

Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant

First Round Application Packet

2021-22



This is an application packet for the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant competition. It explains the competition and offers instructions on how to draft and apply.

Applications are due **October 25th, 2021, at 11:59 pm (EDT)**.

Questions? Email MWFAumni@irex.org. *Good luck!*

About the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant

The world has already invented products and services to end poverty, yet many interventions have large delivery gaps. Millions of people still don't have access. Can you solve this problem? Do you have an idea that can catalyze positive change?

Through a new partnership with D-Prize, a non-profit organization that works to distribute and scale proven technologies to benefit people in extreme poverty, approximately **five 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni will be selected to receive grants of up to \$20,000 USD** each to pilot a new initiative to catalyze change and distribute a proven poverty intervention wherever extreme poverty exists.

Who Should Apply?

The Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant is open to all 2021 Fellowship Alumni from all tracks, sectors, and levels of expertise who want to launch or scale a social enterprise in communities throughout Africa.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant is intended to support 2021 Fellowship Alumni to deliver a proven poverty intervention at scale. The grant is not intended to support prototyping a promising new solution.

Eligibility to Compete

Applications that meet the following criteria will be eligible for the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant:

- The lead applicant (i.e., person submitting the application) is a 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumnus/a in good standing, who has completed all Fellowship requirements. Please note: 2021 Fellowship Alumni are not required to include other 2021 Alumni, or Alumni from other cohorts, as part of their leadership team.
- The 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni lead applicant, leadership team members, and Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant collaboration activities are all based in sub-Saharan Africa.

- 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni applicants are not employees or immediate family members of employees of the U.S. Government (including U.S. Embassies, USAID, and other U.S. Government entities).
- Applications must respond to one of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant Challenges.

Approximately five 2021 Fellowship Alumni will be awarded up to \$20,000. The Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant funding will be distributed in the form of a convertible grant. This means that an award given to a for-profit winner could be converted to a small amount of equity if your company reaches certain milestones. Milestones are listed in the grant; one milestone that would trigger this option is if you issue stock to other investors. If your company does not reach a triggering milestone, then the award does not convert to equity and is treated as a grant.

Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **If I have a new idea for a venture, but I do not have a leadership team in place yet, am I eligible?**

Yes, if you do not have a formal leadership team in place, you may still apply for the 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant. However, group applications (i.e., those that represent a lead applicant and specific names and roles for an existing team) are preferred.

- **Do other team members need to be Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni?**

No, the other members of your team could be individuals from outside the Mandela Washington Fellowship Community who are experts in your field, people with whom you have collaborated in the past, etc.

- **I was not enrolled in the Business & Entrepreneurship track during my Fellowship Institute. Are 2021 Fellowship Alumni from other tracks, such as the Public Management track, also eligible?**

Yes, the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant is open to 2021 Fellowship Alumni from all tracks. Fellowship Alumni who are in the Public Management track and/or employed by a government entity may apply for the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant on behalf of a new or existing venture that is not officially affiliated with their government role.

- **If I have/work for an existing business or organization, am I eligible?**

The Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant is designed to fund pilots of new ventures. Existing organizations will only be considered if they are **piloting a new distribution-focused initiative**, and they have a need for high-risk capital that cannot be supported by current donors or revenue. Existing organizations applying to the Catalyst Grant should have operated for no more than 18 months and raised no more than \$30,000 in outside funding. It is also open to any business model (for profit, nonprofit, and everything in between).

- **Where can I find examples of ventures that received similar funding from D-Prize?**

You may access the profiles of previous D-Prize funding recipients at the following [link](#). Several Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni have successfully received funding, including 2019 Leadership Impact Award Winner and 2014 Fellowship Alumna [Adepeju Jaiyeoba](#), who received funds to provide kits containing essential sterile supplies to traditional birth attendants to help combat childbirth complications in communities throughout Nigeria.

- **I am also interested in applying for the USAID-USADF Entrepreneurship Grant. Can I apply for that grant and the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant?**

2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni in good standing are eligible to apply for both opportunities but will only be eligible to receive funding from one grant.

Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant Challenges

Please note: D-Prize developed the challenges and corresponding documents for the purposes of this competition. The preferences and views expressed in the corresponding documents do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government

Agriculture

- **Quality Inputs Challenge:** Combinations of simple, cost-effective agricultural inputs, like quality seeds and micro-dosing of fertilizer, along with training, enable smallholder farmers to produce more crops. Unfortunately, these inputs do not reach many of the farmers who need them most. Can you provide smallholder farmers high-quality inputs and training proven to increase their harvests? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

- **Post-Harvest Support Challenge:** In need of quick cash, many farmers are forced to sell crops at harvest when prices bottom out. Fortunately, there is a simple intervention proven to help farmers store more to sell when prices rise. Can you provide smallholder farmers post-harvest loans and storage technology proven to increase their incomes? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Clean Water

- **Chlorine Dispenser Challenge:** 400 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa lack access to improved water. Chlorine dispensers at community water sources treat water and lower the occurrence of waterborne disease like diarrhea. Can you distribute community chlorine dispensers and teach people to use them? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Education

- **Teaching at the Right Level Challenge:** In many resource-limited countries, over 50% of Grade 2 students are unable to read a single word of a short text or perform two-digit subtraction. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is an education program that tailors instruction to the learning level of the child, rather than their age. The result is that basic literacy and numeracy are achieved by students before they finish primary school. Can you teach basic reading and mathematics skills to primary school students in a resource-limited classroom? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Governance & Infrastructure

- **Transparency Challenge:** Public services in developing countries are rife with corruption. Public reporting and scorecards create real accountability. Can you improve transparency and report data on the public service performance? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

- **Road Safety Challenge:** Road traffic accidents kill more than 1.35 million people per year and are the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29. More people die each year in road accidents than of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, or diarrheal diseases. Do you have an idea for ways to reduce reckless driving and road accidents? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Energy

- **Solar Lamp Challenge:** 600 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa use kerosene lanterns to light their homes. Solar lamps are cheaper, cleaner, create cost savings, and increase household incomes by 30%. Can you sell solar lights to rural or slum-dwelling households in need? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Health Access

- **Immunization Challenge:** Millions of infants in developing countries do not receive the routine immunizations recommended by the World Health Organization. Increased immunization rates in low-coverage areas could prevent a large number of childhood deaths from preventable diseases. Can you direct 500 caregivers (parents or other guardians) to bring their infants to health facilities for routine immunizations that otherwise would not occur? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)
- **Maternal Health Challenge:** Misoprostol is a \$3 drug that could prevent 100,000 maternal deaths from postpartum hemorrhaging. Can you develop an organization to train birth attendants to administer misoprostol? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)
- **Patient Identification Challenge:** Obstetric fistula, cervical cancer, club foot, and cataracts all have effective treatments. Yet identifying patients among large populations is difficult. Can you create a way to identify patients and connect them to early treatment solutions? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Livelihoods

- **Poverty Graduation Challenge:** Nearly 400 million people live in ultra-poverty, subsisting well below the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per day. These are the marginalized within already marginal communities. They work menial and insecure jobs in agriculture and domestic labor and have limited or no access to healthcare, clean water, electricity, and even shelter. Can you provide business coaching, capital, and social support to lift people out of ultra-poverty? [Click here to download additional information about this challenge.](#)

Propose Your Own Challenge

- **Propose your own challenge!** If you know of another proven intervention in need of greater distribution, we would like to hear it. The only requirements are to choose an already proven poverty solution that is in need of distribution to more people in the developing world.¹ [Click here to download additional information about proposing your own challenge.](#)

Submission Policies

- Applications must follow the instructions in this packet.
- Extra materials outside of the application will not be considered.
- Revisions to applications after submission will also not be considered.
- Only one application per person or team will be considered. **This application must be submitted by a 2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumnus/a.**
- Applications must be written in English.

¹ Creating your own challenge can prove extremely difficult, and most teams have had greater success sticking within the pre-existing challenges in the past. However, if you know of another proven intervention in need of greater distribution, you may submit an application to propose it.

Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant Process and Important Dates

First Round

First Round Applications will be accepted until 11:59 pm (EDT) on **October 25th, 2021**.

Feedback and advancement decisions will be sent in **early December 2021**.

Second Round

2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni applicants invited to participate in the Second Round will be asked to draft and submit a full plan of their social venture (roughly 10 pages in length), plus any desired appendices. The plan should include a more detailed description of the venture's operations, a three-month budget, and other items. Second Round applicants will receive an application packet, similar to this one, with full instructions. Those invited to the Second Round will be required to submit a plan a few weeks after invitation.

Final Round

2021 Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni applicants invited to the Final Round will interview with judges on the phone. Depending on the promise and cost-effectiveness of a proposal, judges may award up to \$20,000 in funding. The average Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant award size is \$10,000.

Winning ventures will be announced in **March 2022**.

After You Win: Starting Your Pilot

The Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant funds ideas that the selection committee believes can succeed. Besides funding, the D-Prize organization may offer mentorship from already-proven social entrepreneurs and can assist in helping your venture attract future funding if the pilot proves successful. D-Prize will also provide applicants access to their network of past winners.

First Round Judging Criteria

Judging Process

All applications will receive an initial screen from at least two judges. The judging panel is composed of members from the D-Prize community who have professional experience with entrepreneurship and social enterprise in the developing world.

Those serving as judges are not personally involved in the ideas being judged, nor do they have any immediate family involved.

Judging Criteria

Contestants are evaluated based on:

- Potential for leadership success, as evident by academic and professional background, relevant skills, and demonstrated passion.
- Focus on distribution. Proposals must focus on distributing a proven poverty solution that needs greater access in the developing world.
- Potential for scalable success of their venture, based on the concept note of the application.

Application Tips

- *Be succinct.* Successful candidates are objective, focused, and clear. These attributes should come across in your writing. Orient your application towards an educated judge who is relatively knowledgeable with the key issues.
- *Scale, impact, cost-effectiveness.* Successful applicants will build a plausible case that their intervention is highly scalable, impactful, and cost-effective.
- *Keep within scope.* The most successful startups are explicit about their focus and avoid spending resources on too wide or too many areas. A well-focused, tightly scoped idea will perform best in this competition.

First Round Application Components

First Round Applications consist of a concept note and resume(s). They must respond to one of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Catalyst Grant Challenges.

Concept Note

Please prepare a concept note which responds to the following prompts. **Concept notes should be no more than two pages.**

- Please begin with a short 1-3 sentence summary of your idea at the beginning of your concept note.
- Describe your proposed venture in more detail. D-Prize wants to understand exactly what you will do, and the key activities you need to do to implement your idea. Details matter.
- You do not need to re-explain the problem statement from existing challenges unless it is to provide data relevant to the local area where you will launch. Instead, use this space to explain your operational details.
- Briefly explain how you will measure your success, and which milestones you intend to achieve. For instance, how many people will you reach after your pilot, at 6 months, and at 1 year?
- Briefly describe all the people on your team and their responsibilities. Please also note any developing country experience (i.e., work, study, or travel), who will be working full time, and who will be working in-country.
- Explain your vision for scale. What do your operations look like after two years? Where have you expanded, and how have you funded your growing operations?

Resume(s)

Please include a one-page resume for every person on your team. D-Prize is interested in your most relevant work related to your proposed social venture, and resumes should briefly highlight past responsibilities and accomplishments.

Ready to Apply?

Application Instructions

- Prepare your concept note and resume, and clearly name your files. Documents must be saved as a PDF and are limited to 4MB each.
- Input your contact details and upload your documents to: <http://www.d-prize.org/MWFRound1>.

Questions?

Email MWFAumni@irex.org