





BUSH
FOUNDATION



Creative Community Solutions

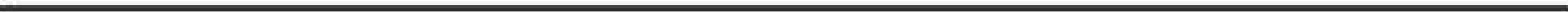
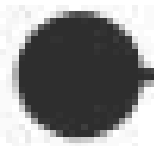


Creative Community Solutions

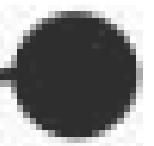
**Program Philosophy: Build the
problem-solving capacity of
North Dakota and the Native
Nations sharing geography.**

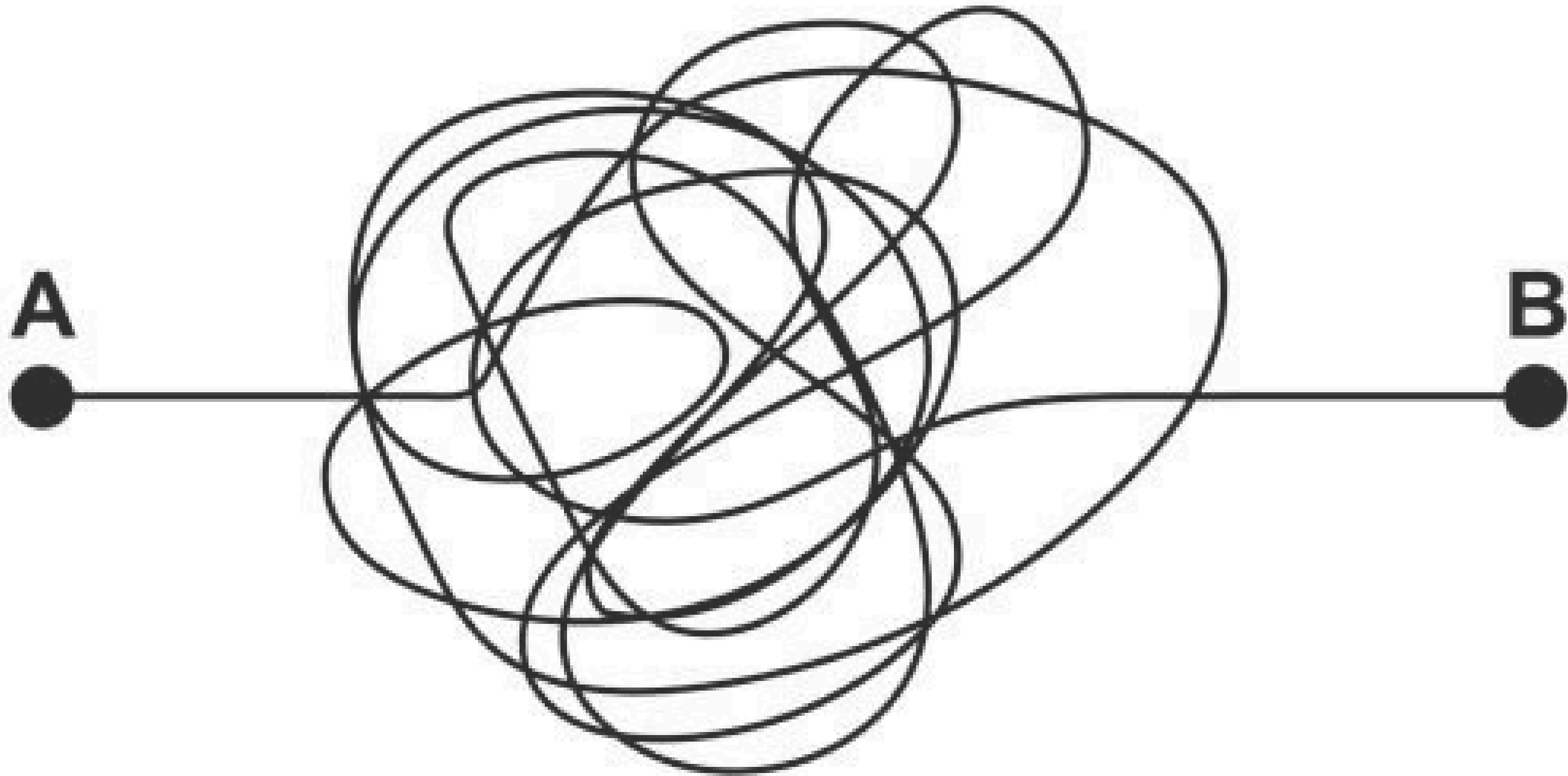
- Developing
- Testing
- Spreading

A



B





Creative Community Solutions

Process

- Introductory Call
- Proposal Submission
- Due Diligence Interview
- Grantmaking Committee Decision
- Award Notification
- Funding Available

Creative Community Solutions

Important Dates

- April 30th and June 30th
- April 23rd

- September 30th and November 30th
- September 23rd

Bush Prize: North Dakota

In partnership with Strengthen ND and the Bush Foundation



The Bush Prize program identifies and honors extraordinary organizations that consistently engage and lead their community toward creative solutions and provides them with flexible support to keep doing that work and supports them to amplify their story to inspire others.

Every year, two Bush Prize: North Dakota honorees will be selected. Honorees receive a package of recognition, including a flexible award of \$250,000 to invest in their creative capital.

Hip Hop & Hope



TNT Kids



Creative Community Problem Solving: Creative community problem solving is the process of developing, testing, and spreading innovative ideas to address community challenges effectively. It focuses on utilizing available resources to create solutions that are effective, sustainable, and impactful. This approach inspires and equips leaders to lead transformative efforts, generating solutions that can influence others and achieve measurable outcomes.

Transformational Change: Transformational change refers to systemic shifts that address the root causes of community challenges, resulting in meaningful and lasting improvements. It focuses on reimagining and redesigning systems or practices to create more effective, sustainable, and equitable outcomes. These shifts inspire hope and foster long-term progress by building capacity and resilience within communities.

Track Record of Creative Community Problem Solving: A track record of creative community problem solving reflects an organization's consistent success in applying innovative approaches to address challenges. It demonstrates a history of developing and implementing solutions that produce measurable impact and serve as models for others. This track record highlights the ability to adapt, test, and spread ideas that solve complex problems and enhance the community's capacity for ongoing change.

Innovation: Innovation is the process of developing, testing, and spreading ideas that address important community issues and create opportunities for improvement. Innovation emphasizes the potential for ideas to benefit multiple communities or organizations and supports the learning process to understand and evaluate the impact of those ideas. It involves inspiring, equipping, and connecting leaders to drive change and ensure the scalability and adaptability of successful solutions.

2026 Prize Criteria (1 of 3)



Impact of Creative Community Problem Solving: Does the organization have a pattern of engaging in and leading creative community problem solving? NOTE: Significant impact can happen through creative solutions of all sizes, within communities of all sizes, and through organizations of all sizes.

- Are these creative solutions that address community needs more effective, equitable or sustainable than existing approaches?
- Did these creative solutions make a significant difference?
- Could the organization inspire or inform others?
- Could the organization's practices serve as a model for others navigating diverse challenges and innovative solutions?

2026 Prize Criteria (2 of 3)



History of Creative Community Solutions: Does the organization have a pattern of working across their community to develop new and innovative solutions to their community's needs?

- Does the organization have a history of using innovative approaches that offer real solutions for the challenges and issues affecting their community?
- Can the organization identify and describe specific examples of processes, programs or projects that use creative approaches, technologies, collaborations, and methods to drive sustainable change and solve problems more effectively?

2026 Prize Criteria (3 of 3)



Culture of Creative Community Problem Solving: Does the organization have strong leadership and a culture of innovation? Is the organization rooted in their community and values-driven?

- What deeply rooted values exist that enhance organizational culture and strengthen partnerships?
- How does leadership encourage and exemplify creative thinking and problem-solving?
- How does the organization demonstrate their focus on solutions that tackle root causes for meaningful, lasting community change?
- In what way does that organization demonstrate a strong track record of financial stability?

Additional Consideration

Over time we seek a portfolio of Bush Prize honorees that represents the full diversity of North Dakota, and includes a variety of:

- Applicant organization sizes
- Communities served (both in terms of size and demographics)
- Types of issues addressed

Eligibility

1

Bush Prize awards must be used for a charitable purpose.

2

Organizations that are 501(c)(3) public charities or government entities (including schools) are eligible for the Bush Prize.

3

Strengthen ND will accept Bush Prize applications from fiscal sponsors.

4

Prize winners must be located in North Dakota or one of the 5 Native Nations that share the same geography.

Initial Review

Strengthen ND and its Grantmaking Committee will conduct an initial review of applications and select finalists. We will let you know in late June whether your application is moving forward.

Finalist Review

Strengthen ND and its Grantmaking Committee will conduct site visits and review references in June, July, and August.

Timeline



- **March 26th, 2026 – Bush Prize Question & Answer Webinar**
- **April 1st, 2026 – Bush Prize Applications Open**
- **April 30th, 2026 – Bush Prize Applications Close**
- **June 1st to July 31st, 2026 – Internal Review & Due Diligence**
- **August 1st to August 31st, 2026 – Final Selection & Notification**
- **TBD – October 2026 – Public Announcement of Honorees**



BUSH PRIZE

TWO HONOREES
TWO PRIZES

\$250,000 EACH

SIGN UP NOW

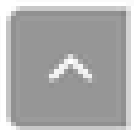
PRIZE AND FUNDING

- Two organizations will be selected as Bush Prize: North Dakota honorees in 2025.
- Each winner will receive a \$250,000 flexible grant, which can be used for:
 - Expanding programs
 - Building reserves
 - Testing innovative solutions
 - Supporting operational sustainability
- The funds cannot be used for debt repayment but must be used for charitable purposes.

SUPPORT FOR HONOREES

Strengthen ND will provide:

- Public recognition and media support.
- Ongoing communication and check-ins throughout the award period.
- Opportunities for honorees to connect and learn from each other.
- A final reporting process to capture lessons learned and impact.



Bush Prize: North Dakota



2026 Application

The deadline for Bush Prize applications is April 30th, 2026 at 11:59pm Central. Our online application system will automatically close, and we will not accept applications after that time. If applying online presents a barrier for you, please let us know - we'd be happy to help.

Once you've started an application in our online system, you cannot save it and return later



Frequently Asked Questions

Applying for a Bush Prize

How do I submit my application?

We use an online application system. To start an application, please visit the Bush Prize page on our website. Once you've started your application, it cannot be saved for you to revisit. Please consider using a Word document to craft your responses and to then copy/paste your responses into the online system.

If applying online presents a barrier for you, let us know, and we will send an application by email.

Understanding the Bush Prize Program

What if the proposed work is a collaborative effort? How do we determine which organizations will be publicly acknowledged and which organizations will receive the grant?

We will only provide an award to one entity but will happily credit multiple organizations publicly, if that is your preference. The primary applicant organization will be the award recipient.

Understanding the Bush Prize Program

How much of a “track record” of innovative community problem solving do we need?

We will be looking for those who have multiple years of data, rather than those who might have a current program or project. Typical timeframes for evaluation may be between 3 and 5 years.

Understanding the Bush Prize Program

How much funding comes with a Bush Prize?

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Understanding the Bush Prize Program

What can Bush Prize honorees do with the grant money?

The Bush Prize awards are flexible and can be used to advance the charitable purpose of the organization, not repay debt. Funds can be used for a wide variety of purposes, including but not limited to project work, general operating expenses and building financial reserves. Funds must be used to support work in North Dakota. Bush Prize honorees will report publicly on the use of their funds.



Understanding the Bush Prize Program

If my organization is not awarded a Bush Prize, can I get feedback about our application?

We believe that learning is an important part of this process and will certainly provide written feedback upon request.



Questions



Megan Langley,
Executive Director of Strengthen ND

Thank you!

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