

Matching Grant Initiatives

at Jewish Funders Network





Jewish Funders Network (JFN) is a community that grows the size and impact of Jewish philanthropy by connecting funders together, empowering individual excellence, and catalyzing collective action.

JFN's matching grant initiatives are among many activities that accomplish these goals. Matching Grant Initiatives offer funders a demonstrably powerful opportunity to grow their impact and broaden the base of grantmaking support for their chosen field or cause. JFN Matching Grant Initiatives have collectively generated over \$100 million in new philanthropic funds since 2004.

JFN Matching Grant Initiatives leverage the sponsor's funds to encourage new funders to make their first ever (or significantly increased) grants to a specific field, and do so by offering matching funds directly to the organization that the new funder is supporting.

Because new funders choose the specific organization within the broad funding parameters, funders who participate understand that the matching funds are indisputably new money, and entirely contingent upon the gifts they decide to make. At the same time, by requiring eligible funders to make their first ever (or significantly increased) gifts, the initiatives offer the sponsor the security that their gifts are genuinely creating new funds from the other participating funders.





Each JFN Matching Grant Initiative advances its target Jewish philanthropic cause or field in five ways:

- Uses the leverage of matching funds to bring both new funders and newly increased funding into the field;
- Provides the sponsor with an opportunity to identify and recruit new funders committed to the field;
- Raises awareness of a problem in Jewish life to which there are potential philanthropic solutions;
- Encourages funders to partner with nonprofits to create new projects which would not otherwise exist; and
- Empowers nonprofits to access the funds they need to make a difference, by doubling new or newly-increased grants.

Sponsoring a Matching Grant Initiative is a benefit of JFN membership, as is having one's grant matched under such an initiative. Funders must become JFN members in order to participate.

What Makes a Successful Matching Grant Initiative?

After completing eighteen grant initiatives, we've learned a good deal about working with funding partners, non-profits, and building successful initiatives. A successful Matching Grant Initiative has a number of elements, including but not limited to:

- Eligibility and desirability criteria which are clearly defined, yet broad enough to allow funders to choose the organizations they feel connected to;
 - Easily explainable from a marketing perspective;
 - Mindful of the capacity of the field and the field's ability to implement the initiative;
 - Supportive of a broad spectrum of organizations, religious denominations, and/or political perspectives.
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Broadening the Base: Implications for the Sponsor

A Matching Grant Initiative's primary goal is attracting new funders and funding to a field. Achieving this influx of new resources and engagement requires a broad, decentralized, collaborative, and pluralistic approach that leaves room for diverse visions from the funders whose gifts will be matched by the sponsor. Therefore, matching grant sponsors should recognize that their initiative may fund a broader spectrum of approaches and organizations than what they themselves fund. Matching Grant Initiatives are not an opportunity to raise new funds for one's own grantees, nor are they meant to reward only those organizations who share a common funder. While Matching Grant Initiatives require partner funders to cede a degree of control over what their funds will eventually support, the sponsor will be able to create a set of criteria that will allow them to meet their funding goals while working to spur interest in the overall field.

Sponsors should also be aware that these initiatives are not suitable for fostering change in the area of philanthropic craft. While sponsors can and should build incentives into applications to encourage thoughtful project development, these initiatives are not designed to teach best practices in grantmaking or tackle deep-rooted issues through systemic change. To do so would require a level of centralized judgment and control that would detract from the initiative's primary purpose of broadening the base of support.

Broadening the Base: Implications for the Field

Since the Matching Grant Initiative is a tool for broadening a field, it's important to know whether or not the "market" exists for growth—that is, whether there are enough players in the field to meet the sponsor's vision. The Matching Grant Initiative model is less ideal for fields that primarily need redirection, but ideal for fields that primarily need more investment.





Thresholds and Timeframes

Grant thresholds and timeframes are key to the success of these initiatives. By setting the minimum grant amount at \$25,000, the Initiatives encourage significant commitments from participating funders. Each Initiative sets a date by which the grants must be paid in order to be eligible for matching funds. By setting a time frame for eligibility, partners are able to identify and match grants that were secured through the Initiative, and avoid grants made by funders who are already invested in the field. The Initiatives offer funders approximately a year from the launch of the program to pay their grants.

Eligibility Criteria

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Operations

For each Matching Grant Initiative, JFN serves as the operational partner, designing, planning, and executing all aspects of the initiative. JFN works closely with each sponsor to ensure that the sponsor’s goals and desired outcomes are met. With each initiative, JFN and the sponsor work hand-in-hand to recruit applicants, work with donors, and market the Initiative to the broader Jewish community.



Current and past matching grant initiative topics include:

- Women's Empowerment
- Impact Entrepreneurship in Israel
- Enhancing the Israeli STEM Pipeline
- Breaking Barriers in Jewish Life for People with Disabilities
- Engaging Intermarried Couples and Their Families
- Workforce Development
- Jewish Social Change
- Jerusalem Renewal
- Jewish Day Schools
- Israeli Jewish Renewal
- Environment in Israel
- Pro-Active, Pro-Israel
- Jewish Camping
- Jewish Elderly Poor
- Jewish Education

For a complete list, please visit

www.jfunders.org/matching-grants

By the numbers...

(From inception in 2004 through 2018)

18 matching grant initiatives completed



13 fields funded



23 funding partners



1,315 donors whose gifts were matched

856 grantee organizations



Matching funds from partners (grant pool):

\$38 million

Matched gifts from donors:

\$67 million

Total funds granted:

\$105 million

