

The Nelson Foundation

Core Grant Application Guidelines

In the core grants program, the Foundation will consider requests that provide services to children and youth in alignment with the Foundation's mission.

Types of Core Grants

The Foundation prefers to make general operating grants whenever possible, but will also consider requests for project support. If at least 75% of an organization's programming (measured by percent of program expenses in your organization's budget) aligns well with the Foundation's mission of providing direct services to expand opportunities for children and youth to become responsible, productive and engaged members of their communities, that organization is encouraged to apply for a general operating grant.

Grant Size and Term

Core grants are awarded as two-year grants with grant sizes typically between \$10,000-\$20,000 annually (\$20,000-\$40,000 total for two years).

Requests that will be considered

The Nelson Foundation will consider support for the following:

- Programs and organizations that support the Foundation's Mission to expand opportunities for children and youth to become responsible, productive and engaged members of their communities. We do this by supporting organizations that improve the academic, character and leadership development of children and youth.
- Programs and organizations that align with the Foundation's strategic priorities to:
 - Fill gaps in life skills education and experiences for children and youth that will prepare them for success in their personal lives, in education, in the workplace, and in their communities
 - Invest in strengthening organizations whose programs are aligned with the Foundation's mission
 - Provide for unmet needs, the lack of which may hinder the development of children and youth
- Programs and organizations that reflect the values of the Nelson Foundation, including Providing Opportunity, Personal Responsibility, Integrity, Adaptability, and Stewardship
- Organizations that have been certified as tax exempt under 501(c)(3) and 501(a)(1) or (2) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Organizations serving one or more of the following counties in Pennsylvania: Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia.
- Programs and organizations that provide direct service to children and youth, with an emphasis on programs and organizations serving socially and economically disadvantaged children and youth, including those from

households with low incomes and limited economic resources, and populations that have been historically marginalized or have limited access to opportunities aligned with the Foundation's mission.

- Organizations with budgets under \$5 million. The Nelson Foundation believes that it is able to have the greatest impact when it supports smaller organizations.
- Fiscally sponsored organizations that meet all other eligibility requirements.
- Local affiliates of national organizations, if a local office with an Executive Director and advisory board are in place and the local budget is under \$5 million. A local 501c3 designation is preferred.
- The Foundation prioritizes out-of-school time programming, but may consider excellent in-school programming when appropriate. While the Foundation has a particular interest in supporting the development of children and youth ages 6 to 18, support is not limited to that age group.

Requests that will not be considered

The Nelson Foundation will not consider support of the following:

- Organizations at which children and youth programming is not a primary focus. To clarify, if an organization would like to request support for a project, a majority of the organization's program activity must align with the mission of the Foundation.
- Organizations with budgets over \$5 million. The Nelson Foundation believes that it is able to have the greatest impact when it supports smaller organizations.
- Individual schools and Day Care Centers
- Hospitals
- Grants to national or umbrella organizations
- Grants to individuals, including scholarships, fellowships, child care, and funds in aid of travel or research
- Private foundations and supporting organizations designated by the IRS as 501(a)(3)
- Medical and mental health treatment, research, or therapy
- Counseling services
- Substance abuse prevention and treatment
- Drop-in, one-time, or infrequent programming
- Summer camp programs in which participants attend for less than four weeks
- Deficits or debt service projects or organizations where the Foundation would be the sole institutional funder
- Support of parties, conferences, fairs and fundraising events
- Purchase of tickets, tables, ads or sponsorships
- Religious or sectarian activities
- Public policy research or advocacy
- Programs for animals

Qualities Sought in Grantees

The ideal applicant would demonstrate these qualities:

- Effective leadership, including engaged Board and staff with a commitment to learning and improvement in organizational and program management
- Transparency in management, operations and communications, demonstrated by provision of clear, comprehensive organizational information on an ongoing basis; we will provide and expect to have open communication with our grantees.
- Clear vision for the organization and programs
 - Demonstrated organizational planning and development
 - Sound program development, implementation, and evaluation
 - Consistent engagement with constituents with evidence of active attention to their input and feedback
- Adaptability
 - Looks for new ways of working to achieve better and sustainable solutions
 - Responds to changing community needs
 - Tracks and evaluates program activities and outcome results
 - Is a learning organization
- Evidence of community support
 - Active participation by volunteers, including community and parental involvement, where appropriate
 - Good reputation in the community
- Sound management
 - Evidence of stable financial performance and efficiency, and thoughtful financial planning
 - Breadth of funding /revenue base
 - Follows best practices to support staff development, staff retention, and leadership succession
- Not heavily reliant on government support and not controlled or operated by government
- Potential to have meaningful impact, with clear program outcomes that advance the Foundation's mission to expand opportunities for children and youth to become responsible, productive and engaged members of their communities
- Well-designed programming that includes regular and consistent participation with demonstrated impact on individuals served

Any potential applicant who believes that his/her organization or program aligns with the Foundation's mission, vision and strategic priorities and meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the Application Guidelines may apply via the online application portal, accessible via The Nelson Foundation website. However, the Foundation only awards grants in this program twice per year, so it is important for you to familiarize yourself with the Foundation's schedule and procedures.