

Organizational Growth: Key Practices for Family and Youth Peer Programs and Organizations Part 1: Video 1



Thank you for viewing this video in our series on organizational growth. We are sharing this information to support the growing demand for peer support services and to discuss key practices for organizational peer program expansion.

My name is Rebecca Evansky, I am the Executive Director of the Wellness Collaborative of New York, Independent Practice Association. The WCNYS IPA is a collective of peer led organizations from across New York State that leverage their expertise and share best practices, support executive operations and advance the awareness and effectiveness of peer support.

This training and all materials are products created in partnership with the NYS Office of Mental Health Under the NYS System of Care Project and is intended to support the growth of family and youth peer led programs across New York State.

Introduction



This series will provide an overview of key practices for family and youth peer programs, offering information to support program growth and sustainability practices.

In this video, we will be covering the primary components of a grant or funding application and an introduction to the eligibility process to become a grant funding recipient

Additional resources on topics regarding organizational growth and capacity building will be available.

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This video is part of a series on building organizational and programmatic growth and sustainability for family and youth peer programs.

In this video, we will be covering the primary components of a grant or funding application and an introduction to the eligibility process to become a grant funding recipient for NYS.

Additional resources on topics regarding organizational growth and capacity building will be available.

Agenda

- ✓ Funding Sources
- ✓ Grant Organizational Narrative
- ✓ Resources for Successful Funding Procurements
- ✓ Nonprofit Peer Provider Request for Funding (RFP) Eligibility
- ✓ Becoming a New York State Vendor in the Statewide Financial System

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Our goal for this video is to review the high-level components that will contribute to a successful funding application and the opportunities available to expand program income. We hope to increase the understanding and capacity for Family and Youth Peer run programs and organizations to apply for grants, enroll as a NYS Vendor with the Statewide Financial System (SFS) (if you have not done so already), and prepare a narrative of your family and youth peer program that can fully reflect the work being done and the needs of the community.

Resources will be provided to support further research of funding opportunities and additional information will be provided in the attached videos.

Program Funding 101

Explore different avenues to expand funding.

- Grants/Foundations
- Fundraising/Donations
- Contracting
- Becoming a Medicaid Provider



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If you are considering expanding or growing your family or youth run program or organization, funding will be a key factor. Family and youth peer programs can explore a variety of sources for funding and it's possible you already have a mix of these sources. Building a portfolio of funding can take many years of growth and expansion, but it's good to understand the options available when considering program growth.

Grants are available from state and federal agencies and require a structured proposal with clear timelines and goals. They require ongoing report outs, budget planning and extensive narratives. For example - a state funded grant generally publishes a request for proposal (or RFP) months in advance which can include extensive documentation to explain the program experience, workforce and materials needed, who you will impact and how you will make that happen. It will be time focused and requires a very specific budget for each request. You may need to have collaborative organizations and gather letters of support as well. You must also be pre-registered with the state system to be eligible to submit a proposal.

Foundations can support both specific projects or materials for a program, but some offer a great deal of flexibility in how funding is utilized and allow programs to be both creative and innovative to meet the needs of a region or target population. An example

of a broad category foundation grant is offered by the NY Health Foundation <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/>. Their catchment categories include support for initiatives that bring healthy foods to communities, support veterans' health, or building healthy communities.

Fundraising and donations are another option. They can bring in both unrestricted dollars to the organization but also be successful in advancing the awareness of peer support and building community collaborations. One thing to note is that the process can be extremely time consuming for a nonprofit organization. Staff may not have the time to dedicate to planning or the tasks for executing may require community volunteers. A good example may be a 5K walk/ run or a community block party. You can request sponsorships or donations but they require extensive planning, possibly permits and a good team to organize.

Contracting is another funding opportunity for nonprofit peer programs. Contracting for family and youth peer support with an outside organization who is interested and in need of peers to be available or accessible for their organization's target population. For example, a community organization that offers housing application support and is seeing an increase in young people or families who could benefit from a peer to navigate other identified challenges, they would reach out and offer an agreement or contract with your organization to have a peer on site a particular day of the week and in turn they provide a payment to the program for those peer services. This model can include the opportunity for a program, such as a clinic, to contract for peers with a peer led organization and bill for services through that program model, if possible according to regulations and other rules.

A Family or Youth Peer program may also consider becoming a Medicaid provider, if they are not already, as family and youth peer services are reimbursed by Medicaid. The handouts accompanying these videos include links to more information on becoming a Medicaid provider.

Grant Narrative: What is Your Role?

What role do I have in preparing a grant?

- Every role at the organization can contribute meaningful information to a successful grant application.
- Consider other areas of funding and how you can apply your knowledge to the team for a strong grant application package.
- Brainstorming and pitching an idea to bring in a funder is a great first step.

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If you are considering expanding your program and this is your “why” for considering new funding opportunities, You might ask yourself what role I have in preparing a grant for my organization? Including a self-reflection process with your internal family and youth peer led team will help guide you in understanding the impact you can achieve when drafting a grant narrative.

As a family or youth peer advocate, you can consider the bigger picture of what success you are having in the initiatives you are part of. If you are leading groups using evidence-based methods or one to one peer support, consider the successes you have in conducting current programs and document what you are accomplishing. Consider if there is a new target population, neighborhood you would like to reach or an organization you would like to partner with. There is a saying we use in grant writing that if you didn’t document it, it didn’t happen and then we can’t report the great work we are doing.

If you are a peer organization leader, your responsibilities might include gathering all of the data and information on the programs you provide and variety of peer support being offered - if you have both family and youth peer specialists. Keep this organized in one place, for example saving a copy to a “future grants” file. This is information you can

use to build the foundation of your narrative and use it ongoing to help identify programmatic needs. You will always be able to speak to your workforce and staffing needs, outreach to different communities and what funding could be utilized for, if the opportunity presents.

If you are just beginning to consider grants as a funding source, you can also use this information as your organizational “pitch. ” which can also be used in a variety of marketing and collaborative discussions. It helps you begin to think in terms of “if we expanded this program, we could offer...THIS... And fill in that blank. OR If we could partner with this organization, we could reach more people who aren’t familiar with family and youth peer support but we know they have a need”

Grants: Outline and Key Areas

- **Abstract** - Brief, one-page summary of organizational information, focus area and service region
- **Work Plan and Action Items** - Targeted goals that match funding requirements to peer organizational assets
- **Budget Narrative and Budget** - Financial outline covering the requested needs, including workforce, materials, technology
- **Letters of Support** - Collaborative organizations and other community supporters

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Each avenue you take to find additional funding may have different requirements and expectations. Here, we will speak about developing grants. Some common key components of a grant include the abstract, work plan, budgets, and letters of support.

It may take some time initially to gather items, but part of the preparation in applying for funding is identifying what your family and youth peer program offers to the community, how your unique experience contributes to the greater organization and what you would like to accomplish with additional funding.

Taking the time to organize and create an outline will make it easier to apply for a variety of funding opportunities and create a foundational packet of information on your organization's strengths.

The abstract will include a narrative that you draft and can be tailored and adapted to a specific request for funding or proposal. It includes information on your organization or program, focus area, who you serve and where you serve them.

Your workplan will be driven by the requirements of the request but should incorporate the family and youth peer values as you describe the action items and outcomes you

plan to accomplish.

Budgets and budget narratives include having an understanding of your current organization's peer workforce and regularly assessing the needs of the community will allow you to know what roles are needed and why. The budget narrative is exactly as it sounds - you will draft the information based on the request for funds. For example, if you are requesting staffing, you would explain the role of each staff and provide a job description.

Consider when you apply for state or federal funding that you may be asked for letters of support from other organizations or collaborative partners. Generally, a template of the support letter is provided but a sample will also be provided in our additional resources.

Grant Narrative Scripting

- A narrative is used to show your program's or organization's experience, qualifications, and credibility.
- Ensure you are emphasizing the work you are doing with family and/or youth peer support.
- Organizational history, mission and vision will be key highlights included in the opening narrative. If you are a family or youth peer program in a larger organization, incorporate the history and impact of the program and work you do in this area.
- Narratives should include experience in providing family and youth peer support.
- Include data to reflect success in current programs.

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One initial step for funding is developing a strong organizational narrative that you can use in your grant applications.

A narrative is used to show your program's or organization's experience, qualifications, and credibility in doing this work. It tells the funder who you are and why you would be successful at meeting the grants' goals; why you are a good candidate for funding.

It includes information that you gather and document regarding your family and/or youth peer programs and should emphasize the variety of support your program offers. Consider your community needs, how they are identified and how you have met them. The narrative should highlight any successful family and/or youth peer programs you have launched and how you outreach to the community.

These are some items to consider when you are beginning to pull together information:

Make a list of things that are unique about how family and youth peer support can engage individuals and the places where an individual can find a family or youth peer.

You will want to include the history of your organization, how long the peer support

program has been in existence, and your mission and vision for the peer support program. If you are a family or youth peer program in a larger organization, incorporate the history and impact of the program in addition to the overview of the larger organization.

Include any relevant data that can show success in family and/or youth peer program implementation. For example, you may want to share the number of individuals served in a year, how you have navigated engaging a traditionally hard to reach population in your covered service area or demographics on a population that you hope to serve. The data should support your story of why your program or organization has the experience that the funder is seeking.

Grant Narrative: The Golden Thread

Ability to respond to the following items:



What am I hoping to accomplish with funding?

- Filling a gap in the community with something your program has to offer

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As you are writing your grant narrative, you may also want to consider what I call the golden thread. The golden thread is the thread of information that connects all of your organization's actions and goals that support your vision and mission.

It is often important to ensure that you are responding fully to these questions in your narrative. Keep in mind that your responses also have to align with the goals of the funder and the purpose of the funding.

What am I planning to accomplish with this funding? Are we filling a gap in services, is this already provided in the community but family and/or youth peers would help enhance that service, or do we have something to offer but it needs fiscal support to increase the workforce needed to accomplish it, are we marketing services, or do we have a material need like technology tangible items?

Grant Narrative: The Golden Thread Cont.



What is the problem I'm hoping to solve?

- Describing the needs in your community with support from data and needs assessments

How do we plan to make this happen?

- Can I provide measurable action items?

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The golden thread when drafting your narrative should answer “What problem are we solving for?” - be able to describe the need in the community, how you know that its needed and how you will be able to document when the need is filled.

And finally - the action plan - how can I make this happen? Use measurable goals that are realistic and be able to document them. Make sure all questions are answered and relate to one another.

Grant Template: Organize and Plan

NAME OF THE GRANT
GRANT NOFO IDENTIFIER
Due Date: DATE GRANT IS DUE
Period of Performance: HOW LONG IS THE GRANT FOR
APPLICATION PACKAGE

Complete notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) is attached

Narrative and Attachment Formatting Guidelines

Font: Use an easily readable font, such as Times Roman, Arial, Courier, or CG Times. The text and table portions of the application must be single-spaced and submitted in not less than a 12-point font. Applications not adhering to 12-point font requirements may be deemed non-responsive and returned. For charts, graphs, footnotes, and budget tables, you may use a different pitch or size font but not less than 10 point or size font. It is vital that the charts are legible when scanned or reproduced.

Paper Size and Margins: For duplication and scanning purposes, ensure that the application can be printed on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper. Margins must be at least one inch at the top, bottom, left and right of the paper. Left-align text.

Application Page Limit: the total size of all uploaded files may not exceed the equivalent of 80 page when printed. Page limit includes the abstract, project and budget narratives, attachments and letters of commitment and support required in the Application Guide and this NOFA.

Formatting:

Your application may be rejected by Grants.gov if you use attachment names greater than 50 characters.

Include the name of the applicant and 10-digit award number (if competing continuation or competing supplement) on each page as a footer.

Project Narrative

Over the course of the one-year grant, recipients should expect to complete the following core activities:

1. Developing/strengthening a network that will address a need that otherwise could not be met individually
2. Conducting a self-assessment to identify alignment of resources and strategies to increase efficiencies in Family and Youth Peer Support
3. Developing a comprehensive strategic plan that focuses efforts toward addressing "need in the community"
4. Completing an action plan that identifies strategies for achieving efficiencies, strengthening the system, and operationalizing the activities proposed in the strategic plan beyond the one-year funding
5. Developing a sustainability plan to that identifies collaboration to improve health, and leveraging resources to sustain the proposed project/ongoing

This section provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. Each element of the project narrative is linked to a review criterion as follows:

- Need (25 points)
- Response (30 points)
- Evaluative Measures (10 points)
- Impact (10 points)
- Resources & Capabilities (25 points)
- Support Requested (5 points)

Finding ways to organize the necessary components of a grant application can be helpful when writing one.

Here we see a sample template that you would use to outline the grant narrative when you look at a possible grant to begin considering an application. This allows you to drop in all the required details and get a clear picture of what is needed. You can build a team, even just two people to tackle the items and build your file of items.

Getting organized and having information, ideas and data in one place will ensure a smooth and successful grant application. See handouts accompanying this series for samples. You can also find sample templates online.

We will review in other videos the types of funding and how to tailor this information accordingly.

Resources

WELCOME TO NEW YORK STATE GRANTS MANAGEMENT

NYS Grants Management for Organizations



Search for Funding
Find New York State grant opportunities using the Grants Gateway.

Register Your Organization in SFS
Steps to register in SFS

Get Prequalified
Nonprofits who wish to apply for Bid Events must first get prequalified using the Statewide Financial System (SFS)

Information can be located at
<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov>

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This website (grantsmanagement.ny.gov) is specific to New York State and is a good place to start for those interested in looking over the NYS requirements. You can also Find, Apply for, and Manage New York State Grants all through the New York State grants management website.

This website also offers a host of webinars, instructional videos and documents to guide you along in the process. If you are uncertain if your organization is registered, there is a search option to inquire.

You can also search for New York funding opportunities and sign up for announcements to be emailed directly to you. Selections can be made for those applicable to your organization and family and youth peer services offered. You do not need to be the organization leader to sign up for grant notices and sometimes it's good to sign up for those relevant grant notices to better understand what types of projects and programs are being funded in your region.

New York State Grants: How to Get Started

NYS Statewide Financial System (SFS) Registration



- 1) Registration process and approval
- 2) Gather required information
- 3) Unique Vendor ID and credentials issued
- 4) Complete all sections within SFS to ensure eligibility
- 5) Review all requirements and timelines for submission

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If you are considering New York State grants, you will need to be registered with the NYS Statewide Financial System (SFS).

The New York statewide financial system registration is required for all nonprofit organizations to apply for funding. The SFS website has a wealth of resources to follow and get registered. If you are an organizational leader, you can check if your organization is already registered and be sure to update all sections, so you are ready when a grant becomes available.

The SFS will issue you a unique vendor id and allows for processing of payment should you get awarded a grant. More information will be provided in our resource handouts to better understand where to get started and how to search for grants.

You will want to review all requirements and timelines for both the SFS submission and grants you are considering. There will be dates for when you need to submit questions, if you need to notify that you plan to apply, which are called “Letters of Intent,” and submission deadlines.

Remember that organizations register to apply for grants to New York State. If you are a

program within a larger organization, make sure to talk with the leaders within your organization on opportunities to apply for funding to expand family and youth peer support.

Additional videos will offer ideas and information on different types of funding, including funding through foundations.

More Information

Check out additional videos and handouts from this series on www.peertac.org.

Email us at info@peertac.org with any questions.

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This video reviewed key considerations for writing a grant narrative, including getting organized and prepared for grant and funding applications. We reviewed information that will support the planning and organization of data and resources for your family and youth peer team.

Please see the other videos and handouts in this series for more information on organizational growth and capacity building.

Thank you for listening to our series. Questions can be emailed to info@peertac.org.

References

- *Becoming a registered vendor in NYS Vendor File*. Corcraft. (n.d.). <https://corcraft.ny.gov/becoming-registered-vendor-nys-vendor-file-0>
- Crosby, K. (n.d.). *New York Statewide Financial System*. The Statewide Financial System of New York. <https://www.sfs.ny.gov/>
- *NYS Grants Management for Organizations*. New York State Grants Management. (n.d.). <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/>

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These references were utilized for this presentation.