



Frequently Asked Questions: PIVOT Program

Last updated Dec. 1, 2025

Please review this FAQ to see if your question is answered here. If it is not, please contact PIVOTinfo@roadopeners.com with your questions(s), attend an upcoming info session or drop-in FAQ session (schedule below), or watch a posted recording of a past info session including Q&As, as your question(s) may have been answered in a live session.

- Thursday, Nov. 13: 5-6 p.m.: [Information Session #1 recording](#)
- Monday, Nov. 17: 10-11 a.m.: [Information Session #2 recording](#)
- Friday, Dec. 5: Noon-1 p.m.: Drop-in Q&A - [Register for Q&A](#)

The Road Openers team will endeavor to reply to questions within two business days; your patience is appreciated. This FAQ will be updated periodically throughout the Letter of Interest (LOI) application period (Nov. 12 - Dec. 10, 2025).

What should my organization consider before submitting a Letter of Interest?

We developed a Self-Assessment Checklist to help prospective applicants assess readiness and fit for the PIVOT pilot program:

Self-Assessment Checklist

Please reflect on the following to assess whether you wish to apply (you will be asked to address these in the LOI form):

- Are you a current or past grantee of OAC (within the past 7 years, i.e. during 2019-2025)?
- Are your primary location and primary reach of programs and services within Seattle city limits?
- Has your organization operated for at least seven years? (If your organization has recently resulted from a merger of two organizations, was at least one of those operating for at least seven years?)
- The PIVOT program will involve regular participation by core, relevant leadership teams of participating organizations. Because of this, your participating team will need to be relatively stable through the two-year program timeline. Please reflect on who would be your core leadership team (board, staff, key volunteers): Who are they? Will they have time and capacity to participate from Spring 2026-Spring 2028?
- Have you identified and can you articulate the business or operational challenge or opportunity that requires organizational transformation?

- Can you demonstrate your organization's commitment to the work of transformation over the two years of the PIVOT cohort/program?

How does PIVOT define “transformation”? Please provide more details about what types of organizational transformations are/aren't a good fit for PIVOT.

Standard updates to existing programs or routine operational needs (like facility upgrades or maintenance) are *not* considered organizational transformation.

For PIVOT, transformation means a *significant shift* in how your organization operates or serves your community. This often entails a financial risk and could include:

- Reinventing how you serve your constituents (e.g. adopting new technologies)
- Evolving your mission in a way that changes programming or staffing or your organization's identity (e.g. redefining what your organization is and does)
- Restructuring your organization (e.g. changing leadership models)
- Pooling resources with one or more other organizations (e.g. pursuing shared services, exploring mergers)
- Relocating to better fulfill your mission

These examples aren't exhaustive—we don't want to be prescriptive because we genuinely want to understand what challenges and opportunities you're facing and how you're thinking about responding to them. The LOI is intentionally open-ended so we can understand what transformation looks like for you and how you're responding to current challenges and opportunities. This helps us determine which projects are the best fit for PIVOT.

Is PIVOT only for organizations that are active in a specific artistic discipline?

No, PIVOT is open to arts and culture organizations of all artistic disciplines, as long as arts and culture are central to your mission.

Is PIVOT for organizations with a physical presence in downtown Seattle only?

No, PIVOT is open to organizations whose primary location and primary reach of programs/services is anywhere within Seattle city limits.

Can we be considered for the program if we have a fiscal sponsor?

Yes, organizations with a fiscal sponsor may be considered for the program.

Will the PIVOT program be focused on philanthropy or on broader organizational strategy?

PIVOT focuses on helping you build sustainability by transforming your organizational strategy and business practices to make you more adaptable and resilient. It will not be focused primarily on

philanthropy, though if that is of interest to participating cohort members or is critical to a cohort member's transformation, it may be addressed through the group learning or individualized support that will be designed for the cohort members once selected.

What types of support will be provided to participating cohort members through the PIVOT program?

We'll work with you and the rest of the cohort to design the specific types of support the PIVOT program will offer, tailoring it to your needs and the kind of transformation you're pursuing (within the program's resources). Our goal is to provide support that could include leadership or organizational coaching, strategic advising, help navigating transformation initiatives, shared learning experiences, peer mentorship, wellness support, and building adaptive leadership skills.

What types of support are NOT included in the PIVOT program?

The PIVOT program is not intended to provide foundational technical assistance, and will not include the following types of support: basic fundraising training, grant writing assistance, marketing basics, financial literacy, etc. If you are interested in these, you may wish to explore other local/regional resources:

- [4Culture - Launch](#)
- [ArtsFund](#)
- [Common Great](#)
- [Puget Sound Grantwriters Association](#)
- [Scandiuzzi Krebs](#)
- [Seattle Public Libraries - Support for Nonprofits](#)
- [Shunpike - Arts Business Clinics](#)
- [Washington Lawyers for the Arts](#)

If a member of our core transformation team (board, staff, key volunteer) is not yet in place but we expect the team to be in place/stable by the time the program begins, can we still apply?

Yes, you can still apply. Please explain your situation in the "Core Team Members" prompt in the LOI.

We anticipate a disruption/transition (such as parental leave, medical leave, a board chair transition, etc.) among the core team for our organizational transformation during the PIVOT program period, but we have a plan for transition/stability. Can we still apply?

Yes, you can still apply. Please explain your situation in the "Core Team Members" prompt in the LOI.

How will you consider the cohort as a whole when reviewing applications? Is there an ideal balance of organizations you're looking for?

We don't have an ideal balance, except that we aim for the cohort to be *balanced overall*. We hope to include a mix of organizations across the dimensions included in the evaluation criteria—such as artistic disciplines, organizational size, geography, and communities served.

It's unlikely we'll achieve a perfect balance across every category, and the final composition will depend on who applies. We'll be looking for applicants who both meet the eligibility criteria and feel ready for meaningful organizational transformation. Our goal is to assemble a cohort that reflects a diverse range of needs, perspectives, and transformation goals.

How do we demonstrate our commitment to a two-year transformation process?

Your commitment will be evaluated in part by who is on your proposed team and whether key leaders who are crucial to the transformation are able to fully participate over the two-year period (or whether there is a plan in place to address any anticipated transitions or disruptions to their participation).

Transformation is far more likely to succeed when organizational leadership is actively involved.

While we won't review past work directly, you are encouraged to reference relevant efforts in your Letter of Interest. Any existing internal work (e.g. strategic planning, data collection, capacity building, etc.) that shows you've already begun thinking about organizational transformation can help demonstrate your readiness and commitment.

What if we're facing multiple pivot points? How do we decide which one to present in our Letter of Interest? Should we focus on the most immediate issue, the most likely for us to address, or include all possibilities?

We ask applicants to be clear about what is prompting their transformation and why this program is the right support at this time. If you are considering multiple directions, focus on the one that feels most urgent, strategic, or necessary for your organization's future.

If you are still unsure which transformation your organization needs most, or if you're at a true fork in the road without clarity, this may not be the right time to apply. The program is designed for organizations that are ready, committed, and clear about the transformation they need to undertake. If you'd like to discuss your options, please reach out to PIVOTinfo@roadopeners.com.

How will the amount of funding be determined and distributed? Is it based on transformation goals or the organization itself?

Funding levels will be tailored to each organization and based primarily on the nature and scale of the transformation you're pursuing. While organizational size (such as operating budget) will be considered, total funding is *not* calculated as a percentage of your budget. Some transformations will require more

resources than others, and we will aim to align support accordingly within the program's overall funding capacity.

We anticipate the grant will include both unrestricted funds—for stability and flexibility—and restricted funds tied specifically to transformation activities. Current plans are to distribute funds in three installments—the first at the start of Year One, the second at the start of Year Two, and the third (and smallest amount) upon completion of the program at the end of Year Two.

How will you evaluate curiosity and openness?

Curiosity and openness will be assessed through how applicants respond to the questions in the Letter of Interest application. We'll look at how clearly the organization identifies its challenges or opportunities, why it's interested in PIVOT, and what it hopes to achieve through the program. The way these answers are framed will help us understand the organization's mindset, willingness to try new approaches, and overall culture of learning and exploration.

Why does the self-assessment checklist ask whether we are current or past OAC grantees within the last seven years?

This question helps us understand how the pandemic may have affected your organization. By looking at recent grantee history, we can better assess whether COVID-related challenges were intensified or whether new opportunities emerged during that period. The legislation allocating funds for the PIVOT program references pandemic-related impacts as a factor.

How can my organization apply to be a Mentor in the cohort?

If your organization is interested in being a mentor within the PIVOT cohort, please submit an LOI. In response to the question, "Has your organization gone through a major transition, expansion or consolidation, or other type of shift in its business model in the past? If so, tell us about the circumstances of that transformation, how it went, and what the outcome of the transformation was," please describe a previous transformative experience your organization has gone through, and what elements from that experience you may be able to offer to other organizations currently undergoing a transformation of their own.

Our organization is not struggling, *per se*. Would we still be a good candidate for the PIVOT program?

Possibly. This program is about supporting organizations through transformations, whether those are motivated by challenges or by opportunities. In the LOI, please describe your specific context, motivations, and strategic thinking surrounding your business transformation.