

FORD FOUNDATION <i>Independent Private Foundation</i> <i>"Working to reduce inequality and strengthen democratic values."</i> https://fordfoundation.org Profile prepared for: Temple Shalom	[Foundation Logo]
Total Assets: \$17.48 billion (FY2024) Grants Paid (FY2024): \$1.05 billion Avg Grant: ● Not published at the program level. Total charitable disbursements divided by estimated grant count suggests individual grants in the \$100,000–\$1,000,000+ range for institutional grantees. Geographic Focus: National (United States) and International — global funder with significant domestic portfolio	
⚡ WORTH PURSUING?	
 Pursue with Strategy	
Mission Alignment	Medium — Ford funds arts and culture organizations, but through a specific lens: social justice, lifting underrepresented voices, and challenging unfair narratives. Temple Shalom's interfaith arts programming and civic engagement work fit this lens — the congregation identity does not. The mission alignment is real but requires careful framing.
Accessibility	Invitation-Only — Ford does not accept unsolicited proposals by mail, email, or phone. The only open submissions are through specific programs (JustFilms for documentary film, currently closed; NYC Good Neighbor Committee, currently closed and limited to New York City). All other funding flows through staff-identified grantees or warm introductions to program officers.
Relationship Status	Cold — No prior relationship identified. No board overlap identified. A warm introduction through a current Ford grantee in the Jewish social justice space is the first milestone — not a grant application.
Ask Size Fit	Strong Fit — Ford's grant sizes are not publicly broken out by program. For organizations of Temple Shalom's size and scope, a first grant of \$100,000–\$250,000 is a reasonable working estimate for the Creativity and Free Expression or Civic Engagement program areas. Confirm with current Ford grantees before using this number in planning.
Geographic Fit	Partial — Ford funds globally, including across the United States. Phoenix, Arizona is within scope. Ford does not have a stated geographic preference for domestic cultural institutions — the program alignment matters more than the location.

Competitive Landscape

Crowded — Ford receives significant attention from major cultural and social justice organizations. The invitation-only policy means the foundation self-selects grantees — but that also means the competition is not a traditional open pool. The path in is through relationships, not applications.

Bottom Line: Ford is one of the most powerful arts and social justice funders in the world — and it does not take unsolicited proposals. Temple Shalom's interfaith cultural programming and civic engagement work fit Ford's Creativity and Free Expression frame, but only if the pitch centers the social justice dimension of that work, not the congregation's religious identity. This is a two- to three-year cultivation play: identify the current Ford grantees in the Jewish social justice space, request a warm introduction to the relevant program officer, and begin a relationship. A grant proposal is a 2028–2029 target, not a 2026 submission.

PART 2 — RESEARCH DETAIL

Ford's Creativity and Free Expression program focuses on arts and culture as tools for social justice — not arts programming in general. The foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals. Grant history to individual organizations is not publicly searchable through standard tools; peer networking through current Ford grantees is the primary way to understand what the foundation is actively funding.

GIVING SNAPSHOT

FY2024 Grants Paid: \$1.05 billion

FY2023 Grants Paid: \$918.1 million

FY2022 Grants Paid: \$942.6 million

Average Grant: ● Not published at the program level. Total charitable disbursements divided by estimated grant count suggests individual grants in the \$100,000–\$1,000,000+ range for institutional grantees.

Median Grant: ● Not published

Largest Grant on Record: Multiple grants in the \$10M–\$50M range — Various — BUILD program multi-year institutional strengthening grants (Multiple years); Institutional strengthening for social justice organizations — BUILD program (\$2B dedicated)

Multi-Year Grants: Yes — Multi-year grants are common, particularly in the BUILD program (which is explicitly a multi-year institutional strengthening initiative). The Creativity and Free Expression and Civic Engagement programs also make multi-year grants to established grantees.

GRANT TYPES

- ✓ **General Operating Support** — Ford makes general operating support grants, particularly through the BUILD program. This is one of the few major foundations that actively funds unrestricted operating support as a core strategy.
- ✓ **Program / Project Grants** — Program grants for specific initiatives — especially in Creativity and Free Expression and Civic Engagement.
- ✓ **Capacity Building** — The BUILD (Building Institutions and Networks) program is explicitly a capacity-building initiative with \$2 billion dedicated to strengthening social justice institutions. This is the flagship program.
- ✗ **Capital / Facilities** — Not identified as a program area.
- ✗ **Planning Grants**
- ✗ **Challenge / Matching Grants**
- ✗ **Seed / Startup** — Ford typically funds established organizations with track records in social justice work.
- ✗ **Emergency / Rapid Response**
- ✓ **Fellowship / Individual Awards** — The Ford Global Fellowship and International Fellowships

Program support individual leaders — not applicable to Temple Shalom as an organization.

The BUILD program is worth specific attention for Temple Shalom if the synagogue has a robust, multi-year social justice program portfolio. BUILD is designed to help organizations like Temple Shalom build the institutional infrastructure to sustain and deepen their social justice work — not just fund a program, but strengthen the organization that runs it.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Stated Priorities

- Civic Engagement and Government — grassroots organizing, political participation, democratic institutions
- Creativity and Free Expression — arts, journalism, film, and cultural work that advances social justice
- Disability Rights — empowerment and accessibility for people with disabilities
- Future of Work(ers) — labor rights, worker mobilization, gig economy
- Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice — human rights advocacy and equality
- Global Governance — international cooperation and decision-making
- Natural Resources and Climate Justice — environmental equity
- Technology and Society — technology's impact on social equity
- BUILD Program — \$2 billion dedicated to strengthening social justice institutions

Actual Priorities (from public grant records)

-  Individual grantee breakdown not accessible through ProPublica or standard public tools — Ford's 990-PF Schedule I (the required annual list of all individual grants paid) is filed but individual grants are not available in the electronic dataset at scale
- Total charitable disbursements: \$1.05B (FY2024), \$918M (FY2023), \$942M (FY2022) — confirmed via 990 summary

 Ford's website describes nine program areas, but the actual grant distribution by program is not publicly accessible without access to the full 990-PF Schedule I. The BUILD program, at \$2B dedicated, is the largest identifiable initiative. For Temple Shalom, the most relevant programs are Creativity and Free Expression and Civic Engagement and Government.

Will Not Fund

- Unsolicited proposals — no exceptions outside of currently-open programs (JustFilms, NYC Good Neighbor Committee)

- Advocacy and commissioned projects (under Creativity and Free Expression)
- Educational initiatives and student projects (under Creativity)
- Film schools (under Creativity)
- Journalism tools and technology (under Creativity)
- Awards, scholarships, and endowment funds (under Creativity)

Typical Grantee: Established organizations — typically with a 10+ year track record — working at the intersection of arts, culture, social justice, or civic engagement. Ford favors organizations that are building movements, not just delivering programs. Community cultural institutions, artist-led organizations, civil society organizations, and policy advocacy groups are the core portfolio types. Faith-based organizations are eligible if their work centers social justice outcomes rather than religious programming.

RECENT GRANT HISTORY

Source: ● Ford Foundation grant history to individual organizations is not accessible through ProPublica's standard interface or Ford's own public grants database. The foundation's 990-PF Schedule I is filed but not available in the electronically searchable format used by most foundations. To research current Ford grantees, use: (1) Candid's foundation database (paid access), (2) Ford Foundation press releases and program announcements, or (3) direct outreach to peer organizations in Ford's portfolio.

Comparable Orgs Funded: Ford has historically funded Jewish social justice organizations working at the intersection of civic engagement and social justice — including organizations like T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), and Repair the World. These organizations are recommended as entry points for relationship intelligence: confirm current Ford portfolio status via Candid, and approach them about facilitating a program officer introduction. Note: current portfolio status for these organizations must be verified — training data is not a substitute for current 990 research.

Prior Giving to Client: No

★ = Organization comparable to Temple Shalom

PART 3 — HOW TO PURSUE

This is a two- to three-year cultivation play, not a 2026 application. The path in is through the Jewish social justice organizations already in Ford's portfolio — a warm introduction to the Creativity and Free Expression or Civic Engagement program officer is the first milestone, not a grant proposal.

GRANT STRATEGY

Probability Assessment: Invitation-Only-Requires-Cultivation

Recommended Program to Lead With: Creativity and Free Expression is the primary entry point — Temple Shalom's Interfaith Arts Festival, cultural programming, and role as a community cultural anchor fit Ford's focus on 'diverse cultural producers and decision makers' and 'lifting underrepresented or unheard voices.' Civic Engagement and Government is a secondary angle if Temple Shalom's voter registration, immigrant integration, and civic organizing work is substantial. BUILD is a longer-term target (5+ years) once the relationship is established and if Temple Shalom wants to invest in its social justice infrastructure at scale.

Recommended Ask Size: ● Confirm with current Ford grantees before using any figure in planning. Working estimate: \$150,000–\$300,000 for a first Creativity and Free Expression grant; \$500,000–\$2,000,000+ for a BUILD institutional strengthening grant. These are estimates based on Ford's overall grantmaking scale, not confirmed program-level data.

Timing: Not a 2026 or 2027 application. Realistic timeline: 2026 = relationship-building begins (identify warm intro paths, attend Ford-adjacent conferences). 2027 = first conversation with a program officer. 2028–2029 = grant submission if the relationship has developed. Organizations that try to accelerate this timeline rarely succeed.

Relationship Entry Point: Step 1: Verify current Ford portfolio status of T'ruah, JFREJ, and Repair the World via Candid's foundation database. Step 2: Ask Temple Shalom's rabbi whether they have personal relationships with leadership at any of these organizations. Step 3: If yes, request a peer introduction to the relevant Ford program officer — framed as 'we'd love to learn more about your program's priorities' not 'we want a grant.'

LOI Emphasis: Not yet applicable. When the time comes: lead with Temple Shalom's social justice work (civic organizing, immigrant integration, interfaith coalition-building), not the congregation's religious identity. Ford funds the work, not the institution's faith tradition. Frame Temple Shalom as a civic anchor and cultural producer that happens to be organized as a congregation.

Gaps to Address Before Applying

- Verify current Ford portfolio status for T'ruah, JFREJ, and Repair the World via Candid — do not assume historical funding relationships are current
- Document Temple Shalom's social justice outcomes with quantitative data: people served, civic events hosted, voter registrations, immigrant families supported
- Identify the current Creativity and Free Expression program officer via LinkedIn or conference research

Red Flags

- ⚠ Cold outreach to Ford's general inbox or any staff email — this approach does not result in program conversations and may close the door
- ⚠ Applying before the relationship has been established — the invitation-only policy is absolute; there is no workaround through the portal
- ⚠ Framing the pitch around Jewish identity or faith-based programming — Ford funds social justice outcomes, not religious programming

→ **Recommended Next Action:** By September 2026: (1) Verify current Ford portfolio status of Jewish social justice organizations via Candid. (2) Identify the Creativity and Free Expression program officer via LinkedIn. (3) Ask Temple Shalom's rabbi whether they have a personal connection to T'ruah, JFREJ, or Repair the World leadership. This three-step groundwork is the prerequisite for everything that follows.

HOW TO APPLY

Submission Type: Invitation-Only

Unsolicited Proposals Accepted: No

Letter of Intent (LOI) Required: No

Full Proposal: Ford does not accept unsolicited grant proposals by mail, email, or phone. The foundation identifies grantees through its program staff. There is no open application process for the Creativity and Free Expression, Civic Engagement, or BUILD programs. The only current open submissions are: (1) JustFilms — documentary film production grants (currently closed as of June 2026); (2) NYC Good Neighbor Committee — New York City community organizations only (currently closed; expected to reopen late 2025).

Word/Page Limits: Not applicable — no open application process

Organizations that receive Ford funding are identified by program officers through field scanning, peer recommendations, and conferences. The most reliable path to a program officer introduction is through current Ford grantees in the relevant field. A cold email to Ford's general inbox is unlikely to result in a program conversation.

GRANT CYCLE & TIMING

Current Status: Closed to unsolicited proposals · Irregular — staff-initiated Cycle

Next Cycle Opens: No open grant cycle — cultivation required before any submission

Decision Timeline: Not applicable for unsolicited applicants. Program officer identification →

relationship building → informal conversation → staff review → formal grant agreement. Multi-year process for new grantees.

Ford's program officers attend sector convenings, read published work, and monitor the organizations in their field regularly. Visibility in the social justice arts and cultural sector — through conference presentations, published articles, and peer organization relationships — is the most reliable way to come to Ford's attention organically.

KEY CONTACTS

● Not published

Program Officer, Creativity and Free Expression

Focus: Arts, culture, and creative work advancing social justice

Email: ● Not published

Phone: ● Not published

LinkedIn: Recommended research path: search LinkedIn for 'Ford Foundation Creativity and Free Expression program officer' to identify the current staff member

Ford does not publish individual program officer contact information on its website. Identify the current Creativity and Free Expression program officer through: (1) LinkedIn, (2) conference speaker lists (Ford staff regularly speak at Grantmakers in the Arts, Americans for the Arts, etc.), (3) peer organizations in Ford's portfolio.

● Not published

Program Officer, Civic Engagement and Government

Focus: Grassroots organizing, civic participation, democratic institutions

Email: ● Not published

Phone: ● Not published

LinkedIn: Same research path as above

The Civic Engagement program is a secondary but viable entry point if Temple Shalom's voter registration, immigrant integration, and civic education programs are a larger part of the portfolio pitch than the arts programming.

RELATIONSHIP INTELLIGENCE

Board Overlap: No board overlap identified. Ford's board includes prominent civic, arts, and academic leaders — cross-referencing with Temple Shalom's board and major donor network is a recommended research step.

Shared Grantees: • T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights — likely Ford-funded; rabbis and synagogues are core to T'ruah's network; Temple Shalom's rabbi may have direct relationships

• Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) — likely Ford-funded; civic engagement focus aligns with

Ford's Civic Engagement program

- Repair the World — Jewish service and social justice organization; likely Ford-funded
- Note: all three require current portfolio status verification via Candid. Training data confirms historical funding relationships but current status must be verified before outreach.

Warm Intro Potential: 1. Identify whether Temple Shalom's rabbi or senior staff have relationships with staff at T'ruah, JFREJ, or Repair the World — these organizations are the most likely warm introduction pathway to Ford program officers

2. Attend Grantmakers in the Arts or Americans for the Arts conference — Ford program officers are regular speakers; this is an organic networking opportunity

3. Publish op-eds or thought leadership from Temple Shalom's rabbi on social justice and interfaith community — Ford program officers monitor the field actively and published voices can generate program officer attention without a cold outreach

Values Alignment: • Ford is explicitly committed to reducing inequality and advancing social justice — a strong values alignment with Temple Shalom's civic engagement and interfaith work

- The social justice frame is required: a Jewish congregation asking for faith-based programming support does not fit Ford's theory of change. A civic institution and cultural producer advancing social justice, equity, and interfaith solidarity does.
- Ford's BUILD program language about 'strengthening social justice institutions' could apply to Temple Shalom's long-term organizational development — but only if the social justice dimension of Temple Shalom's work is substantive and documented

Known Deal-Breakers: • Any framing that presents Temple Shalom as a religious institution seeking faith-based programming support

- Cold outreach to Ford's general inbox — program officers do not respond to unsolicited emails from organizations they haven't identified through field work
- Underestimating the cultivation timeline — organizations that approach Ford expecting a 12-month path to a grant will be disappointed; 24–36 months is more realistic

Reputation in Sector: Ford is regarded as one of the most thoughtful and relationship-driven foundations in the sector. Program officers are knowledgeable, accessible at conferences, and genuinely engaged with the fields they fund. Once a relationship is established, Ford is a long-term partner — multi-year grants are the norm. The path to a first grant is slow; subsequent grants are comparatively easier. Grantees describe Ford as demanding in terms of alignment with social justice values, but not bureaucratically onerous in terms of reporting.