Grant Guidelines: Community Change

The Peter and Elizabeth Tower Foundation accepts Community Change inquiries three times each year. This document offers guidance for its Community Change grants portfolio, including: what the Foundation means by "community change," the populations the Foundation aims to serve, its goals for these populations, applicant eligibility requirements, how to submit an inquiry through the online grants portal, and the 2018 submission dates.

What Does the Foundation Mean by "Community Change?"

The Foundation's Community Change portfolio, formerly "Healthy Communities," is intended to support communities in establishing accessible, holistic, integrated, collaborative services benefitting children, adolescents, and young adults affected by intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness, and/or substance use disorders. Community Change grants generally support collaborative work intended to effect community-wide and/or systems-level change (i.e., efforts to eliminate structural barriers preventing the Foundation's populations of interest from accessing services). **Requests to create or expand programs operated or managed by a single agency are more appropriate for the Foundation's Programs & Services grant program**.

What populations does the Foundation serve?

The Tower Foundation supports programs that improve the lives of young people age zero to 26 affected by intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness, and/or substance use disorders as defined here:

*An **Intellectual disability** is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. Intellectual functioning refers to general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, and problem solving.*

Adaptive behavior comprises three skill types:
- *Conceptual skills (e.g., language and literacy; money; time; number concepts; self-direction)*
- *Social skills (e.g., interpersonal skills, social responsibility; self-esteem, gullibility, naïveté, social problem-solving; ability to follow rules/obey laws and avoid being victimized)*
- *Practical skills (e.g., personal care, occupational skills; healthcare; travel/transportation; schedules/routines; safety use of money use of telephone.*
  (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2011)

*A **learning disability** is a lifelong condition which interferes with the ability to learn. It is a neurological disorder that affects the ability of the brain to process, store and respond to information. There are different types of learning disabilities that can affect different areas of processing, such as learning to read, reading comprehension, writing and spelling, organizing written and spoken language, mathematical operations, decision making, and the development of fine motor skills. Individuals with LD may be particularly gifted in other skills and are typically of normal intelligence. (American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus)*

***Mental illness** includes medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.*

Serious mental illnesses include major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder. (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

***Substance use disorders** occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically and functionally significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)*

What Does the Foundation Want to Accomplish?

For each of the populations it supports, the Foundation has identified a set of grantmaking goals. Community Change grants should promote one or more of these goals:

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

1. Children with intellectual disabilities are identified early and receive services that meet their evolving needs.
2. Young people with intellectual disabilities are engaged in meaningful social, vocational, and educational pursuits.
3. Families understand intellectual disabilities and secure needed supports.
4. Communities embrace persons with intellectual disabilities and provide them with a full-range of supports and opportunities to engage in community life.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

1. Children with learning disabilities are identified early, diagnosed and connected to services that meet their on-going individual needs.
2. Youth with learning disabilities understand how they learn and pursue resources that support them accordingly.
3. Young adults are confident and do not view their learning disability as a liability.
4. Young adults with learning disabilities are ready for work and/or educational pursuits.
5. Families are informed about learning disabilities and are able to identify and navigate available services.
6. Communities value persons with learning disabilities and accommodate their needs.

MENTAL ILLNESS

1. Stigma related to mental illness is eliminated.
2. Children with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges are identified early and connected to appropriate services.
3. Young people with mental health challenges understand and manage their conditions and behaviors.
4. Families understand mental health challenges and help members live productive lives.
5. Communities offer meaningful opportunities and appropriate support to young people with mental health challenges and their families.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

1. Community members understand the prevalence and harmful effects of alcohol and drugs, and work to address them.
2. Resources for substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery are readily available.
3. Families provide safe environments that support healthy choices about alcohol and drugs.
4. Young people make healthy choices about alcohol and drugs.

What Types of Projects Will the Foundation Consider?

- Projects **must** focus on children, adolescents, or young adults (up to age 26) affected by intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

- The Tower Foundation is open to multi-year grants, but does not have specific guidance for annual or total budget amounts. Owing to their community-wide or systems-level emphases, Community Change grants will likely be larger than those seen through its Programs & Services portfolio (which typically range from $10,000-40,000 per year). We are most interested in establishing a level of support appropriate to the work's scope and duration.

- The majority of grant funds should be for expenses that are new to the organization as a result of the proposed project.

How Much Funding is Available?

The Foundation anticipates allocating a **total** of $500,000 for its 2018 Community Change portfolio. While all Community Change grants must support work within the regions in which the Foundation funds and benefit one or more of the populations it serves, there is no pre-defined allocation of funds to any of its geographies or funding categories.

Who Can Apply for a Grant?

Organizations **located in** and serving primarily residents of the following areas are eligible to apply for Tower Foundation grants:

Massachusetts
- Barnstable County
- Dukes County
- Essex County
- Nantucket County

New York
- Erie County
- Niagara County

Additionally, applicants must be:

- not-for-profit organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation that are not private foundations, or
- not-for-profit public benefit corporations, or
- public and diocesan school districts, or
- private and charter schools.

What Won't the Foundation Fund?

The Foundation does not fund programs or projects that:
- provide private benefits for any grant recipient or affiliated person,
- attempt to influence legislation or intervene in any political campaign,
- contribute to capital improvements or capital campaigns
- consist of scholarships, services, or treatment for specific individuals,
- consist largely of general operating support.

How Does My Organization Apply for a Grant?

Community Change inquiries are submitted through the Foundation's online grants portal. Once received, the Foundation reviews each submission to determine whether it wishes to explore the opportunity further through a phone call or meeting. Applicants will be notified by email approximately

three weeks after submitting their preliminary grant request as to whether the Foundation will invite further discussion. Further discussion is not an indication of likely support. There is no specific time line for development or award of Community Change grants, as projects vary in their scope and readiness for funding.

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You can access the Foundation's online grants portal at:

http://thetowerfoundation.fluxx.io

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To ensure that requests are submitted on time, applicants must create an account in the online portal at least one week prior to the submission deadline. Individuals who have registered previously do NOT need to re-register; please log in using your existing account.

The Foundation will **not** accept e-mailed, faxed, or paper submissions.

2018 Grant Application Cycles and Time Line

January			May			August		
Applicants Create Grants Portal Accounts	1/10		**Applicants Create Grants Portal Accounts**	5/2		**Applicants Create Grants Portal Accounts**	8/15	
Healthy Communities Inquiries Due	1/17		Healthy Communities Inquiries Due	5/9		Healthy Communities Inquiries Due	8/22	
Invitations for Further Discussion Sent	2/7		Invitations for Further Discussion Sent	5/30		Invitations for Further Discussion Sent	9/12	

Accommodations

The Peter and Elizabeth Tower Foundation is committed to making its guidelines and applications accessible to all. If you require an accommodation, please contact Don Matteson at dwm@thetowerfoundation.org or 716-906-8903 to make arrangements.

Foundation Contact Information

If you have questions about the Foundation's Community Change grant guidelines, please contact Don Matteson, Chief Program Officer, at dwm@thetowerfoundation.org or 716-906-8903.

Notice for Prospective Applicants

By submitting this proposal to the Foundation, you, as the applicant or its duly authorized representative, hereby agree and consent that the Foundation may disclose to any employee, trustee or professional representative of the Foundation, or to other potential funding sources or their representatives for possible collaboration, this proposal and all supporting materials which have been or will be submitted in connection therewith, including but not limited to the applicant's grant request.