

Frequently Asked Questions – 2021 Grant Cycles

In what ways is this cycle similar to other cycles? What's different?

As we begin our 2021 grant making, we mourn the loss of over 1,000 Delawareans and those living in southern Chester County to COVID-19 over the last year. Simultaneously, we are grateful for the continuing selfless efforts of our community's front line and health care workers. 2020 was a hard year for all of us, but more so for these dedicated individuals. We are humbled by their compassion and commitment. Finally, we are appreciative of all of our nonprofit partners for their dedication and continuing ingenuity in tackling a COVID informed world.

The Longwood Foundation remains committed to being responsive to the needs of our community and nonprofit organizations. As we look ahead to 2021, we are hopeful that there are brighter days ahead as more people are able to access the COVID-19 vaccine. The grants Longwood will make in 2021 will span two years. We're optimistic that within that window we will see a community on the rebound and one that reflects a new normal. We ask that applicants do their best to incorporate both the uncertainty and this new reality into their plans.

We welcome applications from organizations seeking to improve the quality of life and future of the state of Delaware and/or southern Chester County, Pennsylvania (within a four-mile radius of Longwood Gardens). In general, we choose to practice "passive" or "responsive" philanthropy, which means that we assume we don't know the best way to improve our region and therefore we let each applicant define success in their own way. From these distinct views of the future, we choose the most compelling in which to invest. As the pandemic endures, we recognize that nonprofits continue to play a critical role in responding to the human needs and vaccination efforts underway and remain interested in those initiatives. We also continue to seek to incorporate the values of our founder, Pierre S. du Pont, into our grantmaking by taking the long-term view. To craft the brighter days we believe lie ahead, we are also interested in making philanthropic investments that will enable our region and its nonprofit organizations to emerge stronger. We welcome thoughtful proposals from organizations in all nonprofit sectors that address the short-, medium-, and long-term challenges that will benefit the residents, environment, and culture of our region.

In 2021 the Longwood Foundation will return to its usual funding guidelines. We will run our typical two grant cycles in spring and fall, with deadlines of March 1st and September 1st, respectively.

What do you mean by "COVID-informed"?

All requests should now be "COVID informed." Note that COVID-informed does NOT mean that the request must deal with responding to the coronavirus crisis. Rather, this means that your organization has developed a plan and has crafted a request that appreciates the way COVID has impacted your organization and society (i.e. – it does not assume business as usual). You should also assume that the impacts of COVID will continue to change meaningfully in the coming months and years.

COVID does not need to be at the core of your grant request to be eligible to apply in 2021. If you review our grantmaking in 2020 (<http://www.longwoodfoundation.org/recent-grant-awards/>), you'll notice we funded both projects directly responding to the coronavirus crisis as well as those that did not. We will continue to do so in 2021.

What is the application process? When will I receive notice if I am awarded?

The Longwood Foundation operates two grant cycles per year, with proposal deadlines of March 1st and September 1st. Funding decisions are made in May for the spring cycle and in November for the fall cycle. Additional information can be found in the Grant Life Cycle document:

http://www.longwoodfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Longwood-Grant-Life-Cycle-At-A-Glance_Jan-2021.pdf

How much do you anticipate distributing?

The amount to be distributed will be dependent on our assets available. Since this is driven by what happens with the economy over the next few months, we are unable to commit to specific amounts. However, we anticipate that there will be millions of dollars available in each cycle. You can review our historical awards and distributions on our website: <http://www.longwoodfoundation.org/recent-grant-awards/>

How competitive will the grant cycles be?

While it is hard to predict, historically, our long-term average is that we have around \$2.50 of demand for every \$1 we have available to give.

Who is eligible to apply?

The Longwood Foundation accepts grant requests from nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations located in and/or benefiting the residents, environment, or culture of the state of Delaware and within a four-mile radius of Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Organizations that have previously applied are asked not to re-approach the Longwood Foundation with a funding request within two years of a previous request, regardless of whether the proposal was approved or declined. Therefore, if you are not eligible in the spring or fall of 2021 because of a past grant request, then your past grant agreement or declination letter governs when you can return to Longwood for another request.

If an organization is headquartered outside of the Longwood funding geography, but doing work inside of our region, are they eligible to apply?

Yes. If you are working to benefit the residents and/or communities in our region, you are eligible to apply. Please describe the nexus of operations and/or benefits that lies within our geography. If the program you're applying for is solely (or largely) based in our geographic region, then you are eligible and our other funding guidelines apply. If the programming you plan to apply for includes other geographic regions, we'd encourage you to think about a proportional request. For example: If the program you're applying for would cost \$100,000 across all participants and 20% of the participants are from within our geographic region (and it is expected to stay around that number throughout the grant), we're unlikely to contribute more than \$20,000.

What scale of requests is Longwood willing to entertain?

In 2020, we issued grants in a range between \$5,400 and \$1 million. The long-term average is around \$150,000-\$200,000. We'll entertain the scale of request you need to succeed but encourage you to use these benchmarks in planning your request.

Will you consider requests above 50% of the project/operating cost?

We continue to want to pay no more than 50% of the cash needed to a project or operations over the time period you define.

If an organization applies for a grant, when can they apply again?

If you apply in the spring of 2021, you will not be eligible for another request until the spring of 2023 – whether funded or declined. If you apply in the fall of 2021, you will not be eligible for another request until the fall of 2023 – whether funded or declined.

What types of requests will you consider? What sectors or types of organizations will you consider?

We welcome requests for program, operating, and/or capital funds. We're open to whatever kind of request that is most valuable for your organization and clients. There's no need for you or us to categorize the request. We will accept grant requests from all sectors of the community but have a marginal bias towards those that address human needs. We welcome traditional outcome-oriented multi-year requests.

Can organizations meet with a Longwood team member ahead of submitting an application?

Yes. Prospective applicants may request a pre-meeting ahead of the submission of a proposal. During this meeting, organizations may update the Foundation on their planned request and ask questions pertinent to drafting their application. Note that this meeting is optional for requests less than \$500,000 and requesting one neither improves nor harms an organization's likelihood of receiving funding. ***New for 2021*** **Organizations planning to request \$500,000 and above must have a pre-meeting prior to submitting an application.** In order to schedule a pre-meeting, reach out to Lauren Petrusky (Grants Administrator) (lpetrusky@longwood.org), who will connect you to either Maria Stecker (Grants Manager) or Thère du Pont (President) for this meeting.

What factors will Longwood consider when making its decisions?

Our focus is to find the highest and best use of our funds for those who reside in our geography. Many factors are considered in the grantmaking process, including (but not limited to): leadership, outcomes, governance/planning, financial health/sustainability, past Longwood grant performance (if applicable), other financial commitments, and the population served. For more information on this, we encourage you to watch a segment of this recent Information Session in which President Thère du Pont addresses these as continuums: <https://vimeo.com/513538030#t=18m37s>

Outcomes, impact, and ambition have historically been an important part of Longwood's grantmaking process. Has that changed?

For more than five years, specific outcomes and ambitions for them have been the key differentiator in our grant decisions. We continue to be very interested in those. But another way to think about them is this question: What is your Board holding the leaders of your nonprofit accountable for in the next 18-24 months as a result of this grant? Ideally your outcomes and ambition should align with your strategic plan. They help you and your board know the direction you are going and when you have gotten there.

The Barr Foundation has created and given us permission to share a helpful resource that can be used for developing outputs and outcomes: bit.ly/2QCCXwD If you're just getting started with evaluation, the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement & PHMC have also partnered to create outcome measurement tools and resources for nonprofits that can be accessed for free on their website: <http://bit.ly/2Nz0pvW>.

How should organizations think about the timing of proposed outcomes?

The timing of your outcomes should coincide with the length of the grant. Funds for the spring cycle may not arrive until June 2021. Funds for the fall cycle may not arrive until December 2021. Outcomes tied to this grant request should not start before that date. Additionally, we ask that before you return to Longwood with a future request that performance against your last grant is known. Given that most organizations in the spring cycle will not be eligible to reapply until the spring of 2023, we suggest your proposed outcomes span the time interval between June 2021 and the end of 2022/early 2023. We suggest organizations applying in the fall craft outcomes spanning the time interval between January 2022 and summer 2023.

An important note about timing: in our most recent round of grant outcome reviews (where we visit organizations at the end of their grant period), we discovered that only 35% of grantees were nearing completion of their outcomes. It may be harder to deliver the outcomes you propose than you anticipate. You will likely feel pressure, some of it from us, to increase the scale or pace of your outcomes. Please do so with caution. If you ask us in 18-20 months if you can come back for your next request and you have not achieved the outcomes in your last one, you will not start the process from the strongest position. It will not be impossible to receive another grant award, but since most applicants are worthy of a grant, your chances are not as strong.

Will you be concerned about the sustainability of our request?

We are always interested in the ongoing financial health of an applicant. However, we recognize that the COVID crisis has created significant strains on many organizations and will accept requests that have only a short-term duration. That said, a request that shows financial sustainability beyond the expiration of Longwood's funds is more likely to be funded than one that does not.

What financial information will an organization need to apply?

Our grant application will ask for several different pieces of financial information – including an independent audit report, current Balance Sheet, current Statement of Activities, and a Two-Year Cash Flow Projection for both the organization and project (if applicable). We expect that organizations whose revenue last year was above \$5 million will have audited financials. We prefer that smaller organizations do as well. If no independent audit is available, please explain why and provide the most recent year-end Statements of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and Statements of Activities (Profit & Loss Statements) that also contain prior year-end numbers for comparison purposes. The same statements, with comparable prior year numbers, are required for the interim period since your most recent year-end.

We ask for two-year cash flow projections as part of our grant application. It takes on increased importance in these challenging times. Work with your financial experts to understand expected cash inflows and outflows, for both the organization and the project (if applicable), over the next eight quarters. Please present your two-year projected cash flows either quarterly or monthly. We recognize there is a great deal of uncertainty, so we know it won't be perfect. Please keep track of the assumptions you use. You are welcome to propose your own format. For assistance and a blank template (which would need to be modified to show two years), see the Strong Nonprofits Toolkit compiled by the Wallace Foundation & Fiscal Management Associates:

[StrongNonprofits.org](https://www.strongnonprofits.org)

If your prior year revenues were above \$20 million, you do not need to complete a two-year cash flow for the organization. However, if you are requesting funds for a specific project or program, we ask that you provide a two-year cash flow for the project.

Should nonprofits partner with one another and/or will Longwood favor organizations that have partnered?

We believe it's likely that there will be more demand for services from nonprofits and less sources of funds in the years to come. Therefore, it's logical that new forms of partnerships should be explored and/or executed in the months to come. However, partnering is not a simple exercise. It can make execution more complicated and sometimes reduce the likelihood of success. So, it's not for everyone. We encourage you to explore any and all solutions that benefit your clients. If you do partner, as always, there needs to be a lead organization that is primarily accountable for the results. They should be the applicant organization.

Will Longwood reimburse for previously purchased items, such as PPE?

No, we will not. However, it's acceptable to make a request for future funding in part motivated because of the required purchase of items such as PPE in the recent past.

Will you fund scholarships for students whose families may be experiencing hardship?

It's been our practice not to fund scholarships. It remains highly unlikely that we will.

Will you provide economic relief for individuals (e.g. relief or direct support for vulnerable/impacted communities)?

It's been our practice not to fund such programs. It remains highly unlikely that we will.

Will Longwood offer challenge grants?

If the Trustees decide to fund a grant and the applicant has requested a challenge or match format, the Trustees generally find this feature attractive.

How will awarded funds be paid?

We will not be issuing paper checks for the foreseeable future. Once you are notified of the award, you will be assigned a form in our Grants Management System to supply your bank wiring information so that we can distribute the funds quickly.

If funded, what are the reporting requirements?

For those who are currently delivering on a grant provided by Longwood prior to 2020, reporting requirements have been suspended for the foreseeable future — we don't need to hear from you nor do we expect to. At some point in the near future, we expect to restart reporting requirements for all past grantees and will communicate with them directly.

2021 applicants who are awarded funds should expect to report on our typical timelines. We will want to hear an update on your progress at about 15 months after the grant. There is no need for follow up before that. At approximately 18-20 months post-grant we will also schedule a grant closeout meeting with each grant recipient. This meeting will include a discussion on progress against the proposed outcomes of the grant, what the recipient has learned in the process, and seek suggestions for how the Foundation's grantmaking process can be improved.