



PETER & ELIZABETH TOWER FOUNDATION

In response to the unprecedented demands the COVID-19 pandemic has created for our existing grant partners and the communities we serve, the Tower Foundation is canceling all grant cycles for the remainder of 2020. We are not taking applications for any of our regular grant opportunities this April or August. Learn more [here](#).

2020 Grant Guidelines Strengthening Partner Capacity

The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation supports organizations through funding from three portfolios: (1) Programs & Services, (2) Community Change, and (3) Strengthening Partner Capacity. The Foundation accepts requests for funding from each of these portfolios three times per year. We invite applicants to submit capacity building requests through the Strengthening Partner Capacity portfolio.

This document outlines the Strengthening Partner Capacity grant guidelines, including how the Foundation defines capacity building, the types of projects the Foundation will consider in this portfolio, applicant eligibility requirements, how to submit a request through the online portal, an overview of what's involved in applying for a grant, and the 2020 submission dates.

What is Capacity Building?

The Foundation recognizes the importance of strong organizational infrastructure for delivering high-quality programming and promoting organizational sustainability. Capacity building can strengthen an organization's systems and competencies or support the growth of external networks and relationships that strengthen a community or field. Under this portfolio, we invite applications for small capital requests, for work that builds staff skills and expertise, for leadership development, for technology infrastructure, for organizational and program planning, and for building strategic partnerships. Strong applications, whether for facilities upgrades or for a convening of local organizations, will demonstrate how grant dollars strengthen organizations or networks.¹

¹ For more information, see: [Capacity Building 3.0](#): How to Strengthen the Social Ecosystem from the TCC Group 2015.

What Populations Does the Foundation Serve?

Young people age 0-26 affected by:			
Intellectual Disabilities	Learning Disabilities	Mental Illness	Substance Use Disorders

The greater the overlap between the population(s) that your organization serves and the populations of interest to the Foundation, the more competitive your request is likely to be. Please be sure to review the population definitions on the following pages to ensure organizational alignment with the Foundation's interests before developing your request. When in doubt, call or email us.



What Types of Projects Will the Foundation Consider?

The following are types of capacity building requests that the Foundation will consider through this grant program:

1. **Small capital project or equipment** requiring a one-time (i.e., non-recurring) purchase.
2. **Organizational development**, including strategic planning, business plan development, board development, evaluation, and continuous improvement activities.
3. **Program planning** to support the development of a program or strategic partnership (**not** the implementation of the program).
4. Organizational **professional development** (e.g., evidence-based practices training and implementation).
5. **Convenings and network- or field-building events** that align with the Foundation’s focus areas (the Foundation will not consider event sponsorships).
6. **Mergers and affiliations.**
7. **Technology planning and equipment purchases** to support an organization’s back-office needs (technology used by staff rather than by clients). See page five (5) for more information.

Requests may include more than one capacity building project type, so long as they are logically related.

The Tower Foundation allows organizations to apply an **administrative overhead rate** of 20% for requests of \$100,000 or less. The administrative overhead rate for colleges, universities, and affiliated organizations is capped at 10%.

Who Can Apply for a Grant?

Organizations providing services to one or more of the populations the Tower Foundation serves (see sidebars) within the following regions are eligible to apply for Tower Foundation grants:

Massachusetts	New York
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnstable County • Dukes County • Essex County • Nantucket County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erie County • Niagara County

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:

1. Conceptual skills (e.g., language and literacy; money; time; number concepts; self-direction)
2. 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)
3. 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

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

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.

While organizations may have more than one active Tower Foundation grant at any given time, the Foundation may give preference to organizations that have not received a grant award recently.

If the Foundation declines a funding request, your organization may reapply as soon as the following cycle. Please note that your organization **may only submit one request** across all of the Tower Foundation's funding opportunities in any given cycle.

How Much Funding is Available?

The Foundation anticipates allocating a total of \$600,000 for its 2020 Capacity Building Grants program, with \$200,000 allocated to each of the three grant cycles. The maximum grant award is \$40,000.

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.

If you have questions about whether or not your organization or project idea would be a fit, we encourage you to contact a Tower Foundation Program Officer prior to building out your grant request. You can email the Foundation at info@thetowerfoundation.org or schedule a 30-minute call with a Program Officer here at <https://towerfdn.link/30-min-call>

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 are encouraged to create an account in the online portal at least **one week prior** to the preliminary grant request deadline. The Foundation cannot guarantee that registration requests submitted later than these dates will be processed in time for the application deadline. Individuals who have registered previously do NOT need to re-register; please log in using your existing account.

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

What's Involved in Applying for a Grant?

In addition to basic organizational information and a brief summary, organizations will be asked to respond to four questions: (1) What do you want to do? (2) Why do you want to do it? (3) How do you want to do it? (4) What do you need to do it? Specific to Strengthening Partner Capacity grants, organizations will also be asked to briefly describe the impact your project will have on your organization, network, or field.

Applicants will be asked to provide a budget, along with quotes for any single items or services exceeding \$1,000.

Some applicants will receive a grant award or decline following the initial submission of this request without any additional follow-up from the Foundation. The Foundation will contact other applicants for clarification or more information as the request warrants.

For additional guidance, and to access the Strengthening Partner Capacity application questions in their entirety, log in to the Tower Foundation online portal. An application preview is also available on our website on the "Apply for a Grant" page.

When Can I Apply?

2020 Grant Application Cycles and Time Line

	January	April	August
Applicants Create Online Portal Accounts	—	Canceled	Canceled
Preliminary Grant Requests Due	—	Canceled	Canceled
Clarification Calls/Emails Sent	—	Canceled	Canceled
Proposal Decisions Sent	—	Canceled	Canceled

Preliminary grant requests must be received by 11:59:59 p.m. on the stated deadline. Requests submitted after the deadline will be considered during the next cycle.

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. 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>

Accommodations

The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation is committed to making its guidelines and applications accessible to all. Please contact us at info@thetowerfoundation.org or 716-689-0370 to make accessibility arrangements (e.g., submissions via alternative media, text-to-speech software licenses, transcription).

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.

Appendix A

Tips for Technology Requests

Although the Foundation has ended its formal Technology Initiative, it still considers technology planning and implementation grant requests as part of the Strengthening Partner Capacity grants program. The following are tips for developing a request to the Tower Foundation focused on planning or implementation support of new technology for your organization.

Please note that a technology plan must be in place at an organization before a request for funds to purchase technology will be considered.

Technology Planning

The Tower Foundation will entertain requests for costs associated with hiring an outside technology consultant to assist with developing a technology plan. 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 that makes explicit reference to the organization's strategic or business plan.

Technology Implementation

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

The following are not allowed as part of this request:

- 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