2026 Capacity-Building Mini-Grant Program for Otsego County Nonprofits
New York Council of Nonprofits

Purpose of Grants

This capacity-building mini-grant opportunity is intended to improve the governance and management operations of qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofits that are located in or provide significant services in Otsego County. The program is made possible with support from The Scriven Foundation.

Award Details

Organizations may apply for both a capacity building project request and scholarship request within the same application but may be asked to prioritize depending on the availability of funds. Requests should be for no less than $500 and no more than the amounts stated below for the specific project and/or scholarship types. Past grant awards have averaged approximately $2,000 per organization.

Application requests are subject to the following limits:

- Capacity building project requests:
  - Up to $2,500 for general governance and/or management assistance projects or services
    - Applicants are encouraged to clearly define key activities and anticipated outcomes in their request; NYCON is available to discuss requests prior to submitting an application. Submit an inquiry by clicking HERE.

- Scholarship requests:
  - Up to $1,750 scholarship for participation in an NYCON Executive Director Leadership Retreat, for EDs with six months to five years of experience. The spring retreat will be held May 13-15, 2026 and the summer retreat will be held August 19-21. Both sessions will be held at Hotel Trilogy in Latham.
    - This includes registration and accommodation at the Hotel Trilogy for two nights.
  - Up to $1,750 scholarship for participation in the NYCON Camp Finance 2026, to be held October 7-8, 2026 at the Sagamore Resort in Bolton Landing.
    - This includes registration and accommodation at the Sagamore for two nights.
  - Up to $1,750 scholarship for participation in a capacity-building program sponsored by another qualified provider.

One application may be used to request both a capacity-building mini-grant and a scholarship.

Applicant and Project Eligibility

Applicants must be 501(c)(3) organizations that are located within, or provide a substantial service to, residents/visitors of Otsego County. Organizations do not need to be NYCON members to apply.

In addition, projects must:

- Aim to improve the governance, management, and program service capacity of the applicant
- Be implemented and completed within the 2026 calendar year
- Utilize consultants that are qualified and available at a reasonable cost
- Appoint a primary contact who will be responsible for coordinating timely response to the initial award letter, implementation of project and/or registration for scholarship events, and reporting, etc., and a financial contact who will manage invoicing/payment

Examples of eligible project areas include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Board development/training assistance
- Collaboration or strategic alliance exploration assistance
- Employee team building
- Entrepreneurial venture planning and development
- Executive coaching
- Financial management (policy development, internal control review, software conversion, etc.)
- Fund development planning assistance
- Legal assistance (including bylaw or personnel policy development and review, contract analysis, merger or consolidation planning, etc.)
- Marketing plan development assistance
- Organizational assessment support
- Personnel evaluation assistance
- Professional development or training assistance
- Program evaluation assistance
- Strategic planning assistance

Grants will be awarded competitively to qualifying nonprofits with complete applications for approved project activities. *Priority* will be given to those projects that demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Complete application received by the deadline
- First-time applicants
- Annual operating budget of under $5 million
- Capacity-building benefits are clearly articulated and measurable, and need is demonstrated
- Applicant's board and management is committed to maximizing the benefits of the assistance
- Requested service would not likely occur as proposed if grant were not secured
- Nonprofit financially participates (if it has the capacity to do so)

Ineligible Project Expenses

The following activities are not eligible for the mini-grant program:

- Capital or hardware purchases
- Consultancies or training that are already in progress or that were recently completely
- Fundraising activities or plans, including paying a fundraiser to solicit dollars
- Grant research and writing
- Reimbursement for employee time spent on the project
- Software purchases that are not directly related to improving organizational or financial management capacity

Applicant Choice of Consultants

Applicants may choose the consultant(s) of their choice.

- If you anticipate working with NYCON on a project funded by this application, please submit an inquiry by clicking HERE prior to submitting your application to discuss the project objectives.
- If you anticipate working with a different consultant, you will be asked to provide their name, address, telephone, and email information in the application form.

Determination of awards will be made in accordance with the criteria outlined in this document and is not related to your choice of consultant.

Proposal Submission and Award Timelines

Submit proposals online via this form: Otsego 2026 Mini-Grant Application. At the end of the application form, you must also upload your current list of board members and federal tax-exemption certificate

Grant awards will be announced approximately two months after the submission deadline.

Funds must be expended by December 31, 2026. A brief final report will be due upon completion of the project.

For Further Information

Submit an inquiry by clicking HERE or email NYCON Senior Capacity Building Advisor Kate McNally at kmcnally@nycon.org with any questions or set up a time to discuss your proposed project.