



An Innovation Community

Over four rounds of the Prize, we've seen how community among awardees can spark new innovations and help turn ideas to action. Over the three-year term, we bring awardees together for two convenings each year. These meetings spotlight a fellow awardee organization, foster peer learning, and offer mentoring from experts in organizational development, leadership training, and more. From Coastal California to rural Appalachia our awardees have shared in powerful conversations and learning by being embedded in one another's work and reflecting on their role as change agents.

Throughout their Prize term and beyond, awardees also benefit from the Fund's considerable resource network. Whether providing guidance on nonprofit management or an introduction to a fellow funder, the Fund and its staff are there for awardees – both to celebrate the successes and offer strategic counsel amid the stresses of a social innovation startup.

"We've received several federal grants that were very strict, and the unrestricted nature of the J.M.K. Innovation Prize allowed our organization to flourish, particularly considering our focus on social-enterprise models."

Molly Hemstreet & Sara Chester, The Industrial Commons

"Many early-stage prizes in the innovation field are focused on speed, scale, and markets at the expense of depth and connection. What we so appreciated about the J.M.K. Innovation Prize is that we were part of a cohort of people who approach their work from a community-centered perspective, and who are working on longer, more lasting timeframes."

Michelle Miller & Jess Kutch, Coworker.org

"J.M. Kaplan Fund staff have been cheerleaders and morale-boosters, which is an important if often overlooked role in philanthropy."

Brandon Dennison, Coalfield Development Corporation



The Prize Process

Applications are open to individuals or teams representing nonprofit or mission-driven for-profit organizations. The Prize will be awarded to projects or ideas that:

- Represent a game-changing answer to a clearly identified need;
- Innovate within one or more of the Fund's three program areas;
- Demonstrate the potential to develop an actionable pilot or prototype with Prize funding; and
- Hold out the promise to benefit multiple individuals, communities, or sectors through a clearly articulated theory of change.

A first-round application will be made available on the [JMKFund.org](https://www.jmkfund.org) website on **February 7** and will be open until **April 28**. Select applicants will be invited to submit a more detailed second-round application in the late spring. Finalists will present their ideas to the trustees of The J.M. Kaplan Fund in the fall, with awardees formally announced in November 2023.

About The J.M. Kaplan Fund

The J.M. Kaplan Fund champions transformative social, environmental, and cultural causes through inventive grantmaking. Established in 1945 by philanthropist and businessman Jacob Merrill Kaplan, the Fund has since its inception been committed to visionary innovation. Over more than 75 years, the Fund has devoted \$280 million to propel fledgling efforts concerning civil liberties, human rights, the arts, and the conservation and enhancement of the built and natural worlds. The J.M.K. Innovation Prize continues the Fund's legacy of catalytic giving, reaching across America to provide early-stage support for entrepreneurs with twenty-first-century solutions to urgent social and environmental challenges.

Read about our previous awardees, and sign up for email updates at: [JMKFund.org](https://www.jmkfund.org)

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