Strengthening Partner Capacity

2024 Application Preview

The Foundation is interested in funding requests that, "build and/or strengthen the systems, structures, cultures, skills, resources, and power that organizations need to serve their communities."

Funding Availability

- Grants are for one year, with a maximum award of $30,000, including administrative overhead (at 20%). **We will not consider applications for multi-year awards through this funding opportunity**.
- A total of $1,050,000 is available in 2024, with $350,000 awarded in each of three grant cycles.

Here are some examples of the sorts of things the Foundation might be willing to fund, just to get you thinking. This is not a complete list of everything we'll consider!

- Board/Leadership development
- Diversity, equity, inclusion
- Evaluation/Evaluation design
- Mergers/affiliations
- Organizational development (e.g., strategic planning; marketing, development, and/or communications support; process improvement; succession planning)

- Professional development
- Program design and planning (not service delivery; contact us if you have questions!)
- Small capital projects/equipment purchases
- Staff mental wellness support
- Technology planning/purchasing
- What are your ideas? (We're happy to discuss them!)

What We're Not Interested in Funding

- Existing staff positions (we'll consider start-up/temporary/short-term positions)
- General operating support
- Multi-year projects
- Service delivery or program implementation (these are a better fit for our Programs & Services portfolio).
- Reminder: Organizations must currently provide services to our focus populations and geographies to be eligible.

Before You Start Looking at the Questions

Please drop us an email (info@thetowerfoundation.org) to let us know what accommodations would make it easier for you to apply.

Organization Information

We're looking for some pretty standard information here. Where do you work, whom do you serve, and what do you do?

1. Which of the Tower Foundation counties does your organization serve? (Barnstable, MA; Dukes, MA; Erie, NY; Essex, MA; Nantucket, MA; Niagara, NY)
2. What age groups does your organization serve? (Children, Adolescents, Young Adults)
3. Organization's current/most recent annual operating budget
4. In what issue areas does your organization work? (intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health, substance use disorders)
5. What is your organization's mission?
6. What services/programs does your organization provide? Highlight existing programs within the Foundation's service area.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Information

The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation strives to incorporate a deliberate diversity-equity-inclusion (DEI) lens in its grantmaking practice. To help the Foundation understand more about organizations and the beneficiaries they support, we are asking grant applicants to provide us with a better sense of how their organization's leadership, workforce, and governance reflect DEI. The Foundation will give preference to applications from organizations led by people of color and/or people with disabilities and that reflect the communities they serve. No organization will be excluded from consideration solely because it is not led by people of color and/or people with disabilities.

The Foundation recognizes that DEI extends beyond race and disability. We have chosen to focus on these two characteristics because of our interest in serving people with intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities, and in recognition of the systemic racism that persists in our culture and institutions.

1. Does your organization currently collect demographic data about:

	Yes	No
Staff		
Board of Directors		
People Served		

2. If your organization collects demographic data, please enter the number of individuals of each race/ethnicity for each role in the chart below to give us a sense of your organization's racial and ethnic diversity. (Continue to the next question if your organization does not collect this information.) For "People Served," please consider those served in the last fiscal or calendar year.

Race/Ethnicity (Please enter numbers for each)	Executive Director(s)	Staff (excluding Executive Director)	Board of Directors	People Served
African American/Black				
American Indian/Alaskan Native				
Asian				
Hispanic/Latina/ Latino				
Middle Eastern/North African				
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander				
White				
Biracial/ Multiracial				
Other/Unknown				

3. Is your organization led by a person with a disclosed disability? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

4. **What additional information about your organization's diversity and inclusion practices would you like to share?** (*No character limit*)
The Tower Foundation will give preference to organizations that are led by people who reflect the identities (e.g., race or disability) and/or lived experiences (e.g., addiction, mental illness) of the populations they serve. Consider telling us how you incorporate the perspectives of the populations you serve in your work, and what you are doing to make systems, access, and outcomes more equitable.
Please note: Equal employment opportunity or non-discrimination policies do not constitute diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

Project Details

1. **Project Summary: What are you trying to accomplish?** (*300 character limit*)
Imagine explaining your project in two very short sentences (or one tweet). That's what we're looking for here. This is the express elevator pitch. Don't worry, we promise to keep reading.

2. **What do you want to do?** (*No character limit*)
This is the longer, slower elevator pitch. We're looking for a high level, general description of what you're trying to accomplish. Don't get into the concrete details of the project yet — that's going to come up later in the "How do you want to do it?" section.

3. **Why do you want to do it?** (*No character limit*)
Tell us why you see your capacity building project as important and/or exciting for your organization. Give us some background information to help us understand the issue(s) and how it affects your organization.

    This is also where you'd want to make some really clear connections between your organization and the Foundation's focus areas, including a description of the people you serve. Organizations that are more closely aligned with the Foundation's focus areas are more likely to be competitive in their applications for capacity building support, especially those serving young people who also have intersecting identities as members of historically marginalized communities (e.g., Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Indigenous Peoples, disability, housing insecure, immigrant/refugee, LGBTQIA+).

4. **How do you want to do it?** (*No character limit*)
Now you can get into the nuts and bolts of your capacity building activities! Be as detailed and concrete as you like. We think it's important to include the voices and perspectives of the people you serve in your work whenever possible. As applicable, please let us know how your request reflects community input and how the people you serve may be involved in carrying out this project. If your project will depend on the strength of local partnerships, be sure to describe where these stand and what you'll do to develop and nurture them.

5. **What do you need to do it?** (*No character limit*)
Since you're applying for a grant, we assume you need money. Give us a sense of how much money you need and what you expect to spend it on. The more detail you can provide in this section, the easier it is for us to make partial awards if we can't fund your request fully. If you have already received quotes for equipment or any consulting services you need, it's helpful to let us know.

Unless otherwise communicated by a Program Officer, the administrative overhead rate for Strengthening Partner Capacity grants is 20%. The administrative and overhead rate for colleges and universities is capped at 10%.

Even though this section seems focused on the dollars, some required resources might not come with a price tag. If it makes sense, you can also use this section to discuss less tangible requirements (e.g., culture change, interagency cooperation, community engagement).

6. **Budget Requirements**
   The Foundation does not require a budget or quotes for Strengthening Partner Capacity grants.

What comes next?

The Foundation might contact some applicants for clarification or more information if needed. Most applicants will receive a grant award or decline within about six weeks of the submission deadline without any additional follow-up from the Foundation. If you haven't heard from us within six weeks, please make sure to check your spam/junk email folder. If you don't find an email from us in there, or if you have any other questions about your request, contact us.

How to Contact the Foundation

If you have questions about the Foundation's Strengthening Partner Capacity funding opportunity, please contact us. You can send us an email at info@thetowerfoundation.org or schedule a 30-minute phone call with a Program Officer at https://towerfdn.link/30-min-call