

# 2026 Student Basic Needs Spark Grant



---

## LETTER OF INTEREST

What is the name of your organization?

**Is your organization a registered 501(c)(3), fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3), or government entity?** *Note: If your educational institution is not a 501(c)(3), please apply through your institution's foundation.*

Yes

No

Please provide your Employer Identification Number (EIN)

What is your name?

What is your title?

What is your email address?

What is the best phone number to reach you regarding this proposal?

What is your organization's website?

What city is your organization located in?

What state is your organization located in?

**The following questions allow us to learn about how your staff reflects the population you serve.**

**Is your organization led by someone who identifies as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, and/or a minority gender identity (e.g. cisgendered woman), non-binary (e.g. genderqueer, gender fluid, etc.), transgender, or is a member of an otherwise gender expansive identity?**

Yes

No

Choose not to disclose

**We welcome any comments or explanations about the demographic representation in your organization.**

**Has your organization previously submitted a proposal for any previous Michelson Spark Grant rounds?**

Yes

No

Unsure

---

**Is your proposed project new or existing?**

- New
- Existing
- Existing, with incremental impact

**Input grant period in number of months.**

**Will your project impact California students?**

- Yes
- No

**Were students involved in developing this proposal and/or will they be involved in the execution if funded?**

- Yes
- No

*If yes please expand. (150 words)*

**Select which focus area your project would address. *Please select only one.***

Systemic approaches and actionable strategies for higher education systems to address student housing insecurity and housing affordability. We are primarily focused on:

- Integrating affordable housing into broader student basic needs strategies across higher education systems, for example, rising utility costs and tenant rights
- Aligning housing plans, policies, and implementation efforts across segments (e.g., community colleges, CSU, UC)
- Leveraging and streamlining existing housing grant programs and funding mechanisms to maximize impact
- Innovative approaches that utilize existing housing infrastructure and cross-sector partnerships to address the housing crisis
- Policy advocacy efforts that systematically address student housing insecurity

Innovative approaches that strengthen equitable economic mobility and long-term student stability. Areas in which we hope to achieve this include:

- Expanding workforce development pipelines that promote economic mobility for low-income and first-generation students (including those that strategically leverage work study).
  - Efforts that expand and streamline student access, enrollment, and maintaining of public benefits at scale, including CalFresh, CalWORKs, and Medi-Cal
  - Models that move basic needs operations from grant-based to sustainable, institutionalized systems with skilled, permanent staff (including innovative approaches that mitigate the impact of recent federal policy shifts).
-

Actionable research, data, and strategies that inform policy and advocacy efforts. Priorities include:

- Research and practice that supports timely policy response to emerging federal and state changes, (e.g., HR1 impacts), such as expanded emergency aid from campuses and government funding
- Student-centered storytelling, narrative-building, and messaging that strengthen advocacy and policy implementation
- Data collection and analysis related to student access to healthcare and public benefits (including Medi-Cal enrollment and uninsured student populations)
- Analysis of funding flows and impact, including federal dollars brought into California through student benefit enrollment
- Tools and systems that improve tracking, coordination, and responsiveness to both short-term and long-term basic needs challenges

**Please provide an overview of the project you are proposing, including the amount of funding requested (up to \$25,000) and usage of funds. Be sure to include which population(s) would be impacted by the grant. Please also include a proposed timeline for grant usage. (500 words max)**

---

**Describe the three (3) metrics or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) you are measuring as part of this project to gauge success of this program below.**

**Does your project have the potential to impact public policy? If so, elaborate on your plans to pursue that work. (200 words max)**

**Is there anything else you would like to tell us related to your proposal?**

**In your online application, you will have the opportunity to upload related documents you'd like us to review.**

---

**How did you hear about this grant opportunity?**

- Michelson 20MM Website
- Direct referral from a Michelson 20MM partner
- Email outreach
- Previous familiarity with Michelson 20MM
- Article / blog post
- Social media
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you meet with our staff prior to submitting this LOI? While not required, we encourage you to share your idea with our staff in advance to gain insights into whether or not your proposal aligns with our funding priorities and how to maximize alignment.**

- Yes
- No

**How many hours did it take to prepare and submit this LOI?**

**Would you like to be added to the following mailing lists?** *Select all that apply*

- Michelson Spark Grants Updates
- Student Basic Needs Initiative Updates
- General Michelson 20MM Foundation Updates