

Western New York Grant Guidelines

Who We Are: The Western New York Foundation is a philanthropic organization created to support activities that improve the quality of life for people who live in the seven counties of Western New York. Since 1951, the Western New York Foundation has supported exemplary nonprofit leaders and organizations meeting the community needs of the region. Our goal is to help nonprofits based in Western New York operate more effectively and efficiently by making targeted investments in specific capacities that will meet the unique characteristics and needs of each individual nonprofit. We take into consideration the agency's mission, populations served, age, budget size and geographic location. We want our decision making process to be informed and thoughtful, and seek purposeful and candid conversations with our nonprofits and funding colleagues. Simultaneously, we are looking for new approaches and pursuing innovative solutions that will advance the effectiveness of our work.

What we Fund: For much of its history, the foundation has been broadly focused and supportive of many organizations across multiple sectors. Starting in 2010, we refined our focus in order to right size our work to align with our size and operational capacity. The Board of Trustees concluded that the Foundation would consider capacity building grants exclusively.

Starting in 2015 the board began to identify some areas within the sectors that we supported that would rise in priority as well as the populations that they wanted to target more aggressively. The Foundation priorities are as follows:

The foundation has a stated interest in strengthening the capacity of organizations working in **parent education, early childhood development**, and the **well-being of vulnerable children and families**. Particular priority will be given to organizations with a focus on all forms of **literacy** (reading, financial, and STEM), the promotion of positive **mental and behavioral health**, and the provision of **parental support and education** to families in order to provide an optimal environment that will encourage a child's healthy growth and development.

The foundation has a stated interest in strengthening the capacity of organizations working with **refugee and immigrant populations, victims of abusive behaviors**, and people suffering with **mental illness, trauma, and addiction**.

The foundation has a stated interest in strengthening the capacity of organizations focused on comprehensive **neighborhood solutions** in blighted or underserved **urban** areas and projects oriented towards centers for **educational and recreational activities** and **community engagement** in **rural** areas.

The foundation has a stated interest in strengthening the capacity of **arts and cultural** organizations offering **inclusive** programming for **diverse audiences** with emphasis on promoting **diversity in artistic representation and leadership**.

It is the Foundation's desire to work with small to mid-sized organizations that have a documented track record and are experiencing a significant period of growth and where we can realize greater impact in our approach to support adaptability, nurture resilience, and support efforts towards longer-term sustainability.

How we Fund: The Foundation believes that our focus on fostering healthy organizational growth and cultivating nonprofit adaptability and resiliency will permit nonprofits to thrive in an environment of constant change and challenge. We believe that intentional, strong and responsive agencies will provide more impactful, relevant and improved programming that will positively impact the lives of more people in Western New York. The Foundation provides grants to:

- 1.) **Support Strategic Leadership-** to develop strong board and staff leadership and assist our grantees in implementing strategic priorities during critical periods of growth and revitalization.
- 2.) **Foster Collaboration-**to strengthen community engagement and support collaborative and strategic relationship efforts that will result in stronger and expanded services.
- 3.) **Conduct Organizational Assessments-** to support contracted expertise to assess nonprofit needs and design a plan to increase organizational effectiveness that will help meet current challenges and result in intentional and productive growth.
- 4.) **Strengthen Communications-** to support communications efforts that raise awareness about an organization's mission and attract attention and resources to the organization.
- 5.) **Expand Resources and Stabilize Financials-** to develop financial stability by increasing the ability of the nonprofit to develop necessary resources and plan for longer-term sustainability.
- 6.) **Promote Programming Excellence-** to enhance the provision of care or services by strengthening the nonprofit's ability to program and evaluate its work.
- 7.) **Enhance Operational Effectiveness-** to improve day-to-day operational productivity and enhance nonprofit functioning in areas such as administration, finance, human resources, technology and facility management.

Western New York Grant Programs

Western New York Foundation Small Grant Program

The Small Grant Program is an easy-to-engage-in, competitive grant program. Applicants may apply for a grant award between \$500 and \$10,000. These grants are generally made for a 12 month period only.

The Small Grant Program supports exploration of strategic partnerships and capacity building requests that lead to greater capacity and improved productivity. Funding is for specific activities or projects designed to strengthen an organization's governance, leadership, technology, programmatic and administrative capacity.

Western New York Foundation Capacity Assessment Program

Western New York Foundation Capacity Assessment Program is a competitive program for nonprofits that wish to build their ability to perform well. The program offers the opportunity to the nonprofit to engage in a process to assess its capacity needs in coordination with, and support of, an organizational development consultant.

Multiple members of the organization's staff and board will participate in an organizational self-assessment of key capacity elements that has been designed to pinpoint current capacity status and opportunities for transformative growth and change. Results will be examined with the help of a consultant and culminate in a long-term capacity building plan for the organization that includes the

development of action plan priorities with goals and progress measurement. Consultants will work with your organization over a period of time to achieve the following objectives:

- 1.) Review and analyze the results of the assessment (examination)
- 2.) Design a capacity matrix based on current state of the agency (benchmarking)
- 3.) Develop a capacity building plan (long-term sustainability plan)
- 4.) Develop an action plan using a format that aligns with the capacity building plan to include goal and progress measurements (accountability and evaluation)
- 5.) Consultation and technical assistance (initial action plan Implementation)
- 5.) CEO personality assessment (optional)

Understanding the nonprofits current capacity will enable it to design an improvement plan that builds on its strengths and addresses the organization's weaknesses in a manner that will build nonprofit adaptability and resilience.

Western New York Foundation Capacity Building Grant Program

The Capacity Building Grant Program is a highly competitive program. Applicants may apply for a grant award over \$10,000; the average grant award range is between \$15,000 and \$50,000.

The Capacity Building Program supports exploration of strategic partnerships and capacity building requests that lead to greater capacity and improved productivity. Funding is for specific activities or projects designed to strengthen an organization's governance, leadership, technology, programmatic and administrative capacity. Initiatives rank higher if they:

- 1.) Assist in making good and positive strides during a critical period of growth.
- 2.) Strengthen the ability to program and impact more families in the WNY region.
- 3.) Strengthen the ability to work with a broader range of constituents and allies.
- 4.) Attract new financial partners, favorably affect earned revenue numbers, or enhance fee based revenue streams.
- 5.) Reflect a comprehensive approach or are a key component of your organization's strategic plan for long term sustainability
- 6.) Foster collaboration

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible, you must be able to answer yes to the following eligibility questions:

- Your organization must be physically located in one of the following seven counties of Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, and Wyoming
- Your organization has not received a payment in the past two (2) years for a grant approved by the Western New York Foundation. This does not include President or Trustee Discretionary grants.

- You have read the policies and instructions on the Western New York website (www.wnyfoundation.org) and are not applying as any of the types of groups or uses that the Foundation does not support.
- You have filed three (3) or more years of 990 returns.