



Summer 2019
Responsive Grant Process
Information for Applicants

EDUCATION APPLICANTS

July 1, 2019

Cullen Foundation Overview

- ✓ Cullen Foundation is an independent, private foundation dedicated to enhancing education for students in grades pre-K to 12 and advancing theatre and performing arts to positively impact residents of Erie County, New York
- ✓ We were created by the late John S. “Jack” Cullen whose estate provided the funding for the foundation.

Meeting Purpose

The purpose is to review and clarify components related to our *Education Responsive Grant Process* including:

- ✓ Eligibility and guidelines
- ✓ LOI and Application, including financial requirements
- ✓ Tips for submitting quality requests

Basic eligibility is detailed at www.thecullenfoundation.org. Please review the criteria carefully.

Goals of the Responsive Grant Process

Through our “responsive grant process”, we seek to:

- ✓ Create a rigorous yet thoughtful and user-friendly process that aligns with our investment strategy
- ✓ Gain a better understanding of your organization
- ✓ Learn about the needs of the people you serve and the good work you do

Cullen Foundation intends to:

- ✓ Make the process clear, timely, and concise
- ✓ Hear the voice of our applicants throughout the process
- ✓ Have accessible and helpful staff to support the process
- ✓ Invest in strong organizations that align with and help fulfill our mission

We Remain Focused on Requests that Align with our Priorities

In **Education**, our priority is programs with **specific, direct, measurable academic outcomes**, particularly those that serve **economically disadvantaged students** in grades PreK to 12.

Grant Application Basics

- ✓ **A Pre-LOI Call is MANDATORY and must occur by July 19, 2019.**
- ✓ Be realistic in the amount of funding you request.
- ✓ Our deadlines are clear: there are no special reminders or extensions given for LOI and Application deadlines.
- ✓ Proofread the grant before you submit it. Poorly written submissions are difficult to read, reflect negatively on your organization, and may affect the Request's outcome.
- ✓ We read all grant applications – expect a lot of questions.
- ✓ We may ask you for additional information leading up to or after your site visit. Following-up is the Applicant's responsibility and should be done within 48 hours of the site visit/request from Cullen staff.
- ✓ ***We strongly recommend you review the “Grant Writing Tips” on our website to understand what we expect from strong grant applications.***

This is a Competitive Process

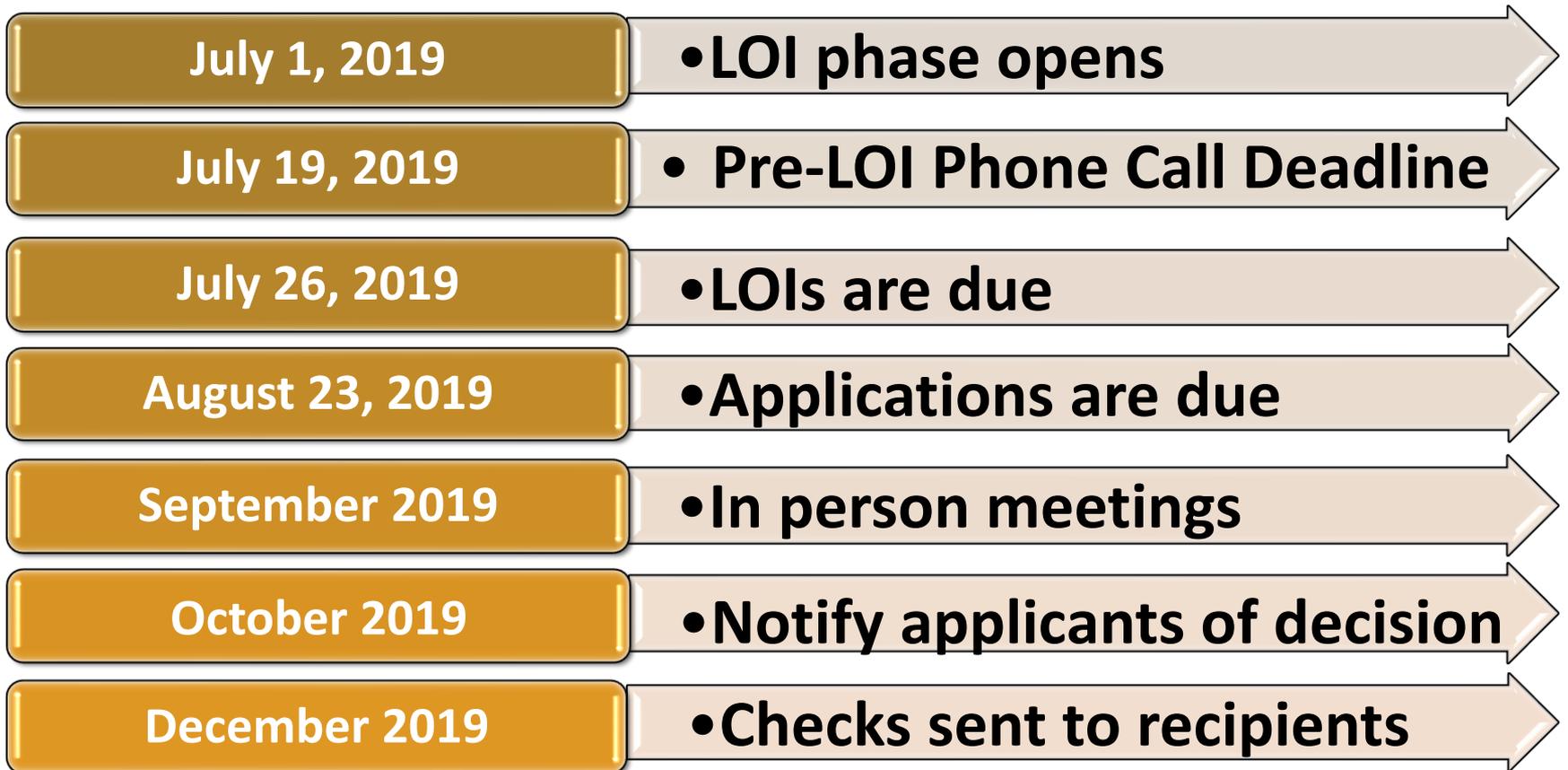
- ✓ We screen and make declinations through the LOI.
- ✓ Multi-year grants are rare and made **only when we believe the multi-year nature of the request is essential to the project's success.**
- ✓ Receiving the maximum \$100,000/year request amount is **uncommon and occurs when we feel unique strategic alignment** between our mission and your program's mission and outcomes.
- ✓ The **fiscal health, sustainability and impact** of your organization are important factors in our decision-making. Understand the relevance of these factors when making your request.

Allow Ample Time for LOI & Application Completion and Plan your Submission Timeline

Nearly 85% of applicants spend at least 10 hours on the application portion

- ✓ All submissions must be deemed complete by Cullen staff prior to the 5 pm deadline.
- ✓ We strongly advise submitting at least 2-3 days in advance so that staff can review and verify completion accurately and sufficiently.
- ✓ If information is missing (i.e. if the submission is incomplete), it will be sent back to the applicant to be completed in its entirety prior to the 5 pm deadline. If the necessary changes are not made and the application is not resubmitted to our site by 5 pm, the application will not be accepted.

Key Dates – Summer 2019 Cycle



Application Checklist

- ✓ Contact Cullen staff (*Pre-LOI*) to discuss the program/project for which you're seeking funding **(by 7/19/19)**.
- ✓ Gather information you will need to complete the LOI, including the required financials; prepare it carefully
- ✓ Submit the LOIs
- ✓ Gather information you will need to complete the Application; review it carefully
- ✓ Submit the Application
- ✓ Respond to Cullen's request for an Application Review Process meeting, including reviewing your application and arranging for the appropriate people at the meeting

We Qualify Requests through the LOI Process

The LOI is our introduction to your project and determines eligibility.

Key questions include:

- ✓ Need
- ✓ Purpose
- ✓ Evidence based (Education applicants only)

Regardless of your organization's size, **reviewed or audited financials are a mandatory requirement of our process:**

- ✓ From most recently completed fiscal year (2018)
- ✓ Must be prepared by a CPA
- ✓ This is Cullen's requirement and is **not related to NYS requirements**
- ✓ Know that there is a cost for obtaining reviewed/audited financials; it's your decision to apply and thereby incur this cost. There are no refunds or awards made for incurring this cost regardless of the application's outcome.

A successful LOI will qualify your organization for the Application phase.

We do further Due Diligence, Analysis and Learning through the Application

The application seeks finer details of your project to understand:

- Who's being served (age groups, demographics, % economically disadvantaged)
- Program logistics (frequency, enrollment, curriculum, attendance)
- Outcomes realized through the project
- Measurement of outcomes
- Organizational strength
 - ✓ Board commitment and involvement
 - ✓ Personnel
 - ✓ Sustainability
- Fiscal health
 - ✓ Budgets (organizational and project based)
 - ✓ Revenue sources and uses
 - ✓ Strength and diversity of support

A Vital Part of our Process is the Site Visit which is Conducted after we've Reviewed your LOI and Application

- ✓ Each organization completing a full application receives an hour-long in person meeting from Cullen staff and oftentimes Trustees.
- ✓ This is Cullen's opportunity to ask specific questions related to your project and organization. Discussion around our questions will consume most of the site visit.
- ✓ This is your organization's opportunity to demonstrate the strengths of and need for your project.
- ✓ We recommend that leadership teams, including relevant board members, attend and participate.
- ✓ Please plan accordingly for the meeting and be prepared for multiple questions.

Financial Information you Submit must be Complete and include Audited/Reviewed Financial Statements

1. **Organization Budget (required for organizations with budget under \$2 million)**
 - You may use an existing budget here
2. **Project Budget**
 - Provide enough detail that expenses and revenues are clear to us
 - Be specific and note the expenses/costs for which you're requesting Cullen's support
 - Be aware that Cullen prefers to fund a portion of a project, and not be the sole funder; this is important to sustainability
3. **Budget Narrative (optional yet helpful)**
 - Provide background on details such as: why costs are increasing or decreasing; what funding sources were used in the past for certain items
4. **Other Grants**
 - Provide info on additional sources for the project; the current year is most relevant – you need not provide historical info.

Example of an Informative Budget

Program or Project Budget

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Amount Committed</u>	<u>Amount Pending*</u>
<u>Support</u>	-	-
Government grants	\$	\$
Foundations	\$	\$
Corporations	\$	\$
Individual contributions	\$	\$
Membership income	\$	\$
Fundraising events and products	\$	\$
In-kind support	\$	\$
Investment income	\$	\$
<u>Revenue</u>	-	-
Government contracts	\$	\$
Earned income	\$	\$
Other (specify)	\$	\$

Program/Project Expenses

<u>Expense Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>%FT/PT</u>
Salaries, wages and benefits by individual (indicate FT or PT)	\$	
SUBTOTAL	\$	
Insurance and/or other taxes	\$	
Consultant and professional fees	\$	
Travel	\$	
Equipment	\$	
Supplies	\$	
Printing/copying	\$	
Phone and fax	\$	
Postage and delivery	\$	
Rent and utilities	\$	
In-kind expenses	\$	
Depreciation	\$	
Other	\$	
<u>TOTAL EXPENSE</u>		
Difference (Income less Expense)	\$	

Education Focus Area Considerations

We seek **evidence-based programs with a strong focus on direct academic outcomes:**

- ✓ Clearly set and state realistic outcomes - we appreciate **true** progress even if it's incremental.
- ✓ Clearly define how you'll work towards achieving your outcomes, how and when you evaluate being on-track to meeting the outcomes, and what the iteration process looks like when you're off track.
- ✓ In general **"direct benefits"** are more important to us than "collateral benefits."
- ✓ Piloting programs are eligible when the program is based on valid research-based practices and when the applicant demonstrates healthy organization structures and systems are in place for the program to succeed.

We prioritize programs that serve primarily **economically disadvantaged students.**

We are interested in organizations that **learn from challenges** and take every opportunity to improve programming.

Education Focus Area - Notes

Include details most relevant to helping us understand your program:

- ✓ Who is served?
- ✓ Who benefits?
- ✓ What are the academic and non-academic outcomes?
- ✓ How do students move through the program?

We are not funding the following:

Field trip funds/programs	Requests from individual schools (or programs serving students from 1 school only)
Museum exhibits	“Arts in education” programs (includes programs where students build portfolios)
Camps	Professional development programs/services
Recreation-based programs	Education/resource rooms
Internship programs	Skills and job training programs

Application Portal - Foundant

- We utilize *Foundant*
- All LOIs, applications, contracts and reports are submitted online

Create an Account
from the “Application
Process” page on our
website

Create New Account

If you already have an Account, click the 'Cancel Account Creation' button to go to the Logon page

⚠ Using the browser's back button will delete your registration information.

ℹ This registration process has multiple steps you must complete before you can apply.

Fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

Organization Information

Organization Name*

EIN / Tax Identification Number*

Please enter in the following format: 12-1234567

Web Site

Telephone Number*

Please enter in following format: ###.###.####

Fax Number

Please enter in following format: ###-###-####

Address 1*

Address 2

City*

State Abbreviation*

Zip Code*

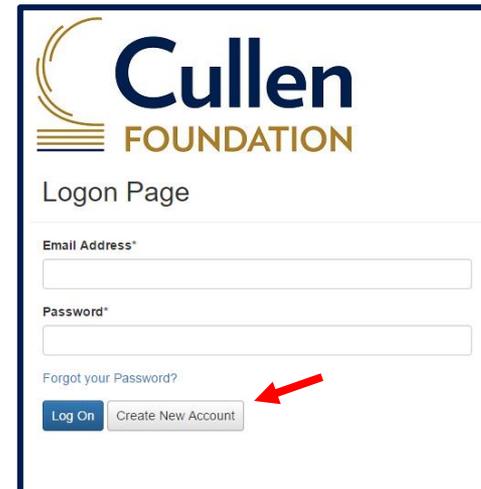
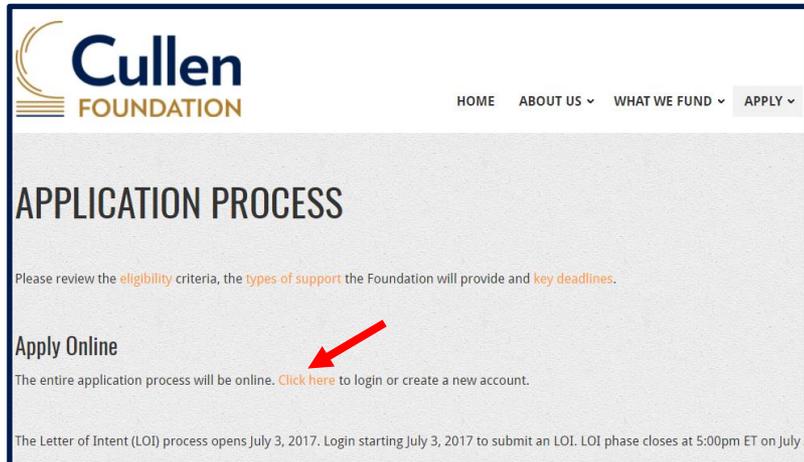
Country

Create an Account & Begin

- ✓ If you do not already have an account with us, you will create one.
- ✓ If you are a returning applicant, please use your existing account.

From the “Apply” page on our website, click the link under “Apply Online”

Then hit “Create a New Account” on the login page; you’ll enter a user name (email) and create a password



Utilize Foundant to Manage your Request

Your Foundant “Dashboard” is where you will manage your Request and all follow-up items with Cullen Foundation (contract, reports, etc.)

- ✓ Login to Foundant; you’ll be on the “*Applicant Dashboard*” -- hit “*Apply*” on the top of the page; choose *Education* or *Performing Arts* to begin your LOI.
- ✓ Work on the LOI and save your work as you go. You may want to write your application in *MS Word* and copy and paste it into Foundant.
- ✓ You can start your Application once your LOI is submitted and approved by Cullen staff.
- ✓ Be aware that many questions have word count limits.

Summary of Tips for Applicants

- ✓ **Contact Cullen Staff to discuss your program/project BEFORE you start the LOI.**
- ✓ Submit the proper financial information – **you must have reviewed or fully audited financial statements from 2018 to apply.**
- ✓ Be sure the *Project Budget* is comprehensive; consider using the *Budget Narrative*
- ✓ Avoid jargon and explain your project clearly -- succinct responses are encouraged; proofread multiple times before submitting.
- ✓ Review the grant writing tips on our website.
- ✓ Contact us with any issues you experience or questions—the earlier the better
- ✓ Do not wait until the last day to submit!
- ✓ Be prepared for questions from us at your site visit; and have the right people in attendance.

If you have Questions during the Process, Please Contact us

Staff can provide guidance along-the-way regarding:

Eligibility	Outcomes
Project fit	Foundant
Financial requirements	Other relevant questions

Phone: 716-800-4280

Address: 250 Delaware Avenue, Suite 820, Buffalo NY 14202

General questions and portal related questions	Heather Jason	HJason@thecullenfoundation.org
Education questions	Corey Bunje Bower	CBower@thecullenfoundation.org
Education questions	Nick Schifano	NSchifano@thecullenfoundation.org
Performing arts and eligibility-related questions	Florine Luhr	FLuhr@thecullenfoundation.org