

## Let's Talk About Grants: Eligibility & Finding the Right Grant Transcript

- Slide 1: Welcome to Part 2 of the webinar series Let's Talk About Grants: Eligibility & Finding the Right Grant from the Erie County Office of Health Equity. This series of videos is intended to be an introduction to grants and grant writing, covering the basics.
- Slide 2: In Part 1, we talked about grants and funders. In Part 2, we'll be talking about eligibility and finding the right funding opportunity to meet your needs and goals.
- Slide 3: Before we talk about eligibility and funding the right funding opportunity, let's review a few terms. A deadline is the last day that a grant application will be accepted by the funder. It may also be called a receipt date or post mark date. A grant period is the period of time when all grant activities must happen. All funding must be spent within this time. It may also be called a funding period. A nonprofit organization is a tax-exempt organization that provides a service or benefit to the community without focusing on earning profits.
- Slide 4: A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit organization that allows another organization to apply for grants using its nonprofit status. The fiscal sponsor provides support including money management to that other (usually smaller or less established) organization, often in exchange for an administrative fee. A fiscal pass-through is similar but provides less or no support. Many grant funders do not allow a "pass-through" structure. If the grant you are looking at does not allow a fiscal pass-through and you are planning to use a fiscal sponsor, be sure to document the support your fiscal sponsor is providing. Priority populations are individuals or communities that are the focus of the program or services that will be funded through the grant. They may also be called target populations or focus populations.
- Slide 5: Here is a list of some of the eligible priority populations from a series of recent grant opportunities from the New York State Department of Health in partnership with Health Research, Inc. These particular grants used a list generated by the CDC of populations that were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Many grants require your project to focus on a specific population. Some will allow you to select or name the population or group you would like to focus on. Others may require that the priority population be chosen based on data-- for example, the population with the highest rate of preterm births in a community. Some grants may require that your project focus on a specific priority population that they name, such as farmers or adults age 65 and older. If your work does not typically focus on the named population, it may not be the right grant for you.
- Slide 6: One challenge is that many priority populations are often available for a single grant. It can be tempting to add as many as you feel you can serve, but sometimes, more isn't better. Quality is as important as quantity. It's important to make sure that you are not working outside of your mission and that you have the ability to focus on your community. No group is a monolith. If you serve the Latino community, of course you will also be supporting people of different ages, people who are LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and more. But if your mission is to serve the Latino community, and

your proposal doesn't have programming that is specific to those other intersecting identities, then a stronger proposal will focus on only the Latino community as the priority population. It's also important to note that priority populations provided by a grant may not be named in person-first language or in terms that your organization would use to talk about the people you work with. For example, a priority population may be listed as "victims of gun violence," or "at-risk youth." A challenge with grant writing is building a bridge between what the funder is asking for and the work that you do. One way to address this is to use the language early in your application, for example: "Our project will provide support to victims of gun violence, referred to throughout this proposal as community members directly affected by gun violence." In this way, we can speak the "language" of the funder, ensure that an application is not marked ineligible because of a difference in terminology, and also continue to use the most affirming language for our community members. Another way to address this issue is to use the language of the funder throughout your application (for example, using the phrase "at-risk youth") with the knowledge that you would never refer to youth in your community this way in any other context, but that by reflecting the language of the funder, you increase your chance of getting funding to help the youth your organization serves. This strategy may be more useful if your grant application has strict length limits. Then, once funding is received, explain and use more affirming language in your reports to the funder.

Slide 7: There are many things to consider when looking at funding opportunities, but here are a few questions to start with to help you figure out if a grant opportunity that you have found is a good fit for your organization. Does it fit what you need? Make a list of your community's needs. Can this grant be used to fund the project you have in mind or to fit another need? If the grant has specific priority populations, do they align well with the community you serve, or would you have to stretch to make it fit? Are you eligible for the funding? Most funders will include information on what kinds of organizations or people are able to receive the funding. More on eligibility in a moment. Is this the right time? Do you have the time, people, and other resources needed to apply before the deadline and to plan and complete the project within the set grant period if it is funded?

Slide 8: Confirming whether or not you are eligible to apply for and receive a grant is important. It does not matter how great a grant is if your organization is not allowed to receive it. Here are 3 steps to help determine whether you are eligible for a grant opportunity. STEP 1: Know what type of organization you represent or if you are applying as an individual. Types of organizations include: Nonprofits, small businesses (like limited liability corporations or LLCs), and grassroots organizations. You can search for grants for your type of organization by searching with keywords-- for example, "nonprofit grants New York" or "Buffalo small business grant."

Slide 9: STEP 2: Read the eligibility information from the funder. Almost every funder will include information who is able to receive funding in the grant description. Some grants allow any organization or individual to apply. Others are only open to a specific kind of organization. STEP 3: Gather any documentation that is required to

prove that you are eligible before beginning your application. This may include proof of nonprofit status, an LLC operating agreement, or a DBA ("doing business as") certificate. It may also be proof that you have an eligible organization serving as your fiscal sponsor. If you are not eligible and do not have an eligible fiscal sponsor, this is probably not the right grant for you. Keep searching for other grant opportunities. You can also consider options to increase your eligibility for grant funding opportunities.

- Slide 10: Most grants have limited eligibility. For example, many foundation grants are only open to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, a nonprofit organization with a specific tax-exempt status. One way that all organizations can maximize eligibility is by considering what other organizations might be strong partners for a particular grant, and considering applying in partnership with them or seeking their support. Many grant opportunities require that applicants collaborate with other organizations, health care providers, or government offices or to form coalitions.
- Slide 11: If your organization does not have nonprofit status and you are struggling to find grants you are eligible for, one strategy to help increase your eligibility to apply for a larger number of grants is to apply for nonprofit status. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations will be eligible for the most grants. 501(c)(3) and other types of nonprofit organizations are tax exempt, meaning they do not have to pay some taxes. To become a nonprofit organization, you must apply for tax exempt status with the IRS, which takes time, effort, and money. Additionally, nonprofits must keep detailed records and submit information to the IRS each year to keep their tax-exempt status. For more information or to start this process, I've included the IRS website that covers applying for tax exempt status.
- Slide 12: Applying for nonprofit status is a process that takes time and resources, and requires making a long-term commitment. If your organization is not ready or not able to apply for nonprofit status, an alternative way to increase eligibility is to work with a fiscal sponsor. Instead of applying for nonprofit status, you can work with an existing 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is similar to your own using a formal agreement called fiscal sponsorship. You can apply for grants under your fiscal sponsor's tax-exempt status. When seeking a fiscal sponsorship, your organization should be ready to talk about: Why your project is needed and its goals, objectives, activities, evaluation, staffing and budget; how your project advances the fiscal sponsor nonprofit's mission; and other ways the nonprofit can benefit from being associated with your project.
- Slide 13: Fiscal sponsorships often involve a written agreement and can benefit both organizations as well as the community being served by a grant project. The fiscal sponsor is legally and financially responsible for the grant and typically reviews grant applications, documentation, and reports. Usually, smaller organizations pay an administrative fee or agree to provide a portion of the grant funds (such as indirect funds, which we'll discuss more when we get to the budget portion) to the fiscal sponsor in exchange for providing this support. If you're interested in learning

more about fiscal sponsorships, [candid.org](https://candid.org) has a comprehensive post about them that is free to access from any device (unlike the foundation directory).

- Slide 14: The Let's Talk About Grants video series is meant to be an introductory overview of grants. Each of your organizations is unique and each grant opportunity is different. The Erie County Office of Health Equity provides free, personalized grant technical assistance for community organizations and groups serving minority, marginalized, and underserved communities in Erie County. We can help with finding grants that are a good fit for your organization and applying for grants including planning and editing. We can provide free templates for grant documents including letters of commitment and support and workplans, and examples of grant documents like budgets and budget narratives. We can also assist with grant reporting and with data and evaluation with the help of our epidemiology team. Scan the QR code or use the contact information on this slide to get in touch with our office.
- Slide 15: Thank you for watching Part 2 of the webinar series Let's Talk About Grants: Eligibility & Finding the Right Grant, a production of the Erie County Office of Health Equity. To download a PDF copy of the slides from this video with clickable links or a video transcript, visit [erie.gov/grantsupport](https://erie.gov/grantsupport). Parts 1 and 3-7 of the Let's Talk About Grants video series cover: Grants & funders, Parts of an application, What to include in a grant proposal, Budget basics, Timelines from start to finish, and Resources. To watch another video in the series or for more information, visit [erie.gov/healthequity](https://erie.gov/healthequity).