

2017

# The J.M.K. Innovation Prize

“Our family goal should be to search for the realization of an ideal society, knowing it is a quest that always eludes man, but one that he must compulsively seek.”

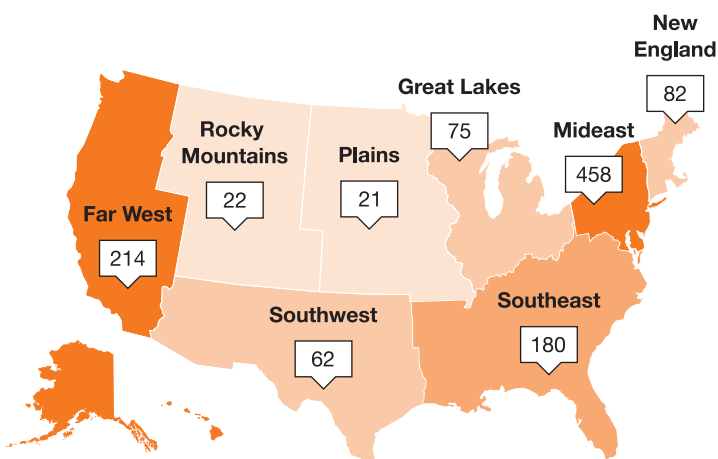
Jacob Merrill Kaplan



The J.M.K. Innovation Prize is an exciting initiative of The J.M. Kaplan Fund, a New York-based family foundation. In 2017, up to ten Prizes will be awarded to those—nonprofits and mission-driven for-profits—tackling our country’s most pressing needs through social innovation. The Prize will provide up to three years of support at \$50,000 per year, as well as a \$25,000 “bank” of funds available for technical assistance or targeted project expenses, making a total award of \$175,000. Specifically, the Prize seeks to support innovation in the fields of the environment, heritage conservation and social justice. The Prize is particularly designed for early stage ideas being piloted or prototyped by dynamic visionaries.

## Differentiation from Other Innovation Awards

The emergent field of social innovation has become a recognized area in philanthropy. The demand for funding of this type, however, has increased so rapidly that many worthwhile ideas fail to find backing from established funders. The J.M.K. Innovation Prize aims to fill a gap in this marketplace, not only by providing critical capital to the social innovation field, but also by taking risks on projects that may be seen by others as underdeveloped or too small. Another difference is that The J.M.K. Innovation Prize builds on the Fund’s longstanding areas of grant making interest while remaining flexible enough for fresh and unexpected thinking. This year, Prize recipients will ideally present innovative concepts that fall within, in-between or in a matter related to the Fund’s three funding categories:



2015 Applications per Region



### 1. The Environment

Reducing the pace and impacts of climate change.



### 2. Heritage Conservation

Conserving America’s greatest monuments and places.



### 3. Social Justice

Supporting decarceration and humane immigrant integration.



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## The Creation of The J.M.K. Innovation Prize

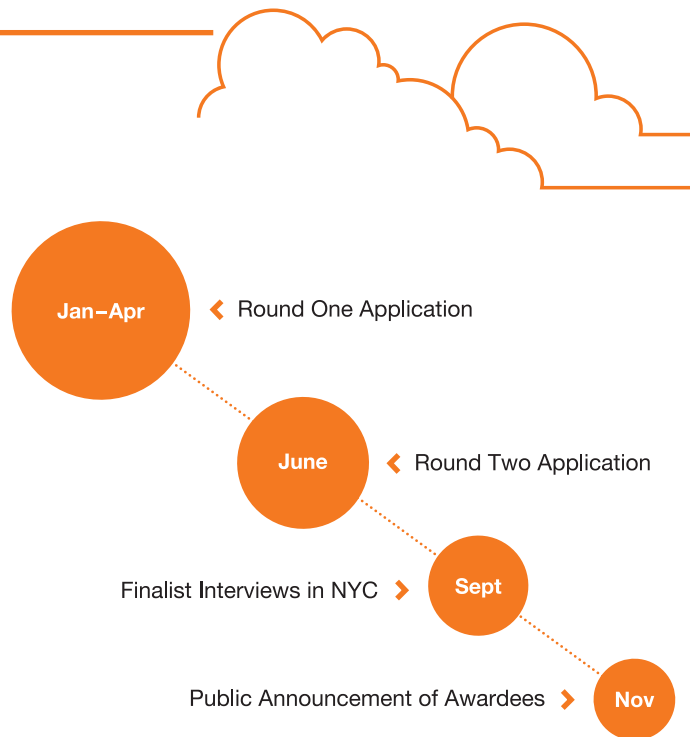
For three generations, The J.M. Kaplan Fund has provided catalytic funding for projects in their early stages of development. Whether a pilot project, a new organization, or a nascent initiative, work supported by the Fund has involved a certain level of measured risk that ultimately led to large-scale, transformative results. The J.M.K. Innovation Prize furthers this legacy by providing funding to visionary social entrepreneurs throughout the United States who are championing emerging social innovations. The J.M.K. Innovation Prize was launched in 2015 and currently runs on a biennial schedule. You can learn about the 2015 class of awardees at [JMKFund.org](http://JMKFund.org).

## Criteria for Selections

The J.M.K. Innovation Prize will be awarded to projects or ideas that: represent a game-changing answer to a clearly identified need; are innovative within, in-between or in a manner related to the Fund's three funding 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. Some cutting-edge social innovation can be more impactful using market solutions, but may require philanthropic seed capital. Unlike the 2015 edition of the Prize, then, mission-driven for-profit organizations are also eligible to apply for the 2017 Prize. In this case, funding would be in the form of philanthropic grants; the Fund would not take an equity stake in these companies.

## The 2017 Timeline

Interested individuals or teams may apply for The J.M.K. Innovation Prize from January 25 through April 28, 2017. A short application will be accessible at [JMKFund.org](http://JMKFund.org) starting on January 25. A sub-set of applicants will be invited to submit a second, longer application for the Prize in late spring. A review of these second round applications will take place throughout the summer, with finalists being flown to New York City in the fall to present their ideas to the trustees of The J.M. Kaplan Fund. The Prize's awardees will be publicly announced in November 2017.



## Award Details

Awardees are eligible to receive \$50,000 per year for three years, as well as a \$25,000 "bank" of funds available for technical assistance or targeted project expenses. Accordingly, the award amount will total up to \$175,000 per Prize recipient over the three-year period. These funds are intended to allow recipients to focus their attention on their social impact idea. Awardees will also receive ongoing, dedicated support from The J.M. Kaplan Fund, including organizational development opportunities at in-person convenings.

## Additional Information

You may sign up to receive email updates about the Prize by submitting your contact details at [JMKFund.org](http://JMKFund.org)

For additional information, please contact:  
[JMKInnovationPrize@JMKFund.org](mailto:JMKInnovationPrize@JMKFund.org)

You can also follow us on Twitter: [@TheJMKaplanFund](https://twitter.com/TheJMKaplanFund)

