



PETER & ELIZABETH TOWER FOUNDATION

Short-Term General Operating Grants Application Preview

Note: Organizations awarded Federal Crisis Response – General Operating grants in 2025 are not eligible to apply for 2026 Short-Term General Operating grants.

This is a preview of the application in our online grants portal. It's intended to give you a sense of what we're looking for before you start filling out the application. The actual online system's experience will look slightly (okay, quite a bit) different, but the questions will be the same.

Confidentiality and Data Security

We understand that sharing information about your organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion practices can be sensitive and, frankly, a little scary. We promise to hold any such information you provide in confidence and to do our level best to ensure that your data are stored safely and securely.

Before You Start Looking at the Questions

- Please [drop us an email \(info@thetowerfoundation.org\)](mailto:info@thetowerfoundation.org) to let us know what accommodations would make it easier for you to apply.
- We won't enforce any character limits, but we do recommend a maximum to keep things manageable (for us). We promise to keep reading if you write more.

Organization Information

We're looking for some pretty standard information here. Where do you work, whom do you serve, and what do you do?

1. Which of the Tower Foundation counties does your organization/collaboration serve? (Barnstable, MA; Dukes, MA; Erie, NY; Essex, MA; Nantucket, MA; Niagara, NY)
2. What age groups does your organization/collaboration serve? (Children, Adolescents, Young Adults)
3. Applicant organization's current/most recent annual operating budget
4. In what issue areas does your organization/collaboration work? (intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health, substance use disorders)
5. What is your organization's or collaboration's mission?
6. What services/programs does your organization/collaboration provide? Highlight existing programs within the Foundation's service area.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Information

As noted above, we realize that it's a tough time to be sharing information about DEI openly. **PLEASE CONSIDER ALL QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION TO BE OPTIONAL**, but we appreciate anything you're willing to share.

The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation strives to incorporate a deliberate diversity-equity-inclusion (DEI) lens in its grantmaking practice. To help the Foundation understand more about organizations and

beneficiaries they support, we ask grant applicants to tell us how their organization's leadership, workforce, and governance reflect DEI.

The Foundation will give preference to applications from organizations/collaborations that are led by people who reflect the identities (e.g., race or disability) and/or lived experiences (e.g., addiction, mental illness) of the populations they serve.

1. 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 question two 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 counts 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				
Middle Eastern/North African				
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander				
White				
Biracial/ Multiracial				
Other/Unknown				

2. Our organization is BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color)-led. Select all that apply:
 - Executive Director identifies as BIPOC
 - Majority of Staff identify as BIPOC
 - Majority of the Board identifies as BIPOC
3. Our organization is led by people with disabilities. Select all that apply:
 - Executive Director is a person with a disclosed disability
 - Majority of Staff identify as people with disabilities
 - Majority of the Board identifies as people with disabilities
4. The organization is led by people who reflect another key identity of the population served (e.g., LGBTQ, in recovery, other lived expertise). Select all that apply:
 - Executive Director reflects a key identity of the population served
 - Majority of Staff reflect a key identity of the population served
 - Majority of the Board reflects a key identity of the population served

Please describe the key identities to which you are referring: *(No character limit; suggested maximum of 1,500 characters, or about 250 words)*

5. How has your approach to addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion changed in the current climate? *(No character limit; suggested maximum 3,000 characters, or about 500 words)*

Here are some things you might consider addressing in light of shifting national priorities around DEI initiatives:

- (How) has your organization adapted its approach to ensuring equity and inclusion?

- What specific challenges have you encountered in maintaining your commitment to serving diverse populations?
- Have you needed to reframe or recommunicate your DEI efforts internally or externally?
- What strategies have proven most effective in sustaining your inclusive practices during this period?
- How are you supporting staff who may be experiencing increased stress or uncertainty?
- Consider telling us how you incorporate the perspectives of the populations you serve in your work, and what you are doing to make systems, access, and outcomes more equitable.
- How are you working to ensure that the needs of the populations you serve remain your primary focus?

6. What additional information about your organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion practices would you like to share? *(No character limit; suggested maximum 3,000 characters or about 500 words)*

Your Current Situation

1. **How have funding cuts and other reductions in revenue affected your organization, your staff, and the people you serve?** *(No character limit; suggested maximum 3,000 characters or about 500 words)*

We're particularly interested in understanding both immediate impacts and potential long-term consequences for your organization's stability and the communities you serve.

Here are some things you might consider as you respond to this question:

- Which funding sources have been/do you expect to be reduced or eliminated (federal grants, state contracts, school district partnerships, individual donations, etc.)?
- Quantify the current financial impact of these cuts on your organization (dollar amounts or percentages).
- How these cuts have affected your staffing (positions eliminated, reduced hours, salary freezes, etc.)?
- Impact on your service delivery model (reduced program hours, waitlists, eliminated services).
- How these changes have directly affected the vulnerable populations you serve?
- Any stopgap measures you've implemented and their sustainability.
- How are you planning for these anticipated cuts and reductions in your budget?

2. **What else do we need to know?** *(No character limit; suggested maximum of 3,000 characters, or about 500 words)*

Tell us all the things you want us to understand that weren't covered under the previous questions. This is your opportunity to share important context about your organization that wasn't captured in previous questions. Some things to think about as you respond:

- Unique strengths or capabilities that position your organization to weather current challenges
- Your unique position serving otherwise unserved vulnerable populations
- Specific upcoming opportunities that could help offset funding losses
- Critical infrastructure or capacity needs that, if addressed, would significantly enhance your resilience
- Innovative adaptations or pivots your organization is considering

- Community partnerships that are providing vital support during this period
- The most significant risk factors to your organization's sustainability that haven't been mentioned elsewhere
- How this general operating support would specifically help you maintain services to the most vulnerable populations you serve.

How We Review Applications

The Foundation considers a number of criteria when reviewing applications, such as how aligned a request is with our interests and how clearly we understand the organization and its needs.

With these in mind, we're committed to a review process that looks beyond financial distress alone. While we recognize the real challenges organizations face from funding cuts, we also prioritize organizational strengths, innovative approaches to addressing current challenges, and the breadth of community need that each organization strives to meet.

When evaluating applications, we place a high value on nuanced conversations about individual applications' strengths and weaknesses, how applications compare to one another, how many similar applications we receive, and the overall landscape of the requests we receive.

While there is no "magic formula" to getting it just right, below are some of the most important factors that we anticipate informing our decision-making process for this cycle.

- Degree of alignment with the Foundation's areas of interests
- Impact of funding cuts on organization's overall budget and ability to serve its community
- Organizational equity practices
- Organizational strengths

Notes on Using Generative Artificial Intelligence

While we're not big fans of using generative artificial intelligence to write grant proposals, we absolutely encourage you to use these tools to help you strengthen your requests. Two important caveats:

- You're still responsible for what you submit, so make sure to review anything you let AI touch to ensure quality and accuracy!
- Do not ever submit sensitive information without checking on the privacy policy and settings (and even then, think twice). Most AI platforms – even the free versions – have a setting to turn off data sharing for model training.
 - ChatGPT: Profile icon → Settings → Data Controls → turn off "Improve the model for everyone." New conversations after you change this setting will not be used to train OpenAI's models; you can also use "Temporary chat" for individual conversations that are not saved or used for training.
 - Claude: Claude uses chats for model training by default unless you opt out. In Claude's privacy or account settings, look for an option such as "Help improve Claude" or similar, and switch it off to opt out of training. Also avoid using the thumbs up/down feedback tools if you do not want those conversations stored for training.
 - Gemini: Go to "Gemini Apps Activity" in your Google account and turn off "Keep activity" for Gemini Apps. This stops those chats from being stored long term or used to improve Google's AI models, but you will not have ongoing access to the history of new chats initiated after changing this setting (Google may still keep short-term logs for safety).

- Copilot (consumer): In your Copilot or Microsoft account privacy settings, turn off “Model training on text” and “Model training on voice” wherever they appear (web, desktop, or mobile). This prevents Microsoft from using your chats and voice inputs to train Copilot’s models, though some processing for safety and service operations may still occur.

Declined Requests

While we normally invite applicants to contact us to learn more about why we declined a request, we aren’t able to extend such an invitation for this grant opportunity. Given the anticipated volume of applications and the limited funding available, many decisions will involve very small distinctions between strong applications rather than significant deficiencies in any single proposal.

Organization Contacts

You will need to identify a primary contact (the point person for any grant-related communications) and fiscal contact (the person to contact regarding payments). If they do not already exist in our grants management system, you will need to add them. Omitting this information will result in delayed payment of awarded grants.

What Comes Next?

The Foundation will review submitted requests once the submission deadlines have passed (February 13 for the spring, September 25 for the fall). We anticipate a large number of requests but hope to communicate our funding decisions no later than six weeks after the submission deadlines (March 27 for the spring, November 6 for the fall). We will be in touch if it looks like reviews will take longer than expected. If you haven’t heard from us by these decision dates, please check your spam/junk email folder. If you don’t find an email from us in there, or if you have any other questions about your request, contact us.

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

If you have questions about the Foundation’s Federal Crisis Response funding opportunity, 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>

Having Problems with the Grants Portal?

- First of all, please make sure you have an account! It’s easy to register on the login screen.
- Have a grants portal account, but can’t get in? Please try a password reset (there’s a link on the login screen). If that doesn’t help, please send an email to support@thetowerfoundation.org and our system administrators will get you squared away.
- If you’re having trouble with the grants portal (e.g., you aren’t able to create a new application), please use the Support button on the grants portal home page to request assistance. Please **DO NOT** send an email to the general info email address or to any specific Program Officer (even if you know them well and really like them).