

Youth Service Improvement Grants



SPRING 2017 GUIDELINES

APPLICATIONS DUE:
MARCH 10, 2017 3:00 PM EST



William T. Grant
FOUNDATION

Program Overview

The Youth Service Improvement Grants (YSIG) program supports activities intended to improve the quality of services for young people ages 5 to 25 in the five boroughs of New York City. Our goal is to help strengthen existing youth services by addressing issues or problems at the point of service, where staff and youth interact.

Applicants should describe the organization's mission and the specific youth services targeted for improvement. They should carefully describe an issue or problem at the point-of-service, outline how they identified the problem, and explain how it has limited the impact of their services. They should also propose a solution that addresses the issue and a feasible plan to implement the improvement. (More details about the required elements of the proposal are on page 5.)

These grants fund specific, standalone projects that will make services more effective and, ultimately, provide youth with better experiences. Applicants should focus on a compelling issue or problem with their current services and propose their best improvement idea. Possible problem areas for improvement include: the program curriculum and teaching materials, direct service skills of frontline staff, or a gap in current services. Applicants should not feel limited to these examples. We encourage applicants to examine other issues at the point of service and propose appropriate solutions.

Awards

Awards are \$25,000 each and support projects lasting between six months and two years. Although the Foundation is prepared to fully fund projects within our budget range, we are also willing to co-fund larger improvement efforts with other funders. Regardless of the size of the budget for the improvement project, we encourage applicants to commit some of their own resources through in-kind support or the use of unrestricted funds. We view this action as one indication of organizational commitment to the improvement project.

YSIG Review Committee

Applications for Youth Service Improvement Grants are reviewed by a dedicated volunteer committee of non-senior Foundation staff twice each year. Committee members have a diverse range of expertise, including finance, communications, and nonprofit administration. Thus, applications should be written to address an educated lay audience.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for consideration, applying organizations must:

- Have their own 501(c)(3) tax-exemption. If an applying organization is separately incorporated but tax-exempt through a group ruling, the applicant should supply the 501(c)(3) letter of the parent organization and documentation that it is part of the group. In this case, only the applying organization's budget will be considered under the YSIG eligibility guidelines. If the applying organization is a sub-unit of the parent organization and is not separately incorporated, the parent organization's budget will be considered under the eligibility guidelines.
- Have an operating budget between \$250,000 and \$5 million, if the organization serves youth only. If the applying organization serves youth and other populations, its operating budget must be less than \$20 million and its youth services budget must be between \$250,000 and \$5 million.
- Be a community-based organization (CBO) that provides youth services in any of the five boroughs of New York City. Public and private schools are not eligible for consideration.
- Serve youth ages 5 to 25. At least 80 percent of youth participating in the services targeted for improvement must be in this age range.
- Serve youth directly; applicant staff must have direct contact with youth at the point of service.

Organizations previously funded under the YSIG program cannot apply again for at least 18 months after the end of their award.

The YSIG program only supports improvement activities. The program does not support general operations; planning, needs assessment, and evaluation proposals will not be considered. Organizational improvement activities not focused on changes at the point-of-service, such as board development or financial system updates, are also ineligible. The YSIG program also does not fund building campaigns, scholarships, endowments, lobbying, or awards to individuals. We will not fund changes that simply increase the number of slots in a program (expansions). As such, all proposed budgetary items must be directly related to the proposed improvement.

Selection Criteria

Grantees will be selected according to the following criteria:

- **Clear description of the organization's mission and current youth services**
 - ▶ The applicant provides a clear, compelling explanation of how the current services create positive and meaningful experiences for youth.
- **Compelling rationale for improvement**
 - ▶ The applicant clearly identifies an issue at the point of service, describes how they discovered this problem, and explains how the problem has impacted its current services. The applicant has investigated the issue and has identified likely causes.
 - ▶ The applicant makes a strong case that the quality of services to youth would significantly improve if the issue were resolved.
- **Strength of the improvement plan**
 - ▶ The improvement will effectively address the issue.
 - ▶ The improvement can feasibly be implemented within the grant period. Also, the majority of the improvement activities must take place within the grant period, which begins on September 1, 2017.
 - ▶ A manager is identified to oversee the improvement plan and track progress across the timeline.
 - ▶ The applicant will collect useful information to help determine whether the improvement is resolving the identified issue.
 - ▶ The improvement can be sustained operationally and financially. If additional funds will be required to continue the improvement after the grant period, the applicant must provide a feasible plan to achieve sustainability.

Special Considerations

While our main objective is to help meaningful programs provide better services and increase their impact, we are particularly interested in some improvement program approaches. These considerations include:

- Programs for underserved populations. If appropriate, applicants should describe their participants' demographics.
- Staff training. Applicants proposing this should consider coaching of frontline staff using a well-developed tool (refer to *Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools, 2nd Edition* for guidance), or develop site directors' skills to conduct effective staff development with frontline staff. Applicants may want to mention whether frontline staff fall within the Foundation's definition of youth (ages 5 to 25).

Proposal Documents

Prepare the following three documents in your online application. These documents should be formatted using one-inch margins on all sides. All pages of the application should use a 12-point font, and be single-spaced. Do not use headers or footers. Save the document in .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf format.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (ONE PAGE TOTAL)

- What are your overall mission and goals?
- What services do you provide? (Briefly describe services for all populations served.)
- How do the current youth services targeted for improvement fit into your overall mission and achieve your stated goals and outcomes? (Note: Do not discuss here how the services will benefit youth after the improvement has been implemented. That will be included in the Narrative. In this section, we are interested in learning about the services as they stand.)
- Describe the financial health of your organization, including major trends, challenges, or unusual developments that have affected the funding, staffing, or enrollment of your youth services over the past two years.

2. NARRATIVE (FOUR PAGES TOTAL)

- **Youth Services Targeted for Improvement (one page maximum)**
 - ▶ What are the current youth services you want to improve? Describe the full range of your youth activities. What does a participant experience on a day-to-day basis in your program? Which and how many staff are involved with the services, and what is their training/experience?
 - ▶ How many youth participate each year or per cycle in the services you want to improve? If there is a recruitment or selection process, please describe it. How often do youth attend and for how long do they stay with the services? How many youth participate in an average session? What are the demographics and risk factors (if any) of these youth?
 - ▶ Describe the degree to which you have fulfilled your program goals and produced the intended youth outcomes. Please give examples/data.
- **Rationale for Improvement (one page maximum)**
 - ▶ What is the issue or problem you are trying to tackle? How has it impacted your program's ability to serve youth and/or produce the intended outcomes?

- ▶ What data, surveys, observations, or discussions with youth and staff brought this issue to your attention? How long has this issue existed? What are the possible underlying causes? Why is addressing it now a priority?
- ▶ How would youth experiences in the program be improved if the issue was addressed?

• **Improvement Plan (two pages maximum)**

- ▶ What is the improvement and how will it resolve the issue? Please clearly explain how the proposed improvement will change your services. After the improvements have been made, how will participants' experiences differ?
- ▶ How does the improvement plan respond directly to youth and/or staff feedback and needs?
- ▶ What are the specific goals and activities of the improvement plan? Who are the staff members or consultants who will implement the changes?
- ▶ What is the timeline for the improvement plan?
- ▶ Who will manage the improvement plan and how will they track progress against the timeline?
- ▶ How will staff know whether the improvement is resolving the issue? What information will be collected to assess short-term results?
- ▶ How will you sustain the improvement financially and programmatically? (This must account for ongoing staff training, staff turnover, etc.) If the improvement will result in an increase in program costs, how will you ensure financial sustainability after the grant ends? Please be as specific as possible.

3. IMPROVEMENT PROJECT BUDGET

The improvement budget numbers will be entered into text boxes online. Prepare and upload a budget justification using the Improvement Project Budget justification Form (available on our website). All items included on this budget must be directly related to the improvement. Identify any portion of the budget that will be funded by sources other than this grant. Identify both support from the organization (e.g., in-kind or support from unrestricted funds) and support from third parties. Completion of the budget justification for the improvement project budget is required.

Supporting Documents

Upload the following additional documents with your online application.

4. TOTAL ORGANIZATION BUDGET

5. TOTAL YOUTH SERVICES BUDGET (required for multiservice organizations)

If the applying organization serves only youth, simply state that. No additional budget is required beyond File 4: Total Organization Budget.

Multipurpose organizations (i.e., those not exclusively focused on youth) must upload a separate youth services budget in this section. The youth services budget must include all services to children and youth provided by the organization, not only the budget for services targeted for improvement.

6. INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Upload a list of institutional funders (foundations, corporations, etc.) that contributed more than \$10,000 in the current fiscal year. (In the case of multipurpose organizations, a list of supporters of youth programs should be submitted.)

7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

8. MOST RECENT AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OR CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT'S REVIEW REPORT

Upload the most recent audited financial statement or certified public accountant's review report. (2014 or more recent year). The audit or certified public accountant's review report must be uploaded with the application on the due date, and drafts are not acceptable. Please do not upload your tax forms/ returns.

9. 501(c)(3) TAX-EXEMPT LETTER FROM THE IRS

Upload the organization's 501 (c)(3) Tax Exempt Letter. Please make sure that the EIN or FIN number is listed on the 501 (c) (3).

Application Procedures

The online application will be open on January 6, 2017. Proposals are due by March 10, 2017 (3:00 p.m. Eastern Time), for decisions in September 2017.

1. Applications are accepted through our website, wtgrantfoundation.org.
 - Use the Log-in link at the top of any webpage.
 - If you have not submitted online with us before, you will need to register as the executive director and obtain a log-in ID and password.
2. On your homepage, select “Apply for Funding.”
 - For grant program, choose “Youth Service Improvement Grants Spring 2017.”
 - Complete the eligibility quiz.
 - After passing the eligibility quiz, you will be brought back to your home page. Click on the “Application–Youth Service Improvement Grants” task.
3. Fill in text boxes for the following information.
 - Contact Information.
 - ▶ Development officers or staff applying on behalf of the executive director should enter the executive director’s information in the “Executive Director contact information” section. They should enter their own information in the “YSIG Contacts” section if they are the contact person. Once in YSIG Contacts, click “add,” under “role,” select “YSIG contact,” then click “add new person” and fill in their own contact information.
 - Organization Information.
 - Project Information.
4. Upload the nine files listed in Proposal Documents and Supporting Documents (on pages 5–7).
5. Go to Review and Submit and click “View PDF.” This will generate your online application. Review the information to make sure your materials are in order.

Note: Due to recent web browser security upgrades, the PDF might not open in a separate window. If this happens, do the following:

 - ▶ Turn off all pop-up blockers or go to your pop-up blocker settings and add “easygrants.wtgrantfoundation.org” to the list of Allowed Sites, which permits pop-ups from specific websites.
 - ▶ Hold down the CTRL key and click the “View PDF” button.
6. Return to “Review and Submit” and click “Submit” at the top of the page. The system will send an email confirmation of the submission.

Questions regarding the Youth Service Improvement Grants program may be sent to Sharon Brewster: sbrewster@wtgrantfdn.org.



www.wtgrantfoundation.org

570 Lexington Avenue, 18th Fl.
New York, NY 10022
t: 212.752.0071
f. 212.752.1398

info@wtgrantfdn.org