



Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation

# Community Experts Fund

## A different kind of RFP:

### ***Designed by and for the community***

This grant initiative has been developed by the Tower Foundation's Advisory Team,\* an eleven-member group of young adults with lived expertise relating to the Foundation's funding areas. **For 2022, the Advisory Team will direct its funding toward programs (new or existing) that deliver mentoring and coaching in support of self-advocacy, or counseling in support of mental health.** Advisory Team members will take the lead in both the review of applications and the approval of grant awards for this initiative.

The design and administration of this grant opportunity is spearheaded by young adults with ties to the communities where services will be delivered. Their engagement in the grantmaking process both amplifies community voice and informs grantmaking with the concerns, insights, and priorities of the young people that are the focus of the work. This fund is focused on supporting costs and activities that make services for youth more accessible, more engaging, and more sustainable for your organization.

Applicants will choose between submitting a brief proposal or video, and will participate in a 20-minute Zoom interview. **Applications must be submitted by July 22nd, 2022.**

## ▶ Eligible Populations

Programs that work with young people ages 6 to 26 with an intellectual disability, learning disability, mental health challenge, or substance use disorder are eligible to apply.

## ▶ Eligible Organizations

Youth-serving nonprofit organizations currently providing services in one or more of these regions are eligible to apply:

- Massachusetts: Barnstable County, Dukes County, Essex County, Nantucket County
- New York: Erie County, Niagara County

*\*If you would like to learn more about the Tower Advisory Team, visit this [blog](#).*



## Eligible Programs

Funding requests should support new or existing programming in one of two categories:

### 1. Mentoring & Coaching:

Mentoring or coaching for youth that supports self-advocacy, communication skills, and personal goals. This includes a focus on one or more of the following:

- Social and communication skills;
- Life skills and independent living;
- Job/career/academic support;
- Peer mentoring;
- Self-advocacy/self-expression

### 2. Counseling:

Person-centered counseling or therapy that focuses on healing from trauma, on personal growth, and on managing mental health challenges. This includes a focus on one or more of the following:

- Individual or group therapy for young people;
- Individual or group therapy for families;
- Staff/partner training in screening and behavioral supports

## Eligible Activities & Expenses

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

1. **Programming** (e.g., funding for a portion of existing staff positions, costs of community programming, admission fees, team-building activities, program supplies)
2. **Transportation** (e.g., transportation for participants)
3. **Technology & Equipment** (e.g., Laptops or Zoom costs)
4. **Training for staff and/or community partners** (within or outside of agency)
5. **Events** (e.g., space rentals, food costs, speakers)
6. **Related facility enhancements** (e.g., space for group therapy)
7. **Program evaluation** (e.g., evaluation consultant fees)
8. **Stipends** (e.g., stipends for youth or community participation)

## How much can my organization apply for?

Applicants may apply for any amount up to \$20,000. The Advisory Team has a total of \$100,000 available to award. Your request may include 20% overhead.

## Additional Considerations

Strong applications will address the following:

- Inclusion of youth in program design
- Diversity of organizational leadership and people served by organization
- Creativity of the project design
- Collaboration with other community partners

## ▶ Proposal Process and Timeline

Applicants will have the option of submitting a brief application in writing or a video application up to five minutes in length. Applications include the following steps:

### ▶ **Step One: Organizational Information**

Provide some brief organizational background, including diversity information, and contact information.

### ▶ **Step Two: Complete Brief Application**

Applicants will choose between a written application or a video application and respond to four questions (see below).

**Deadline:** All applications must be submitted by July 22, 2022 at 11:59PM

### ▶ **Step Three: Complete Zoom Interview**

All applicants will be contacted after they submit their application to schedule a 20-minute zoom interview that includes representatives of the Advisory Team and Tower Foundation staff.

**Deadline:** Calls will be scheduled on a rolling basis as applications are received. All calls must be completed by August 5th.

### ▶ **Step Four: Decision Notification**

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by September 30, 2022.

## ▶ Application Questions

Applicants have the option of responding with up to 250 words (about a half page, single spaced) in each response or submitting a five-minute video. For more information, see the application preview.

1. What services does your organization provide?
2. How do you reflect youth voice in what you do?
3. How much are you requesting?
4. What do you propose to do with the grant?

**To complete an application, visit:**

<https://towerfdn.link/communityexperts>

## **Accommodations & Contact Information**

For more information or to request an accommodation, contact:

Nick Randell at ngr@thetowerfoundation.org or 716-689-0370 x 205