



PETER & ELIZABETH TOWER FOUNDATION

Grant Guidelines: Strengthening Partner Capacity

The Peter and Elizabeth Tower Foundation accepts Strengthening Partner Capacity grant requests three times each year. This portfolio currently comprises two grant programs that address critical operational needs that are often underfunded: the Small Grants Program and the Technology Initiative. This document outlines applicant eligibility requirements, how to submit a request through the online grants portal, and the 2018 grantmaking calendar.

What Does the Foundation Mean by “Strengthening Partner Capacity?”

In broad terms, the Foundation’s Strengthening Partner Capacity portfolio supports organizational capacity building activities. The Foundation recognizes the importance of strong organizational infrastructure to delivering high-quality programming and promoting organizational sustainability.

Who Can Apply for a Grant?

Organizations **located in** and currently providing services to one or more of the populations the Tower Foundation serves (see below) within the following regions 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 Populations Does the Foundation Serve?

The Tower Foundation supports programs intended to 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 Types of Projects Will the Foundation Consider?

The Small Grants Program provides up to \$30,000 for projects or purchases that do not involve service delivery. The Small Grants Program focuses on short-term (one year or less) projects that: help organizations pursue their missions more efficiently; consist of practical applications requiring little or no customization; or that are critical to an organization's viability. These can include:

- **Capital/Equipment:** Small purchases requiring one-time (i.e., non-recurring) capital or equipment purchases.
- **Capacity Building:** Specific activities or projects aimed at strengthening an organization's governance, leadership, programmatic, or administrative capacity. Examples of allowable capacity building activities include: organizational assessment, an agency's first audit, strategic and board planning, executive coaching and consulting, and staff participation in professional development.
- **Program Development:** Support for program development, program planning, or enhancement (but NOT service delivery).

See page five for more information about Small Grants.

The Technology Initiative assists not-for-profit agencies in obtaining the technical expertise and equipment required to develop and implement a strategic technology plan. The Technology Initiative focuses exclusively on "back office" technology (i.e., technology used by staff) rather

than on technology used by clients (e.g., computer labs). This initiative comprises two types of grants:

- **Technology Planning** grants provide up to \$50,000 for not-for-profit agencies to hire a technology consultant to conduct a technology inventory and needs assessment; and to develop a two- or three-year technology plan that is explicitly aligned with the agency's strategic or business plan. (See page six for more information about technology planning grants.)
- **Technology Implementation** grants provide up to \$125,000 (requiring a dollar-for-dollar cash match) for not-for-profit agencies wishing to implement an existing technology plan that is explicitly aligned with an existing strategic/business plan. (See page six for more information about technology implementation grants.)

See page six for more information about Technology Initiative grants.

How Much Funding is Available?

The Foundation anticipates allocating a total of \$300,000 for its 2018 Small Grants Program, with \$100,000 allocated to each of the three grant cycles. The anticipated allocation for the Technology Initiative is \$525,000 for planning and implementation grants combined. Again, these funds will be divided evenly across the three grant cycles (approximately \$175,000 per cycle).

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 campaigns
- consist of scholarships, services, or treatment for specific individuals,
- consist largely of general operating support.

How Does My Organization Apply for a Grant?

All grant requests must be submitted through the Foundation's online portal:

<http://thetowerfoundation.fluxx.io>

To ensure that requests are submitted on time, applicants must create an account in the online portal at least one week prior to the preliminary grant request 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.

Please see page five for further Small Grants Program details and application instructions. See page six for additional information and instructions for submitting Technology Initiative applications.

2018 Grant Application Cycles and Time Line

January		May		August	
Applicants Create Grant Portal Accounts	1/10	Applicants Create Grant Portal Accounts	5/2	Applicants Create Grant Portal Accounts	8/5
Preliminary Technology Grant Requests/Small Grants Applications Due	1/17	Preliminary Technology Grant Requests/Small Grants Applications Due	5/9	Preliminary Technology Grant Requests/Small Grants Applications Due	8/22
Technology Proposal Invitations Sent	2/7	Technology Proposal Invitations Sent	5/30	Technology Proposal Invitations Sent	9/12
Small Grants Program Decisions Sent	3/2	Small Grants Program Decisions Sent	6/23	Small Grants Program Decisions Sent	10/5
Technology Proposal Decisions Sent	4/11	Technology Proposal Decisions Sent	8/1	Technology Proposal Decisions Sent	11/14

How Do I Get in Touch with The Foundation If I Have More Questions?

If you have questions about the Foundation’s Strengthening Partner Capacity grant guidelines, please contact us.

Chuck Colston, Program Officer
cec@thetowerfoundation.org
 716-689-0370 x206

Don Matteson, Chief Program Officer
dwm@thetowerfoundation.org
 716-906-8903

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.

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.

Small Grants Program: Additional Information and Application Instructions

Does the Foundation Give Preference to Any Type of Organization?

The Foundation gives preference in its Small Grants Program to organizations with annual budgets of \$3 million or less.

Can I Use a Small Grant to Fund Part of a Larger Project?

Small Grants are intended to cover the complete cost for small capital requests or capacity building projects. If you are requesting a Small Grant to supplement other funds for a more costly project, you must demonstrate in your submission that you have secured all other funding for the Foundation to consider your submission. For instance, if you have a project that costs \$40,000, and you are requesting a \$10,000 Small Grant from the Foundation, you must demonstrate that the remaining \$30,000 has already been secured from other sources.

How Often Can My Organization Apply for Small Grants?

Grantees receiving a Small Grants Program award are not eligible to apply for another Small Grant for two years (e.g., a 2018 Small Grants award recipient would not be eligible to apply for another Small Grant until 2020). Organizations receiving Small Grants **are** still eligible to apply for any of the Foundation's other grant opportunities.

Applicants who do not receive funding for a Small Grants request may submit again for the next Small Grants cycle.

How Does My Organization Apply for a Small Grant?

Small Grants Program requests must be submitted via the Foundation's online portal.

Unlike the Foundation's other grant opportunities, the Small Grants Program does not require a multi-stage application. Small Grants Program applications must be complete when submitted, including budget and price quote attachments. The Foundation will not consider incomplete proposals for funding.

To be considered for an award, preliminary grant requests must be received by 11:59:59 p.m. on the stated deadline.

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

Technology Initiative Grants: Additional Information and Application Instructions

NOTE: 2018 Will Be the Last Year for the Tower Foundation's Technology Initiative

Although the Foundation is ending its Technology Initiative after 2018, it will still consider technology planning and implementation grant requests in the future as part of a more comprehensive range of capacity building opportunities. This approach will allow us to be more flexible and responsive to community needs, and will help us place technology in a broader organizational context. We will release updated Strengthening Partner Capacity guidelines towards the end of 2018.

***Eligibility Note:** School districts and colleges/universities are not eligible for Technology Initiative grants.*

TECHNOLOGY PLANNING GRANTS

What Costs Can Be Covered by a Technology Planning Grant?

The Tower Foundation will provide funds for costs associated with hiring an outside technology consultant to assist with this project. Grant funds will be used for outside consultants to:

- conduct a comprehensive hardware and software inventory;
- develop a technology needs assessment; and
- produce a technology plan with a one-to-three year time line that makes explicit reference to the organization's strategic or business plan.

What Costs Cannot Be Covered by a Technology Planning Grant?

Technology planning grants do not cover costs associated with:

- staff time spent working on technology planning or implementation
- developing an agency's strategic plan
- purchasing technology equipment, software, licenses, or maintenance
- technology planning related to client-facing technology (e.g., computer labs).

TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

What Costs Can Be Covered by a Technology Implementation Grant?

The Tower Foundation will provide dollar-for-dollar matching funds for costs associated with purchasing equipment, software, training, and services necessary for implementing the agency's technology plan.

What Costs Cannot Be Covered by a Technology Implementation Grant?

Technology Implementation grants do not cover costs associated with:

- staff time spent working on technology planning or implementation
- developing an agency's strategic plan
- developing a technology plan
- developing custom software applications or web-based information portals
- advanced information technology training (e.g., certifications)
- software licensing or subscriptions to cloud-based services beyond the first year of implementation
- service/maintenance contracts beyond the first year of implementation

How Does the Cash Match Requirement Work for Technology Implementation Grants?

Organizations funded through the Technology Implementation initiative are required to provide a dollar-for-dollar cash match for the Tower Foundation's award. The match is applied on a line-by-line basis, so the Foundation and grantee split all costs evenly. Previous technology expenditures and in-kind contributions do not satisfy the cash match requirement.

Matching funds may be obtained through any source of unrestricted funds (e.g., operating funds, unrestricted reserves) or awards designated for the technology implementation project specifically. For multi-year awards, funds will be disbursed each year, not as a single lump sum.

How Does My Organization Apply for a Technology Grant?

The first step in applying for a Technology Planning or Implementation grant is to submit a preliminary request via the Foundation's online portal. Once received, the Foundation will review each submission to determine whether to invite a more detailed proposal. Foundation staff may ask some applicants to provide additional information by way of a brief phone call.

To be considered for an award, preliminary grant requests must be received by 11:59:59 p.m. on the stated deadline.

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

Applicants will be notified by email within three weeks of submitting their preliminary grant request as to whether the Foundation will invite a full proposal. Invited applicants will then work with Foundation staff over the next six to eight weeks to develop a full proposal.