Since its founding in 1936, the William T. Grant Foundation has worked to further the understanding of human behavior through research. Today, the majority of our funding supports research to improve the lives of youth ages 8 to 25 in the United States.

This document details the Funding Guidelines and Application Procedures for investigator-initiated grants and Officers’ Research grants. Investigator-initiated grants usually range between $100,000 and $600,000 and cover two to three years of support. Projects involving secondary data analysis are at the lower end of the budget range, whereas projects involving new data collection and sample recruitment can be at the higher end. Proposals to launch experiments in which settings (e.g., classrooms, schools, youth programs) are randomly assigned to conditions often have higher awards ranging up to $1.5 million. Officers’ Research grants are up to $25,000.

The William T. Grant Foundation accepts applications through our website, www.wtgrantfoundation.org. Letters of inquiry are accepted in early January, early April, and early September for investigator-initiated grants and on a rolling basis for Officers’ Research grants. If an investigator-initiated grant letter of inquiry demonstrates that the project falls within our Current Research Interests and potentially meets our general criteria for funding, we will invite a full proposal for further consideration. The review process for a successful investigator-initiated grant application, beginning with the submission of a letter of inquiry and ending with approval by our Board of Trustees, is 10 to 15 months. The review process for Officers’ Research grant applications is usually four to six weeks. Approved awards
are made available shortly after Board meetings for investigator-initiated research grants and after internal review for Officer’s Research grants. For specific deadlines, please visit the Research Grants section of our website.

Information on all of our funding programs and requests for proposals is available in the Funding Opportunities section of our website.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

The following criteria are applicable to investigator-initiated and Officers’ Research grants and are the primary guidelines by which applications are reviewed.

- **Research area is consistent with the Foundation’s Current Research Interests.**
  
The research questions posed should be a strong fit with the Foundation’s Current Research Interests. Our Current Research Interests focus on studies that examine how youth settings work, how they affect youth development, and how they can be improved; and on studies that examine when, how, and under what conditions research evidence is used in policies and practices that affect youth and how its use can be improved. For projects examining youth settings, important settings include but are not limited to youth programs, schools, families, peer groups, and neighborhoods. For more information, see our Current Research Interests document and recent Annual Report essays on studying the use of research evidence and doing social setting research on our website.

- **Project addresses questions or issues that can inform policy and/or practice.**
  
The research questions posed should have relevance for policies and/or practices affecting the settings of youth ages 8 to 25 in the United States or a vulnerable subpopulation of those youth (e.g., young people who are adjudicated or aging out of foster care). Some studies directly examine policy choices, program practices, and services. Other studies advance our understanding of how youth settings work and affect youth in ways that are important for understanding how to improve policy or practice. Studies of the
use of research evidence in policy or practice should inform attempts to support or improve the use of research evidence. We do not expect that any one study will or should impact policy or practice. Instead, studies should contribute to a body of empirical evidence that is relevant and useful for improving policies and practices that affect youth.

- **Project complements and extends prior and concurrent efforts and informs theory.**
The application should reflect a mastery of relevant theory and empirical findings and build upon this work. Studies can focus on either generating or testing theory, depending on the state of knowledge about a topic. We support studies that build and test theories about how youth settings work, how to improve youth settings, and how settings affect youth. We also support studies that build and test theories about when, how, and under what conditions research evidence is used in policy and practice that affect youth and about how to improve the use of research evidence.

- **Project reflects high standards of evidence and rigorous methods, commensurate with the proposal’s goals.**
  - The study’s design, methods, and analysis plan should fit the research questions under study.
  - The sample should be appropriate in size and composition to address the study’s questions.
  - The assessment, observation, and/or measurement plan should reflect methodological rigor.
  - The analysis plan for quantitative and/or qualitative data should reflect sufficient sophistication for addressing the study’s questions. The plan should reflect a clear understanding of the strengths and limits of various analytic techniques.
  - Where relevant, there should be attention to generalizability of findings and to statistical power to detect meaningful effects.

- **Project demonstrates adequate consideration of the gender, ethnic, and cultural appropriateness of concepts, methods, and measures.”**
• **Project is feasible.**
  The work can be successfully completed given the resources and timeframe. The staffing plan reflects adequate expertise to successfully carry out the project. The investigators have the ability to conduct and communicate research successfully, as demonstrated in their prior training and publications.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to the General Criteria for Funding, the Foundation also values projects with the following characteristics:

- Interdisciplinary work;
- Mixed-methods work;
- Projects that generate data useful to other researchers and that make the data available in public use files;
- Project teams that include people with different roles (e.g., researchers, practitioners, policymakers);
- Project teams that combine senior and junior staff in ways that mentor junior staff;
- Projects led by members of underrepresented groups; and
- For Officers’ Research grants, we encourage applications from junior scholars of color in need of small grants to build their research programs.

**SELECTION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES**

I. LETTER OF INQUIRY (INVESTIGATOR-INITIATED and OFFICERS’ RESEARCH GRANTS)

To apply for an investigator-initiated grant, principal investigators should submit a letter of inquiry. The letter of inquiry functions as a mini-proposal and should both meet the general criteria for funding and provide sufficient detail for reviewers to determine whether a full proposal is warranted. Reviewers will evaluate letters of inquiry based on whether projects are a strong fit with the Foundation’s Current Research Interests and potentially meet the other funding criteria. Those applying for an Officers’ Research grant should also submit a letter of inquiry. These applications
are reviewed internally on a rolling basis and do not require a full proposal. They are reviewed according to the same funding criteria as investigator-initiated grants.

Letters of inquiry for both investigator-initiated and Officers’ Research grants are reviewed internally. Internal reviewers may not have expertise in an applicant’s specific area of work and applications should be written with this audience in mind. In order to more adequately assess a project, internal reviewers will occasionally request more information from applicants or solicit expert opinions on a proposal.

II. FULL PROPOSAL (INVESTIGATOR-INITIATED GRANTS ONLY)
If the letter of inquiry submitted for an investigator-initiated grant demonstrates that the project falls within our Current Research Interests and potentially meets our funding criteria, we will invite a full proposal for further consideration. We do not accept unsolicited proposals.

Full proposals are reviewed using a rigorous, scientific peer review process involving two or more external reviewers. The Foundation chooses reviewers with content, methodological, and disciplinary expertise in the proposal’s subject matter. Applicants who receive positive reviews with critiques that may be addressed are given an opportunity to provide written responses to external reviewers’ questions and comments. Full proposals, external reviews, and applicants’ responses to external reviews are then further reviewed by the Foundation’s Senior Program Team. The Senior Program Team makes funding recommendations to the Board of Trustees at their meetings. Funding is allocated shortly after these meetings.

QUALIFYING ORGANIZATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS
Grants are limited, without exception, to tax-exempt entities for purposes that are described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Applicant institutions must make available, on request, letters from the Internal Revenue Service that include the applicant’s classification under Section 509(a) of the Code, “Private Foundation Status.”
As a rule, the Foundation does not support or make contributions to building funds, fundraising drives, endowment funds, general operating budgets, or scholarships. Grants are made to organizations or institutions, not individuals.

Each institution has its own set of eligibility criteria to determine who can act as Principal Investigator (PI) on a grant. We require that our applicants meet their institution's specific criteria. Usually, this excludes graduate students. Graduate students can, however, be listed as Co-Principal Investigators.
APPLICATION PROCEDURES
I. LETTER OF INQUIRY PROCEDURES
The William T. Grant Foundation accepts applications through our website, www.wtgrantfoundation.org. Begin by clicking on the “Log In” button on the top right of any page and then registering on our website as the Principal Investigator (PI) to obtain a Log-in ID and password. Letters of inquiry are accepted in early January, early April, and early September. Please refer to our website for specific dates.

1. Log in and select “Click here to start a new application.” Choose the investigator-initiated grant cycle listed under “Major Grants” and hit “Continue.” Select this option even if you are applying for an Officers’ Research grant. Our online system accepts applications for both programs through this mechanism.

2. Complete the Eligibility Quiz. After saving the information, you will be brought back to your homepage.

3. Under “To Do—Application,” select “Letter of Inquiry—Investigator-Initiated Grants.” (Select this task even if you are applying for an Officers’ Research grant.)

4. Fill in text boxes for the following information.
   - **Contact Information** for the Principal Investigator (PI) only.
     Note: Development officers or staff applying on behalf of the PI should enter the PI’s contact information.
   - **Other Contacts**
     Add contact information for each additional Co-Principal Investigator.
   - **Project Information**, including:
     - **Project title** (maximum of 15 words);
     - **Brief description** of the project (maximum of 100 words);
     The brief description should be written in language appropriate for an educated lay audience, not for researchers. Research descriptions should begin with the major research questions, followed by a brief summary of the project’s rationale and background, intervention (if applicable), research methods, and data analysis plan.
5. Upload the following two files separately.

- **File 1: Narrative** (three to five pages), formatted using 12 pt. font, single-spaced paragraphs with a space between paragraphs, and one-inch margins on all sides. If you choose to include a reference page, this should be included in this upload but will not count toward the five-page maximum.

Projects should describe the following:
- **Major questions** guiding this work;
- **Rationale**, including a brief literature review indicating how the project complements and extends prior and concurrent research, and describing how it adds to theory and either policy or practice;
- **Specific hypotheses and/or research questions** to be tested or addressed;
- **Research methods**, including sample definition and selection procedures, research design, intervention (if applicable), key constructs, measures/data sources, and data collection procedures; and
- **Data analysis plan** for addressing hypotheses and/or research questions.

- **File 2: One-page Curriculum Vitae, Biographical Sketch, or Résumé** for each Principal and Co-Principal Investigator. Researchers should include education and training, peer-reviewed publications, and grants. Do *not* send full curricula vitae, sketches, or résumés. As this upload section only allows for one file upload, the Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator’s curricula vitae should be merged into one upload.

6. Go to Review and Submit and click “View PDF.” This will generate your online application in a separate window. Review the information to make sure your materials are in order.
Note: Due to recent Web browser security upgrades, the application PDF might not open in a separate window. If this happens, do the following:

- Turn off all pop-up blockers. Or, go to your pop-up blocker settings and add “easygrants.wtgrantfoundation.org” to the list of Allowed Sites.
- Hold down the CTRL key and click the “View PDF” button.

7. Go to Review and Submit and click “Submit” at the top of the page. The system will send you an email confirmation of the submission.

II. FULL PROPOSAL PROCEDURES

The Foundation will invite applicants to submit proposals through our website following review of the letter of inquiry.

1. Log in and click on the incomplete “Full Proposal—Investigator-Initiated Grants.”

2. The following information will be automatically copied from your letter of inquiry, but you may edit or update the information.

   - Contact Information for the Principal Investigator only.
   - Other Contacts
     Add contact information for each additional Co-Principal Investigator.
   - Project Information, including:
     - Project title;
     - Brief description of the project (maximum of 100 words);
       The brief description should be written in language appropriate for an educated lay audience, not for researchers. Research descriptions should begin with the major research questions, followed by a brief summary of the project’s rationale and background, intervention (if applicable), research methods, and data analysis plan.
     - Start and end dates of the project; and
     - Grant request amount (direct and indirect costs combined).

3. Fill in the text boxes for the budget for the primary institution.
   - Budget by grant year, for all direct and indirect costs. Indirect costs may not exceed 15 percent of total direct costs for each grant year. This ceiling
includes any indirect costs contained in expenses for subcontracts. Be sure to include indirect costs contained in subcontract expenses when calculating the total indirect cost in your budget. Please follow the instructions from the “Budget and Budget Justification Guidelines,” which can be found on our website.

4. Upload the following five files separately.

- **File 1: Budget Justification (and applicable Subcontractor Budgets and Budget Justifications).** Please follow the “Budget and Budget Justification Guidelines.”

- **File 2: Abstract** (maximum of 250 words). The abstract is an extended version of the “Brief Description” discussed above. It should be written in language appropriate for an educated lay audience, not for researchers. Abstracts should begin with the major research questions, followed by a brief summary of the project’s rationale and background, intervention (if applicable), research methods (including the setting, participants, research design, and data collection procedures), and data analysis plan.

- **File 3: Proposal Narrative** (maximum of 25 pages, excluding bibliography, tables, figures, charts, and similar exhibits), formatted using 12 pt. font, single-spaced paragraphs with a space between paragraphs, and one-inch margins on all sides.

Proposals should contain the following sections:

- **Major questions** guiding this proposal;
- **Rationale**, including a brief explanation of how the project is relevant to the Foundation’s Current Research Interests, and a literature review that indicates how the project advances theory and either policy or practice, how it complements and extends prior and concurrent research efforts, and its importance and unique contributions;
- **Specific hypotheses or research questions** to be tested or addressed;
- **Research methods**, including sample definition and selection procedures, research design, intervention (if applicable), key constructs,
measures/data sources, data collection procedures, and power analyses (if applicable);

- **Data analysis plan**, including a detailed description of how the data will be analyzed to address each of the study’s main research questions or hypotheses;

- **Anticipated products and communication plan**. While plans usually include products for researchers such as journal articles, books, and reports, it should also include products for policymakers or practitioners such as policy reports, briefings, and presentations. Plans should include ongoing communication with policymakers or practitioners as the research is conducted;

- **Timeline and staffing plan** (details on the staffing plan should be included in the budget justification);

- **Bibliography**; and

- **Exhibits such as charts, figures, and tables**. Be judicious in the selection of exhibits. They should be critical to aiding reviewers’ understanding of the proposed project. Materials such as prior articles, intervention materials, or other potentially relevant documents should be noted, listed, or briefly summarized. Do not include them in the proposal.

- **File 4: Curriculum vitae/ Résumé** for the Principal Investigator, each Co-Principal Investigator, and other key staff. Please note that as this upload section only allows for one file upload, the Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator’s curricula vitae should be merged into one upload. Each should include the following:
  - Name;
  - Position/Title;
  - Educational history (baccalaureate, graduate/professional, and post-doctoral), including institution, degree, year conferred, and field of study;
  - Research and professional experience, including employer, title, and dates of employment;
  - Honors and awards;
  - Publications; and
Grants.

NOTE: While Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required at this time, no grant money will be issued for projects needing IRB review until approval is submitted to the Foundation.

8. Go to Review and Submit and click “View PDF.” This will generate your online application in a separate window. Review the information to make sure your materials are in order.

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- Turn off all pop-up blockers. Or, go to your pop-up blocker settings and add “easygrants.wtgrantfoundation.org” to the list of Allowed Sites.
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9. Go to Review and Submit and click “Submit” at the top of the page. The system will send an email confirmation of the submission.