



Grant Guidelines: Core Programs and Services

The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation accepts Core Programs and Services grant applications in its four funding categories via three grant cycles throughout the year. This document describes the Foundation's funding categories and grantmaking objectives, applicant eligibility requirements, general grant characteristics, preferred strategies, the 2017 grants schedule, and how to submit an application through the online grants portal.

What Are the Foundation's Funding Categories and How Are They Defined?

The Tower Foundation makes grants in four key categories: **Intellectual Disabilities**, **Learning Disabilities**, **Mental Health**, and **Substance Use Disorders**. These grants are 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 Does the Foundation Want to Accomplish?

For each funding category, The Foundation has identified a set of grantmaking goals. Grants will be awarded to projects that show the greatest promise of advancing one or more of these goals (within one category or across categories).

<p>Intellectual Disabilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Learning Disabilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<p>Mental Illness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Substance Use Disorders</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community members understand the prevalence and harmful effects of alcohol and drugs, and work to address them. 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 Tower Foundation encourages multi-year grants with budgets ranging from (but not limited to) \$20,000 to \$50,000 per year.
- The majority of grant funds should be for expenses that are new to the organization as a result of the proposed project.

While open to a range of projects that have the potential to advance its goals, the Foundation will give preference to projects focusing on the following:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Programs or processes that promptly identify challenges that young people face and match them with optimally effective services, treatment, or supports.
- **Community-Based Education and Supports:**
 - **Community and Professional Education:** Community-based education or professional development that enhance knowledge of intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness and/or substance use disorders; and on tools and evidence-based approaches to promote life and learning skills, wellness, independence, and an individual and creative voice. Education can target teachers and educators, employers, healthcare and human services professionals, and the general public.
 - **Family Supports:** Programs that are supportive of parents and families: parent or peer networks, respite or social activities, family-based support for recovery and wellness, and family support of career and educational planning.
- **Transition/Service Navigation:** Programs that help young people navigate life transitions, including transitions from one educational setting to another, transitions from job training to employment, and transitions that continue to facilitate personal growth and fulfillment. This includes programs that facilitate sustained recovery from mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

How Much Funding is Available?

The Foundation anticipates awarding approximately \$833,000 *per cycle* in Core Programs and Services grants: \$175,000 in each of its four funding categories, with an additional \$133,000 to be allocated to strong applications regardless of category.

Who Can Apply for a Grant?

Organizations primarily serving residents of the following areas 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 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 improvements or 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?

Preliminary Grant Request

The first step to apply for a grant is to submit a preliminary grant request via the Foundation's online portal. Once received, the Foundation reviews 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.

Online Grant Portal

All preliminary 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.

E-mailed, faxed, or paper submissions will **not** be accepted.

Full Proposal Submission

Applicants will be notified by email approximately three weeks following the preliminary grant request submission as to whether the Foundation will invite a full proposal. Applicants invited to submit full proposals will then work with Foundation staff over the following eight to ten weeks to develop their final submissions.

2017 Grant Application Cycles and Time Line

January		May		September	
Applicants Create Grant Portal Accounts	1/6	Applicants Create Grant Portal Accounts	5/12	Applicants Create Grant Portal Accounts	9/1
Preliminary Grant Requests Due	1/13	Preliminary Grant Requests Due	5/19	Preliminary Grant Requests Due	9/8
Full Proposal Invitations Sent	2/3	Full Proposal Invitations Sent	6/9	Full Proposal Invitations Sent	9/29
Proposal Decisions Sent	4/7	Proposal Decisions Sent	8/11	Proposal Decisions Sent	12/1

Foundation Contact Information

If you have questions about the Foundation’s Core Programs and Services grant guidelines, please contact us.

Chuck Colston, Program Officer cec@thetowerfoundation.org 716-689-0370 x206	Megan MacDavey, Program Officer mtm@thetowerfoundation.org 716-689-0370 x203
Don Matteson, Chief Program Officer dwm@thetowerfoundation.org 716-906-8903	Nick Randell, Program Officer ngr@thetowerfoundation.org 716-689-0370 x205

Accommodations

The Peter and Elizabeth C. 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.