

Tennessee Fatherhood Initiative:

Grant Program Application Guide



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Letter from Tennessee Department of Human Services Commissioner Clarence H. Carter

Potential Grant Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this grant program! I'm excited to share a vision for the future with you – one that is not only the future of our state's safety net, but of the whole of Tennessee society. In the 32 years I have worked in human services at the local, state, and national levels, I have seen firsthand the transformational impact a father can have in the lives of children, family, and the community.

I have also come to a few unmistakable conclusions:

The first is that **active and engaged fathers are absolutely essential** to the health and well-being of their own children and families – but also to a vibrant Tennessee society.

The second is that **some areas within society have yet to internalize this truth** and, as a result, have inadvertently neglected, forgotten, or devalued the role of fathers to the detriment of their children, families, and communities.

The third is that **the lack of recognition of this truth has affected our laws, regulations, policies, and institutions** in ways that have created significant barriers to a father's involvement in children's lives.

And the fourth is that, despite this crisis of fatherhood that we face, **it is not too late for us to act** and change course to the benefit of generations to come.

Our vision is simple: imagine a Tennessee where every father, mother, teacher, pediatrician, human service provider, legislator and citizen understands, values, and seeks to actively support the essential role of fathers. Imagine a Tennessee that equips fathers with the tools and guidance they need to stand strong as pillars of love and stability for their families.

Through this grant program, **we are taking a significant step toward making this future vision a reality**. But this vision is broader than government and cannot be achieved by TDHS alone. I'd like to thank each of you for accepting the challenge that is upon us. You are answering the call to prioritize the needs of Tennesseans and improve the lives of Tennessee citizens. As you continue your good work and embark upon this grant opportunity, remember we are in this together. Our collective efforts provide the best opportunity for long-term success. Together we are stronger.

Together, we can Transform Tennessee.

With gratitude,

Clarence H. Carter, Commissioner

Grant Purpose and Overview

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) fatherhood grant program is a significant investment in the health and well-being of Tennessee society. Through this program, TDHS seeks to collaborate with public, private, and non-profit organizations to promote fatherhood and provide the necessary support to empower fathers. The grant program will provide funding to organizations to support projects to advance the essential role of fathers in Tennessee society. Broadly, TDHS seeks to fund grants that directly invest into services for fathers. Intended grant recipients are on-the-ground service delivery providers with previous experience providing fatherhood or related programming to communities.

Specific eligibility criteria will be provided for the grant; however, generally, interested organizations should have a mission or intended output of benefitting and improving outcomes for fathers and families.

The focus of this grant application and grant cycle are Fatherhood Programs that provide direct services to fathers and their families. Read on if your organization is interested in applying.



Eligibility Requirements

Fatherhood Programs

Fatherhood program grants are intended to fund on-the-ground service delivery providers with previous experience providing fatherhood or related programming to communities. The funding source for our Fatherhood Grants is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal program that offers states flexibility in serving families of low-income. The purpose of TANF is to reduce intergenerational dependency on public benefits by increasing self-sufficiency, education, and economic mobility of families with children. Fatherhood grant applicants must serve one of the four federal goals of the TANF program:

1. Provide assistance to needy families with children so that they can live in their own homes or the homes of relatives;
2. End dependence of needy parents on government benefits through work, job preparation, and marriage;
3. Reduce out of wedlock pregnancies; and
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Fatherhood program grant applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Have been incorporated for at least two (2) years.
- Be currently operating fatherhood, parenting, or related programs in Tennessee or serving individuals and families in Tennessee (Note: Grant applicants do not need to be headquartered in Tennessee but must have a documented presence serving individuals and families in Tennessee).
- Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.
- Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity.
- For-profit businesses that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity.
- Be in good standing with the State of Tennessee, e.g., have filed formation or registration documents, have filed all required annual reports, and paid all fees, as applicable.

Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be used to score and select applicants for the grant awards. Please note that the information presented below is intended to provide an overview of each evaluation criterion and therefore should not be fully relied upon to gain a complete understanding of each criterion. A detailed breakdown of the evaluation criteria for each tier is available in the application, here:

https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/2024_fatherhood_direct_services_grant_application.

Fatherhood Programs

- **Relevant Experience (30 points):** Demonstrates experience designing and implementing fatherhood programs and services as well as evidence of previous work with the Department of Human Services, community organizations, or other stakeholders addressing similar challenges related to the grant.
- **Proposed Approach/Response (30 points):** Clearly articulates understanding of the role fathers play in the well-being of families, communities, and society, how the use of the grant will support fathers, and how the proposed approach, strategies, and framework will satisfy the requirements of the grant.
- **Budget Justification (15 points):** Provides a detailed budget, including a rationale for proposed activities.
- **Staffing (15 points):** Provides a one-page resume of the project leader(s) to establish that the organization leadership is experienced and in good standing and provides a description of the team that will be executing funded activities.
- **Risk Mitigation Plan (10 points):** Outlines potential risks and presents a proactive risk-mitigation plan.
- **Required Legal Documentation (Pass/Fail):** Required legal documentation provided (e.g., evidence of 501(c)(3) nonprofit status).



Application Requirements

The below requirements must be followed, in addition to adhering to the specific eligibility requirements for each grant tier.

Format

Your proposal must be submitted in PDF format on 8 ½ X 11" paper, doubled spaced, with 1" (2.54 cm) margins all around and at least 11pt. font. The size and/or style of graphics are not restricted and their use and style are at your discretion.

Cover Page

The cover page provides foundational information about your organization. Include:

- Your Project's Name
- The legal name of your organization
- Names and contact information for all individuals involved

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Include page numbers for each major section and subsection of your proposal.

Program Proposal

The program proposal must not exceed twenty (20) pages. Describe your organization's:

- Vision, capacity, anticipated impact, and outcomes
- Relevant experience
- Proposed approach/response
- Budget justification
- Staffing
- Risk mitigation

Organizational Chart

The organizational chart must not exceed one (1) page and should include only the key staff to be involved in carrying out the grant.

Budget

Complete your proposed budget (using the form linked here <https://mylk.us/l/264>), cost allocation plan, and indirect cost rate proposal. Complete the tabs listed as "Year 1 Detail", "Year 2 Detail", and "TOTAL Budget Detail".

Certificate of Acknowledgement

Include the certificate of acknowledgement with the state form provided here

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Applicant%20Certification%20of%20Acknowledgement.pdf> .

Application materials must be submitted electronically through the provided web portal Formstack:

https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/2024_fatherhood_direct_services_grant_application. Applications are due by June 14, date, 2024 at 5:00 PM Central Time. Applicants must complete all required sections in Formstack.

Evaluation Process

Applications will be evaluated by a panel of TDHS reviewers to determine which organizations receive funding. Generally, applications will be scored against a rubric detailing how well – based on applicant responses to each question – organizations are likely to satisfy TDHS grant requirements. To promote transparency in the evaluation process, evaluation categories for responses are detailed below, with reviewers holding final discretion over scores.

Deficient: Few, if any, elements are addressed. Documentation and required information are deficient or omitted. Application has very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses. Weaknesses identified will have substantial impact and prevent the successful implementation and execution of the proposed project. Insufficient ratings may also be given if the applicant responses do not meet the programmatic intent of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

Fair: Most elements are addressed, although when addressed, do not contain all the necessary detail and/or support. Documentation and required information are deficient. Application has few strengths and some weaknesses and of the weaknesses identified, only one major weakness. The one major weakness could potentially impact the successful implementation and execution of the proposed project.

Good: Elements are addressed, although some do not contain necessary detail and/or support. Most documentation and required information are present and sufficient. Application has some strengths but with at least one weakness identified that will likely have moderate impact on the successful implementation and execution of the proposed project.

Very Good: Elements are clearly addressed with necessary detail and the evidence is thoroughly supported. Documentation and required information are specific and comprehensive. Any weaknesses identified will likely have minor impact on the successful implementation and execution of the proposed project.

Exceptional: All elements of the criterion are clearly addressed, well-conceived, thoroughly developed, and well supported. Documentation and required information are specific and comprehensive. The criterion has no deficiencies or weaknesses. All strengths identified should clearly be above and beyond the baseline requirements. No restatements of the application or the NOFO requirements.

Pre-Application Tips

✓ ***Make sure to thoroughly review the Notice of Funding Opportunity, Application Guide and Additional Resources***

We highly recommend thoroughly reading the grant application. Applications have many different questions across a range of topics – such as detailing your organization's planned approach, sharing previous relevant experience that qualifies your organization, detailing how grant funding will be used, outlining performance monitoring and evaluation plans, and more. Additionally, there are specific requirements, from including certain legal paperwork to ensuring page limits and formatting are adhered to.

To maximize your organization's chances at receiving funding through the grant program, it's critical to closely read all of the requirements and questions to ensure responses are thorough and complete.

✓ ***Gather the following documents:***

- Documentation about the legal status of your organization and forms that show an EIN/DUNS number
 - Non-Profits should submit proof of non-profit status (e.g., reference to applicant's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations, copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate, statement from state taxing body certifying non-profit status, certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation, etc.)
 - For-Profits and Small Businesses applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their legal status: Documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships and/or accept awards (i.e., articles of incorporation, bylaws).
- Key staff resumes (project manager(s), executive leadership, board)
- If a Fatherhood Program, collect evidence of previous collaboration with other community organizations, if applicable

✓ ***Check for upcoming webinars or other Technical Assistance opportunities***

- Visit <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/fatherhood-grants.html> to see the schedule of events

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the grant program?

The grant program is intended to provide funding to organizations to support fatherhood programs, through direct services, to advance the essential roles of fathers in Tennessee society.

Where can I submit my application?

All application materials may be submitted through the online portal linked [here](#).

How long is the grant period?

The grant period for all grants is two (2) years.

Can my organization apply for multiple grants?

Yes, your organization is eligible to apply for multiple grants. As long as each application adheres to the specific guidelines and criteria set forth by the application, organizations may apply for multiple grant tiers.

What are common reasons for grant application rejection, and how can I avoid them?

Common reasons for application rejection include lack of alignment with Tennessee Department of Human Services' priorities and goals, insufficient detail or clarity in the proposal, inadequate evidence of the project's feasibility or impact, and failure to meet eligibility criteria or submission deadlines. To lower chance of rejection, be sure to thoroughly read through the application, follow all guidelines, and present a well-organized proposal with clear objectives and evidence of your organization's capacity to effectively carry out the grant.

Are there any workshops or webinars available to help me with the grant application process?

Please visit the events calendar [here](#) for the complete schedule of upcoming workshops and training sessions.

I have a question about the grant application. Who can I talk to?

For questions concerning grant application details or processes, please reach out to the TDHS Fatherhood Program at Fatherhood.TDHS@tn.gov. Please include your name, organization, and the grant(s) you are planning to apply for.

I'm having a technology issue with/submitting my application. Who can I talk to?

For technology-related issues with your application, please reach out to the technical support contact the TDHS Fatherhood Program, at Fatherhood.TDHS@tn.gov. Be sure to include your name, organization, the grant(s) you are trying to apply for, and the technical issues you are experiencing.