



## 2020-21 Grant Cycle – Letter of Inquiry Guidelines

Deadline: October 9, 2020

This year the Foundation is accepting applications for both the annual grant cycle and the COVID-19 Response Fund. Organizations have the option of applying for one or both of these funding opportunities. Please choose according to your organization's greatest need during this time of crisis as funding is limited. The below guidelines and timeline are for the [annual grant cycle's Letter of Inquiry](#).

- [Click here](#) to apply for an annual grant.
- [Click here](#) to apply for a COVID-19 Response Fund grant.

### About Us

The New Canaan Community Foundation's mission is to serve as New Canaan's local partner for advice, leadership and facilitation of charitable giving. Our vision is a New Canaan that comes together to address both individual and local challenges, enriching the lives of all community members.

Our grant investments support programs, operating, partnerships, and the capacity of individual nonprofits as well as the local nonprofit sector.

Grantmaking is one way that we deploy resources in the community for impact, but not in isolation – financial resources are just one way we hope to support the health of our community. From our grantmaking, and the expertise of our partner nonprofits, the Foundation strives to provide community leadership on key local issues, and act as a convener and advocate.

### Eligibility Requirements

The New Canaan Community Foundation funds nonprofit organizations in Lower Fairfield County. Our emphasis is on organizations based in New Canaan, and those serving significant numbers of people in the New Canaan community. Additionally, we support organizations providing critical services in lower Fairfield County, with an emphasis on towns closest to New Canaan. The Foundation does not support expenses already incurred or make grants to build endowments.

Our funding supports several broad areas, with the following goals:

- **Arts, Culture & Community Resources** – Community members benefit from New Canaan's cultural, recreational, and other community resources.
- **Health** – Community members have the information and access to services they need to stay healthy.
- **Human Services** – Community members are able to meet their basic needs.
- **Seniors & Special Needs** – Older adults & persons with special needs achieve and maintain a high quality of life.
- **Youth & Education** – Youth have the academic, social, and financial support they need to succeed.

### Critical Community Issues

Inclusive of these areas, we look to annually address one or more critical community issues. Two years ago, we formed a Behavioral Health committee whose work is on-going. Nonprofits working in the area of behavioral health (broadly mental health and substance misuse issues) should still apply through the same grants process as all applicants. Additionally, the work of the COVID-19 Response Fund is on-going. Applicants responding to the

impacts of the pandemic may apply for the COVID-19 Response Fund (through the separate application link) and/or this annual grant cycle.

Through the annual grant cycle, the foundation is currently seeking to support:

- Program, operating, and capital grants
- Capacity building grants

### **Program, operating, and capital grants**

At the Letter of Inquiry stage, applicants have the opportunity to choose whether they are seeking support for a specific program, general operating, or a capital project. Grant applications are accepted from organizations serving New Canaan and lower Fairfield County. Organizations can apply independently or may apply in partnership with additional organizations.

### **Capacity building grants**

At the Letter of Inquiry stage, applicants also have the opportunity to identify whether they have a capacity building need. Capacity building requests will only be considered from organizations based in New Canaan or substantively serving New Canaan. Capacity building grants seek to help nonprofit organizations increase their reach, impact, or capacity as an effective organization.

Following an initial review, applicants may either be:

- *Invited to submit a full proposal* for grants that are generally in the range of \$5,000 - \$20,000. Guidance and feedback will also be provided if there are concerns or questions about the initial request that need to be addressed in the proposal. Organizations receiving larger dollar grants in this area will be expected to report on the impact achieved during their grant period.
- *Moved to the next round\*\** of review but will not need to submit additional information if it's determined they will be considered for smaller dollar grants, generally \$5,000 and under. Organizations receiving smaller dollar grants are vetted for inclusion on our grant list, as it is our hope that smaller dollar grants can help leverage additional visibility or support from a wider range of donors.
- *Considered for any issue-specific initiatives* identified as priorities by the Foundation.
- *Declined*, if there is not a fit with Foundation priorities.

### **Submission Requirements**

The Letter of Inquiry is due on Friday, October 9, 2020. The [online application](#) consists of 3 sections: Cover Sheet, Narrative and Financial Information. This year's grant cycle timeline is as follows:

- **September 17:** Letter of Inquiry (LOI) application opens
- **October 9:** LOIs are due
- **Mid-December:** Full proposals will be invited, if necessary. Some smaller dollar grant requests will not need to provide additional information, beyond what was provided in the LOI. Some requests may be declined, based on fit. All applicants will receive an email update on their application status.
- **Mid-January:** Proposals due, if applicable.
- **February – March:** Site visits, if applicable.
- **May:** Grant decisions

**\*\*Please note: Your Letter of Inquiry should be as complete as possible. This may be the only information the committee reviews if your application advances to the next stage without the need for a full proposal.**

### **Questions**

Please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page on our website or call the Foundation at 203-966-0231.