



Strategic Plan 2021-2026

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Reflecting on our History to Meet this Moment

For more than 100 years, FISA Foundation and its predecessor organizations have focused on important but overlooked issues affecting women, girls, and people with disabilities. Since the establishment of FISA Foundation twenty-five years ago, we have funded and advocated with and for people with disabilities to have equitable access to healthcare and dental care, education, housing, employment, and the social amenities we all need to lead full and connected lives. We have invested in addressing domestic violence and sexual assault as pervasive health and safety issues. We have sought to empower girls to have information, support, and opportunity to reach their potential, and we have partnered with nonprofits supporting women who are vulnerable due to trauma, homelessness, and addiction. Throughout our history, we have prioritized the needs of those who face the greatest barriers.

We believe that the inequities experienced by women, girls, and people with disabilities are not accidental; disparities are the result of policies, practices, societal attitudes, and beliefs that advantage some and disadvantage others. As a result, FISA invests in advocacy and systemic change to dismantle barriers, as well as direct services to help these populations thrive.

It has become increasingly clear to us that the issues we care most about are not race-neutral. If we do not specifically examine the ways that structural racism intersects with our work, we risk exacerbating disparities rather than advancing fairness, equity, and inclusion.

This strategic plan reflects our ongoing commitment to women, girls, and people with disabilities and articulates our commitment to addressing the intersection of racism in our grantmaking, our convening, and our internal business practices.

Mission

FISA Foundation champions equity, justice, safety, and inclusion for women, girls, and people with disabilities, combating systemic racism that impedes progress for these populations in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Vision

We seek to foster a community that is strong and vibrant, where all members are treated with dignity and respect, are safe and healthy, have fair access to opportunity, and are fully included.

Guiding Principles

- Disability is a common, frequently occurring part of the human experience. We have a responsibility to counter ableism and the stigma that renders people with disabilities less visible and less valued.
- We recognize that sexism profoundly impacts the lives of women and girls. We acknowledge that people assigned female at birth as well as those who identify as female or femme may experience gender-based discrimination. When we say “women and girls” we embrace all who experience the world as female.
- FISA Foundation condemns racism of all forms. We acknowledge that racism has historically existed in our community and continues today in deep and pervasive ways. The evidence of systemic racism can be found in the persistent disparities that afflict Black people and other people of color across southwestern Pennsylvania. We commit to promoting racial equity.

Putting Our Beliefs in Action

In line with our core values and beliefs, FISA Foundation will:

- Use a racial-justice lens in our work to more accurately frame problems and inform solutions.
- Amplify the leadership, voices, and perspectives of people with disabilities, and seek to remove barriers that prevent full participation in all aspects of our community.
- Prioritize the needs of those who live with multiple marginalized identities, for example, Black women, girls, and people with disabilities; immigrant and refugee women; and trans women.
- Continue to diversify our leadership, including decision-makers that represent the communities we seek to serve.
- Advance equity through our grantmaking practices, the types of grants we approve, and through the organizations we partner with and invest in.
- Foster diverse leadership in the nonprofit sector.
- Support convenings and collaborative partnerships that promote equity and inclusion, as well as advance our strategic priorities.
- Engage in business practices that advance equity, including but not limited to hiring, contracting with vendors, and managing our investments.
- Adhere to the highest standards of ethics and accountability in our policies and practices.

Strategic Approaches to Promoting Social Change

FISA Foundation focuses its grantmaking, convening and all other aspects of its work to:

- Improve the Lives of Individuals;
- Strengthen Organizations/Promote Best Practices;
- Change Systems and Policies.

Strategic Priorities

1. Improve the health and well-being of people with disabilities, women, and girls.

Priority will be given to proposals designed to:

- Improve access to health care and dental care for people with significant disabilities or complex health conditions;
- Address bias among healthcare professionals;
- Address the specific needs of women, girls, and people with disabilities who are Black or other people of color;
- Influence policy and practice to change systems.

2. Prevent domestic and sexual violence, and Support the most vulnerable victims in pursuit of safety, healing, and justice.

- Priority will be given to proposals that specifically address the needs of people with disabilities; Black people and other people of color; immigrants and refugees; members of the LGBTQ+ community.

3. Remove societal barriers and promote equitable opportunities for women, girls, and people with disabilities.

Priority will be given to proposals designed to:

- Promote equal rights, access, and full inclusion for people with disabilities, particularly Black people and other people of color with disabilities, in all aspects of life;

- Include programs, services and advocacy efforts focused on girls who have been marginalized, particularly Black girls and other girls of color, girls with disabilities, and girls in under-resourced areas;
- Address the needs of women that society marginalizes and fails to serve, particularly those who struggle with addiction, homelessness, trauma, and poverty.

NOTE: FISA Foundation funds nonprofit organizations providing services in southwestern Pennsylvania, limited to the following counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland. All grants benefit women, girls, and/or people with disabilities. FISA Foundation focuses disability-related grantmaking on adults and children with physical, intellectual, sensory, and developmental disabilities. While we recognize that mental health intersects with many of our other priorities, the primary diagnosis of mental illness is outside our scope. FISA does fund cross-disability efforts that include mental health.

Applying for a grant

Organizations interested in applying for funding should submit a letter of inquiry outlining the need to be addressed, a brief description of the proposed project or program, and the amount of the request. Letters should be accompanied by a completed application form.

Additional details and guidelines for submission are available on the website: www.fisafoundation.org under Grants.

Before applying, please also review the instructions on types of funding that will be considered as well as restrictions/requests that will not be funded.