William T. Grant
FOUNDATION

Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants

2023 Application Guidelines
Updated May 2023

Application Deadline:
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Contents

Program Overview

The Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants (YSCG) program supports *activities to strengthen the organizational infrastructure of small 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 tackle inequality in youth outcomes. These grants provide general operating support so that small nonprofits (operating budgets between $250,000 and $1 million) can determine the best way to address capacity-building needs that have been identified through a formal or informal assessment. Capacity-building needs may include:

- Financial management
- Board recruitment and development
- Human resource management
- Staff training
- Fundraising
- Strategic planning
- Information technology
- Leadership development
- Communications
- Evaluation systems.

We welcome other compelling needs beyond this list. Strong proposals will make the case that addressing the capacity-building need will result in a strengthened organization that can yield stronger services for youth.

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, 2024.

- 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 matching funding of $10,000. We invite organizations to leverage the Foundation's award to obtain new funding partners.

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

ⓘ POST-AWARD

In addition to grant support, grantees participate in technical assistance activities designed to help them meet their organizational capacity-building goals. We have partnered with Community Resource Exchange to provide free one-on-one support as well as learning community 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 achieve their capacity-building goal(s). The learning community 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 supportive space.

Eligibility

The YSCG program awards grants only to youth-serving community-based nonprofit organizations in any of the five boroughs of New York City whose staff have direct programmatic contact with youth at the point of service. To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be a youth serving community-based nonprofit organization in any of New York City's five boroughs
- Have direct contact with youth at the point of service
- **Meet at least one of the reducing inequality criteria**
- **Meet all organizational criteria.**

Organizations previously funded under either of the Foundation's Youth Service Grant programs cannot apply again for at least 18 months after the end of their award.

Reducing Inequality Criteria

The YSCG program is aligned with the Foundation's broader focus on reducing inequality in youth outcomes. Inequality in New York City is multifaceted, reflected in racial and economic segregation across boroughs and neighborhoods, in inadequate services for Mexican-descent youth and LGBTQ+ youth, and in a lack of racial, ethnic, gender identity, and sexual-orientation diversity among executive directors and CEOs of youth-serving organizations. We seek to build the capacity of youth-serving nonprofit organizations that confront these challenges.

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

1. Currently provide youth services in one of the eleven 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

   CD 12 – Williamsbridge

   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 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

   Many programs serve Mexican-descent and LGBTQ+ youth, but only those organizations with programming specifically designed for these populations are eligible for consideration under this criterion.

3. Have leaders (executive directors or CEOs) who are people of color and/or members of the LGBTQ+ community

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 services must be in this age range.

   ○ If the organization also serves adults, at least 80 percent of the service recipients must be youth ages 5-25.

   ○ The applicant's staff must have direct contact with youth at the point of service.

2. Have their own 501(c)(3) tax-exemption or operate under a fiscal sponsor that is a registered 501(c)(3). Confirmation of fiscal sponsorship agreement is required. 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.

3. The applying organization (not the fiscal sponsor) must have an operating budget between $250,000 and $1 million.

   ○ 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 $1 million.

4. Have audited financial statements or certified financial statements from the applying organization or from the fiscal sponsor if the organization is operating under fiscal sponsorship.

5. Have a 990 for the applying organization (or explain your exemption). Or, if operating under fiscal sponsorship, the fiscal sponsor must have a 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 five boroughs of New York City.

Application Materials

> **ⓘ NOTE**
>
> The Foundation accepts applications only through our online application system, which is accessible through our website. Applicants must use the Foundation's forms, which can be downloaded from the Resources section of the YSCG webpage, or from within the online application. The forms include guiding questions from the background information and narrative sections below. Do not edit the forms or delete instructions from them. Only applications that use our forms will be reviewed. All documents should be uploaded to the online application.

All applications must include the following materials:

1. **Background information on the organization (two pages maximum)**

- Describe the organization's overall mission and goals.

- Describe which reducing inequality criterion you meet. If your organization provides youth services in one or more of the eleven community districts, please state what percentage of your organization's overall work is carried out in each community district(s) you use to qualify for this criterion.

- Describe the financial stability 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?

- Which and how many staff are involved with the services? What is the training and experience of staff, including frontline staff who are involved with youth services?

- If you have existing services for Mexican-descent or LGBTQ+ youth, please state that and provide an in-depth description of those services. Describe how programming is designed and implemented to meet the particular needs of that group.

- 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 challenge 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 challenge. 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 underlying causes?

- Given your understanding of the challenge and your investigation of its causes, explain why addressing the problem is necessary to strengthen 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 challenge and its cause(s) over the 3-year term of the grant. If you are proposing a strategic plan, please clearly explain how it relates to your capacity-building goals.

- 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 implement the proposed project and discuss how they will be involved in implementation.

- 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 ofmulti-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) for the applying organization or fiscal sponsor if the organization is operating under fiscal sponsorship. Drafts are not accepted.

7. **IRS Form 990**

- A copy of the 990 must be uploaded by the applying organization for the applying organization or fiscal sponsor if the organization is operating under fiscal sponsorship.

8. **501(c)(3) tax-exempt letter from the IRS**

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

Review Criteria

> **ⓘ NOTE**
>
> Applications for Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants are reviewed by a dedi-
> cated 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.

Eligible applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

Clear description of the organization's mission and current youth services

- The applicant provides a clear, convincing explanation of how the organization
  and its current services create positive and meaningful experiences for youth.

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 challenges to be
  addressed, and explains how the problems have adversely impacted organizational
  functioning.

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

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 challenge: it is targeted at the causes of the challenge, it is
  likely to be effective, and it is sustainable.

- The applicant describes meaningful goals and proposed activities in the plan. The
  plan should cover three years of activities, although not every activity must last
  this long.

- 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 three-year 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.

Appendix A: Ask the Grants Administrator

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

Yes. Applicants must meet 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 eleven 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 YSCG program?

Yes, an organization that fits the YSCG organizational eligibility criteria and has an established youth-serving program in one of the identified 11 community districts may apply for the YSCG program. Applicants will need to demonstrate that a significant portion of the organization's overall work is carried out in the community district(s).

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 tailored specifically for Mexican and/or LGBTQ youth. If you meet either of the other two reducing inequality eligibility criteria, though, you would still be eligible to apply.

In the application, do I need to identify the funding source for $10,000 matching funds for the third year of the grant?

No. The source of the $10,000 match does not need to be identified in the application.

My organization does not currently provide services for LGBTQ or Mexican-descent youth, but we would like to expand our existing services to do so. Are we eligible to apply?

Organizations that do not currently serve but want to expand their existing services to include LGBTQ or Mexican-descent youth are not eligible for consideration, unless they meet either of the other two reducing inequality criteria.

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 reducing inequality eligibility criteria, then you are eligible to apply.

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

Financial Management

- Budgeting and financial planning / forecasting
- Financial literacy training for executive directors and board members
- Development of financial management systems, policies and practices 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 and practices
- Board structure review and planning

Human Resource Management

- HR policy development
- Staff training and development (e.g., supervision skills)
- Team building and effectiveness
- Recruitment and onboarding practices

Fundraising

- Development and implementation of fundraising strategy

Organization/Program Planning

- Strategic planning
- Theory of Change
- Business planning
- Program planning
- Staff planning retreat
- Branding exercise

Information Technology

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

Leadership Development

- Leadership succession planning
- Leadership coaching
- Creation and implementation of volunteer management/recruitment plan
- Management, leadership training for staff

Marketing and Communications

- Development of marketing and communications strategies
- Rebranding
- Design and staff training for newsletter, brochure, annual reports, etc.
- Evaluation and outcomes systems
- Organization or program evaluation

Other areas:

- Organizational assessment
- Change management

Appendix B: Recent Youth Service Capacity-Building Grants

Organziation	Background	Need	Capacity-Building Plan
Teachers & Writers Collaborative	Teachers & Writers Collaborative partners with New York City public schools to provide creative writing workshops, led by professional writers, where participating students learn how to analyze plays, poetry, paintings, and fiction through an artistic lens.	The organization's primary sources of funding are fees from partner public schools and support from government agencies, but these funding streams are vulnerable to budget cuts and restructuring.	Teachers & Writers plans to hire a full-time development director to work with the Executive Director to build long-term individual, corporate, and foundation funding plans.
The Gardiner Foundation	The Gardiner Foundation's flagship program, Tru Talk, provides a safe, confidential space for youth to build relationships within their community and discuss current issues impacting young people with mentors including local experts and volunteers.	A recent self-assessment by Gardiner's board of directors identified program planning, development, and program sustainability as the biggest challenges facing the orgaznition, particularly as it aims to expand to serve more young people.	The Gardiner Foundation will hire a local school principal as a program planning consultant to build a clearly defined program expansion plan for the Tru Talk youth program, which will include staff recruitment and a fundraising strategy.
Brooklyn Boatworks	In Brooklyn Boatworks' school-based boat-building program, students work together to construct a two-seat sailboat using a curriculum that incorporates STEM lessons and promotes positive social-emotional development.	The organization lacks a centralized database of participants, which has led to challenges related to tracking student involvement and engagement with programming, in addition to making it difficult to conduct evaluations and communicate with partner schools.	Brooklyn Boatworks will develop a database system that will be integrated with their website and used for internal and external communication, participant monitoring, and program evaluation.

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