PETER & ELIZABETH **TOWER FOUNDATION**

2021 Grant Guidelines
Community Change Grants

The Tower Foundation supports organizations through funding from three portfolios: (1) Programs & Services, (2) Community Change, and (3) Strengthening Partner Capacity. In 2021, the Foundation will accept requests for funding from each of these portfolios in two funding cycles. Preliminary applications for the two cycles will be accepted by April 14 and August 18, respectively. Because challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic are very much still with us in 2021, the Foundation will offer an additional round of COVID-19 Response Grants. Please see the [COVID-19 Response Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

This document offers guidance for the 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 portal, an overview of what's involved in applying for a grant, and the 2021 submission dates.

What is Community Change?

The Foundation's Community Change portfolio 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 (e.g., 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 portfolio**.

What Populations Does the Foundation Serve?

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

The Foundation will give preference to applicants that focus on serving members of the above groups **who also** experience further inequities as people of color; refugees and immigrants; people experiencing homelessness; people who are incarcerated; LGBTQ+ people; and people with disabilities.

The Foundation believes that organizations reflecting the diversity of the communities they serve in their own leadership, governance, and workforce are better suited to serve those communities. **New to the application in 2021 will be a short form asking you to identify the racial/ethnic composition of your executive director(s), board of directors, staff, and people served.** This form can be previewed on page six of this document.

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 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 HEALTH

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.

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

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 Foundation will give preference to projects expanding supports for people experiencing additional inequities as people of color; refugees and immigrants; people experiencing homelessness; people who are incarcerated; LGBTQ+ people; and people with disabilities.

- 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 may 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.

The Tower Foundation allows organizations to apply an **administrative overhead rate** of 15% on grant requests over $100,000, and 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
- Barnstable County - Dukes County - Essex County - Nantucket County	- 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 or diocesan school districts, or
- private or charter schools.

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

While organizations may have more than one active Tower Foundation grant at any given time, preference may be given 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 has allocated a **total** of $1,300,000 for its 2021 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.

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 email the Foundation at info@thetowerfoundation.org or schedule a 30-minute call with a Program Officer here: 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 at:

https://thetowerfoundation.force.com

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.

Please note: Contract grant writers or individuals who might submit grant requests on behalf of multiple organizations should contact Kathy Andriaccio (at kea@thetowerfoundation.org) or Don Matteson (at dwm@thetowerfoundation.org) to set up an account in the grants portal.

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 that are asked across all of our portfolios: (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?

For additional guidance, and to access the Community Change application in its entirety, log in to the Tower Foundation online portal. A preview of what the application includes is also available on our website on the "Apply for a Grant" page.

Once submitted, the Foundation reviews each application 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.

When Can I Apply?

2021 Grant Application Time Lines

	April	August
Applicants Create Online Portal Accounts	April 7	August 11
Preliminary Grant Requests Due	April 14	August 18
Invitations for Further Discussion Sent	April 28	September 8

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 Community Change 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.

2021 Diversity Form Preview

New to all 2021 applications to the Tower Foundation, regardless of grant opportunity, is a short form asking you to identify the racial/ethnic composition of your executive director(s), staff, board of directors, and people served. The Foundation will also give preference to organizations that reflect the communities they serve.

The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation is working to incorporate a deliberate diversity-equity-inclusion (DEI) lens in its grantmaking practice. To help the Foundation understand more about the organizations and beneficiaries it supports, we are asking grant applicants to provide us with a better sense of how your 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 in light of our focus on serving people with intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities, and in explicitly recognizing the profound inequities created as a product of a culture and institutions imbued with systemic racism.

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				
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander				
White				
Biracial/ Multiracial				
Total #				

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?