William T. Grant
F O U N D A T I O N

Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants

Applications Due : September 30, 2019, 3:00 p.m. EST

Contents

Overview

The Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants (YSCG) program supports activities to strengthen the organizational infrastructure of nonprofit organizations in the five boroughs of New York City that provide direct services to young people ages 5 to 25. The long-term goal of the YSCG program is to help build stronger, more stable youth-serving organizations that will ultimately improve the lives of young people. These grants provide general operating support to allow grantees the flexibility to determine the best way to allocate the funds to address their capacity-building needs.

Applicants should describe their organization's mission and youth programming. The Foundation expects that applicants will do some type of formal or informal assessment to help identify their capacity-building goal(s). Capacity-building goals may include: financial management, board recruitment and development, human resource management, staff training, fundraising, strategic planning, information technology, leadership development, communications, and evaluation systems. We welcome other compelling needs beyond this list. Strong proposals will make the case that addressing and accomplishing the goal(s) will result in a strengthened organization that can yield stronger services for youth.

A New Program Derived from our Focus on Reducing Inequality in Youth Outcomes

In 2018, we took a fresh look at our Youth Service Improvement Grants program in the context of inequality in New York City. Three themes stood out in our review. First, the geography of inequality is stark, with poverty rates well over 40 percent in some neighborhoods and too few of our grant dollars going to those communities. Because economic and racial inequality are intertwined, better serving the highest poverty neighborhoods would also mean supporting Dominican, Puerto Rican, Afro-Caribbean, African American, and Southeast Asian youth. Second, a purely place-based approach to grantmaking would neglect under-served communities that are more geographically dispersed. People of Mexican-descent are now the third largest immigrant group in the city, have high rates of poverty but few established organizations tailored to their needs. LGBTQ youth are another group that is too often overlooked and whose well-being demands greater support. Third, our review noted the lack of racial, ethnic, gender identity and sexual-orientation diversity among executive directors and CEOs of youth-serving organizations.

Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants are part of an entirely new program that seeks to capitalize on these insights and reduce inequality by focusing on small youth-serving nonprofit organizations (with operating budgets between $250,000-$1 million) that meet specific eligibility criteria.

Eligible youth-serving, nonprofit organizations must meet at least one of the following criteria related to the Foundation's focus on reducing inequality in youth outcomes:

1. Currently provide direct youth services in one of the ten community districts identified as having the highest community risk to child well-being by the Citizen's Committee for Children, or;

2. Have well-defined existing programming tailored specifically to Mexican-descent or LGBTQ youth, or;

3. Have leaders (Executive Director or CEO) who are people of color and/or LGBTQ individuals.

Awards

Awards are $60,000 each and provide general operating support to allow grantees the flexibility to allocate the funds for organizational capacity-building needs over a 3-year term that begins on March 1, 2020. The award provides $30,000 in the first year to get the work off the ground, $20,000 in the second year, and $10,000 in the third year. In the third year, the grantee is required to obtain new outside matching funding of $10,000.

The Foundation will award three new Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants annually.

In addition to grant support, grantees will participate in technical assistance activities designed to help them meet their organizational capacity-building goals. We have partnered with Community Resource Exchange (CRE) to provide one-on-one support as well as learning community cohort meetings over the three-year term of the grant. One-on-one support will allow each grantee to receive customized assistance that will help them work toward and achieve their core organizational goal(s). The learning community cohort meetings will focus on peer-based learning and coaching, allowing grantees to discuss challenges, seek advice from peers and colleagues, and collaborate across projects in a safe space. YSCG grantees are required to participate in technical assistance.

Eligibility

All YSCG applicants must be youth-serving community-based nonprofit organizations based in any of the five boroughs of New York City whose staff have direct programmatic contact with youth at the point of service. The applicant must meet **at least one** of the reducing inequality criteria and **all** organizational criteria.

Reducing Inequality Criteria

Applicants must meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

1. **Provide youth services in one of the ten community districts identified as having the highest community risk to child well-being by the Citizens' Committee for Children:**

Bronx:

- CD 1 – Mott Haven
- CD 2 – Hunts Point
- CD 3 – Morrisania
- CD 4 – Concourse/Highbridge
- CD 5 – University Heights
- CD 6 – East Tremont
- CD 7 – Bedford Park
- CD 9 – Union Port/Soundview

Brooklyn:

- CD 5 – East New York
- CD16 – Brownsville

Organizational offices do not need to be based in one of these community districts, but organizations must currently provide youth service programming in one of the districts. Organizations can identify their community districts on the New York City Department of City Planning's Community District Profiles webpage (https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/).

2. **Have existing well-defined programming tailored specifically to Mexican-descent youth or to LGBTQ youth; or**

With New York City being a diverse metropolis, it is likely that many organizations serve young people that fit into these groups. However, if services were not specifically designed for these populations, then the organization is not eligible to apply under this criterion. Organizations must have existing well-defined services that are specifically designed for Mexican-descent or LGBTQ youth to apply under this criterion.

3. **Have leaders (e.g., executive directors or CEOs) who are people of color and/or LGBTQ individuals.**

Organizational Criteria

Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. **Serve youth ages 5 to 25. At least 80 percent of youth participating in the services must be in this age range.**

2. **Have at least 80 percent of the service recipients be youth if the organization also serves adults.**

3. **Have their own 501(c)(3) tax-exemption. If an applying organization is separately incorporated but tax-exempt through a group ruling (religious institutions), the applicant should supply the 501(c)(3) letter of the parent organization and documentation that it is part of the group.**

4. **Have an operating budget between $250,000 and $1 million.**

5. **Have most recent financial statements reviewed by an auditor, per New York State law requirement. If the organization's annual budget is under $750,000, then certified public accountant's reviewed financial statements are required.**

6. **Have filed IRS Form 990.**

What we do not support

The YSCG program does not support:

- Capital fund projects, scholarships, endowments, lobbying, real estate purchases, or awards to individuals

- Public and/or private schools

- National or international organizations

- Organizations that are based outside of the 5 boroughs of New York City

- Organizations that utilize fiscal sponsors/conduits

Selection Criteria

Applications for Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants are reviewed by a dedicated volunteer committee of Foundation staff once a 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. If you use acronyms that may not be familiar to a lay audience, please be sure to spell them out the first time. If you use terms that are not commonly known, please provide relevant context and explanations.

Grantees will be selected according to the following criteria:

1. **Clear and compelling description of the organization's mission and current youth services**

2. **Compelling rationale for organizational capacity-building**

   – The applicant has already undertaken an initial assessment (informal or formal) to identify its organizational capacity challenge(s).

   – The applicant clearly identifies one or more organizational problems to be addressed, and explains how the problems have adversely impacted the organizational functioning.

   – The applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of their capacity challenges and the underlying causes.

3. **Identification and strength of capacity-building plan**

   – The applicant clearly identifies a capacity-building project(s) and has a well-reasoned plan to implement the identified project(s). The plan effectively addresses the capacity problem: it is targeted at the causes of the problem, it is likely to be effective, and it is sustainable.

– The applicant describes meaningful goals and proposed activities of the plan.

– The applicant identifies the key staff and/or consultants to be involved in the proposed activities and identifies a capable staff member or manager to oversee the plan and track progress across the timeline.

– The applicant outlines how it will collect and use information to determine whether the capacity building project is successful.

– The applicant convincingly describes how the newly built capacity will be sustained operationally and financially.

Proposal Documents

Prepare the following two documents for your online application: Background Information and Narrative. Applicants must use the Foundation's forms on the website, which will include the following guiding questions. Do not edit the forms or delete instructions from them. Items 3-8 should be uploaded to the online application.

1. **Background information on the organization (one-page total)**

   – Describe the organization's overall mission and goals.

   – Describe the financial health of your organization, including major trends, challenges, or unusual developments that have affected the funding, staffing, and activities of your youth services over the past two years.

2. **Narrative (six pages maximum)**

   • **Description of current youth services (two pages maximum). Do not mention the capacity-building project in this section.**

   – Describe current youth services, including participation in the programming: What does a participant experience on a day-to-day basis? How often do youth attend and for how long do they stay with the services? How many youth participate in an average session?

   – If you have existing services to Mexican-descent or LGBTQ youth, please state that and provide an in-depth description of those current services. Describe how programming is designed and implemented.

   – Which and how many staff are involved with the services? What is the training and experience of frontline staff?

   – Describe the degree to which you have fulfilled your organization's goals. Please give examples and, if available, data.

   • **Rationale for organizational capacity-building (two pages maximum)**

   – Clearly identify and explain the organizational problem that you are seeking to address. Describe how this problem has adversely impacted your organization and your ability to serve youth.

– Discuss how you identified the problem. What information derived from your informal or formal assessment (e.g., data, surveys, observations, or discussions with youth, staff, or Board) brought this issue to your attention? How long has this issue existed? What are the likely underlying causes?

– Given your understanding of the problem and your investigation of its causes, explain why addressing the problem would mitigate its adverse impact on your organization and youth services.

- **Organizational capacity-building plan (two pages maximum)**

– Describe the capacity-building goal(s) and plan (include proposed activities) for effectively addressing the organizational problem and cause(s) of the problem that you have identified.

– Clearly detail how the proposed plan will change your organizational capacity and services.

– Identify a staff member to manage the capacity-building project and describe how this person will track the project's progress. Also, identify staff members and/or consultants who will be involved in the proposed project and discuss how they will implement the changes.

– Describe how the organization will determine whether the project is addressing the problem: What information will be collected to assess short-term results?

– Describe how the capacity that the grant develops will be sustained financially and operationally, accounting for challenges such as ongoing costs, training needs, or staff turnover.

3. **Total organization budget**

4. **List of institutional funders of the organization**

– Upload a list of institutional funders (foundations, corporations, government, etc.) that contributed more than $10,000 in the current fiscal year. (In the case of multi-service organizations, note which of the funders earmarked support for the youth services.)

5. **List of board of directors**

6. **Most recent audited financial statement or certified public accountant's reviewed financial statements**

   – Upload the most recent audited financial statement or certified public accountant's reviewed financial statements (most recent year). The audit or certified public accountant's reviewed financial statements must be uploaded with the application on the due date, and drafts are not acceptable.

7. **IRS Form 990.**

8. **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 July 30, 2019. Proposals are due by September 30, 2019 (3:00 p.m. EST), for decisions in March 2020.

1. Applications are accepted through our website, www.wtgrantfoundation.org.

- Use the "Log In" link at the top of any page.

- If you have not submitted online with us before, you will need to register as the executive director or CEO, and obtain a log-in ID and password.

2. On your homepage, select "Apply for Funding."

- For grant program, choose "Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants 2019."

- Complete the eligibility quiz.

- After passing the eligibility quiz, you will be brought back to your home page. Click on the "Application–Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants" task.

3. Fill in text boxes for the following information.

- Contact Information

    (Staff applying on behalf of the executive director or CEO should enter that leader's information in the "Executive Director or CEO contact information" section. They should enter their own information in the "YSCG Contacts" section if they are the contact person. Once in YSCG Contacts, click "add," under "role," select "YSCG contact," then click "add new person" and fill in their own contact information.)

- Organization Information.

- Project Information.

4. Upload the six files (items 3-8) listed in Proposal Documents and Supporting Documents (on pages 10-11).

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.

- If the PDF does not open, 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.

Must my organization fit the Foundation's reducing inequality eligibility criteria?

Yes. Applicants must meet at least one of the reducing inequality criteria in order to be eligible. Applicants must also meet all organizational criteria for eligibility.

Our organization is not located in any of the ten community districts identified as having the highest community risk to child well-being, but we provide youth services in one of the districts. Are we eligible to apply for the Youth Service Capacity-Building Grant program?

Yes, any organization that fits the YSCG eligibility criteria and has an established youth-serving program in one of the identified 10 community districts may apply for the YSCG program.

Many Mexican and/or LGBTQ youth participate in our programs, but our programming was not intentionally designed to serve these populations. Would we qualify to apply to the YSCG grant program?

No, your existing programming must be created and tailored specifically for Mexican and/or LGBTQ youth. If you meet either of the other two eligibility criteria, though, you would still be eligible to apply.

My organization meets more than one of the reducing inequality eligibility criteria, does that improve my organization's chances of receiving a grant?

No, meeting more than one eligibility criterion does not improve your organization's chances of receiving a grant. As long as your organization meets at least one of the eligibility criteria, then you are eligible to apply.

ASK THE GRANTS COORDINATOR

What are some examples of eligible organizational capacity-building projects?

- **Financial Management**

  – Development of financial systems and improvement of accounting practices

  – Software upgrades and staff training

- **Board Development**

  – Plans to recruit new board members and/or train existing board members

  – Board retreat

  – Creation of board policies

- **Human Resource Management**

  – Personnel policy development

  – Staff training

- **Fundraising**

  – Development and implementation of fundraising strategy

- **Organization/Program Planning**

  – Strategic planning

  – Staff retreat

  – Branding exercise

- **Information Technology**

  – Software upgrade for office, database, website, etc.

- **Leadership Development**

  – Leadership succession planning

  – Creation and implementation of volunteer management/recruitment plan

  – Management, leadership training for staff

- **Communications**

  – Development of communications strategy

  – Design and staff training for newsletter, brochure, annual reports, etc.

- **Evaluation and outcomes systems**

  – Organization or program evaluation

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