



## 2023-24 Grant Cycle – Letter of Inquiry Guidelines

### Deadline: October 15, 2023

#### About Us

The New Canaan Community Foundation's mission is to address our community's needs by providing leadership on local issues, making impactful grants, and facilitating New Canaan's effective charitable giving. Our vision is a town that comes together to meet the needs of New Canaan and its neighbors, creating a healthier and more vibrant community.

Our grant investments support programs, operating, partnerships, capital campaigns, 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. We prioritize funding organizations broadly serving New Canaan in a wide variety of quality-of-life initiatives, and funding organizations in lower Fairfield County that are responding to issues of greatest need, with a current emphasis on neighboring communities. 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 & individuals with disabilities 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. Five 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.

Through the annual grant cycle, the foundation is currently seeking to support project/program, operating, capital, and 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 Letter of Inquiry\*\* review, applicants may be:

- *Invited to submit a full proposal* for projects or organizations that are new to the Foundation or that we'd like to learn more about. Guidance and feedback will be provided if there are concerns or questions about the initial request that needs to be addressed in the proposal.
- *Invited to submit an Updated LOI*, including the applicant's most up-to-date financial and demographic information, for requests that have been adequately addressed by the initial LOI.
- *Considered for any issue-specific initiatives* identified as priorities by the Foundation.
- *Declined*, if there is not a fit with Foundation priorities.

***\*\*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.***

### **Submission Requirements**

The Letter of Inquiry is due by midnight on Sunday, October 15, 2023. The [online application](#) consists of 3 sections: Cover Sheet, Narrative and Financial Information. This year's grant cycle timeline is as follows:

- **September 18:** Letter of Inquiry (LOI) application opens
- **October 15:** 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 and Updated LOIs are due, if applicable.
- **February – March:** Site visits, if applicable.
- **May:** Grant decisions
- **June 2024 – May 2025:** Typical grant period

### **Questions**

Please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page on our website. You may also call the Foundation at 203-966-0231, or email the office at [info@newcanaancf.org](mailto:info@newcanaancf.org).