledge through the reading of major texts in history, literature, and political philosophy
3. Focus attention on local history
4. Design opportunities for students to observe and participate in responsible governance by serving local residents, caring for local infrastructure, or working on other pressing problems

Regardless of curricular approach, all successful proposals are expected to address the following:

- **Sustainability**

Major curricular redesign requires alignment with institutional priorities and strategic plans, attention to academic governance procedures, and reallocation of institutional resources. The factors that contribute to longer-term

sustainability may vary campus to campus, but they are as important as the actual implementation of curricular redesign. For example, proposed curricula must be designed in such a way that they will meet internal standards for academic review and can be delivered by the prevailing configuration of tenure-track faculty. Grants are made in the expectation that once the formal grant period ends, should the piloted programs be successful, the costs associated with supporting those efforts will be absorbed by the participating institutions.

- **Assessment**

Successful proposals will include clearly articulated goals and appropriate means of assessment. They will seek to evaluate effects of curricular redesign both on student learning and faculty practices, and to use what they learn to inform ongoing improvement. There may be a follow-up study three to five years after the conclusion of the grant period in order to assess the longer-term outcomes of the funded project.

- **Dissemination**

Active dissemination efforts will be important in order to spread the effects of the practices conducted and knowledge gained by grantees to interested and influential audiences. Project leaders and participants will be expected to join periodic grantee convenings and other professional development workshops sponsored under the initiative to share lessons learned with their peers and to support each other in this work.

### **Submission Process**

Requests for grant support will be considered following a two-stage application process. First, we ask that prospective grantees share brief concept papers, whether they are interested in planning or implementation support. After review of the concept papers, a limited number of applicants will then be invited to submit full proposals.

The concept paper should provide a sketch of the project, with an eye toward meeting the criteria discussed above for faculty-led curricular reform and longer-term sustainability. The concept paper should be 3-5 pages in length. Please begin the concept paper with a 200-300 word abstract that includes project goals and how the project is aligned with the RFP's call. Please indicate the type of grant (planning or implementation) that is of interest and the requested award amount. There is no need to include a budget at the concept paper stage.

### **Timeline**

Concept papers for planning and implementation awards must be submitted by **August 1, 2025** to [proposals@teagle.org](mailto:proposals@teagle.org). Applicants will receive status notifications by November 2025. Applicants who are invited to submit proposals

will be expected to finalize their applications by early January 2026. Work supported by the grant may begin as early as March 2026.

**Contact Information**

Please contact Tamara Mann Tweel, senior program director for civic initiatives at the Teagle Foundation, at [ttweel@teagle.org](mailto:ttweel@teagle.org) with questions about the *Civics in the City* initiative.