



2025/26 Grants Cycle Webinar, June 10, 2025 Follow-Up Q&A

Can the grant fund conference presentations?

Answer: Grant funds cannot be used to cover the costs of hosting events. However, they may be used to support providing free access to educational opportunities.

If we apply with another org (new) is 20k a possibility?

Answer: If you are new to NEXT, we will consider funding projects up to a maximum of \$10,000.

We have to choose a category? We have several things that do more than one.

Answer: Yes, we understand that many programs naturally span multiple categories. In these cases, we recommend selecting the category that best represents the core focus or primary impact of your work. Choose the one that aligns most closely with your program's main goals or outcomes.

I'm curious about your organization's use of person first language. Most autistic adults prefer identity first language but Abigayle keeps saying "person with autistic"

Answer: NEXT for AUTISM uses a mix of identity first and person first to accommodate both preferences. When in direct conversation, we try to use the method of identity that the individual prefers.

Assuming the "program serving adults with autism" requirement is 18+ years old?

Answer: Programs that support transitional age autistic individuals are accepted. NEXT considers the transitional age starting at 13.

Do my organization have to be BOTH autistic-led AND community-based? Or just one?

Answer: Your project will either be autistic-led OR community based. Autistic-led projects must have active and continuous involvement from an autistic employee of the organization.

Regarding eligibility categories, for the Health and Wellbeing focus- does access to adaptive outdoor recreation count as a wellness resource? These opportunities increase mental, physical and social wellbeing.

Answer: Yes, adaptive outdoor recreation could count as wellness. In your application, highlight what elements of the program support the individual's wellbeing.

Does autistic-led have to meet both of the criteria listed or just one?

Answer: To qualify for autistic-led funding, the project must be led by an autistic individual and have active and continuous involvement from an autistic employee of the organization.

When you say an autistic person leading an organization, do they have to have a medical diagnosis or is self-diagnosis acceptable?

Answer: NEXT does not require proof of a diagnosis and presumes honesty in autistic-led organizations and applications.

Is your definition of adults with autism = 18 and older?

Answer: Yes, that is NEXT's definition of adult. However, applications supporting transitional age individuals starting at age 13 will be considered for funding.

Our organization is VOLUNTEER - we have an advisory board, workgroup members, and interns that are autistic. Would that make us Autistic-Led. I am the President and am not autistic.

Answer: If there is an autistic individual leading and having active and continuous involvement in the project, this would be considered autistic-led.

Does N4A support efforts to increase the draconian \$2000 Medicaid asset limit, improve ABLE account access and enhance disability trusts?

Answer: NEXT for AUTISM is focused on developing and supporting high-quality services that improve the lives of autistic adults. While we do not engage in legislative or political advocacy, we strongly believe that every autistic person deserves access to the resources and supports necessary for a meaningful and self-directed life. We deeply respect and value the work of those advocating for policy changes that address critical systemic barriers, such as the Medicaid asset limit and access to financial planning tools.

Our project is about DEMAND CREATION. So marketing is a key cost of the program. We are trying to increase the number of businesses hiring autistic people. Therefore we do not consider these costs as INDIRECT but DIRECT for the project. Does that make sense?

Answer: We encourage you to provide information on your process and how you have seen your marketing directly led to benefiting the autistic individuals.

Is gym equipment considered a capital expense?

Answer: Yes, gym equipment would be a capital expense and not be eligible for funding. A program supporting the use of the equipment to give access and benefit to autistic adults would be eligible for funding.

Is insurance considered an overhead cost? Thanks!

Answer: Yes, insurance for individuals or programs would be considered an overhead cost.

Is equipment/supplies for a program an acceptable budget line item?

Answer: Yes, we encourage as much detail as possible on submitted budgets.

What if we have two very different projects that we would like to apply for. Can we submit two applications?

Answer: NEXt accepts only one application per organization. The exception is for universities or health systems where departments have unique teams and budgets. In this scenario we would accept distinct proposals related to this funding opportunity.

Would a vehicle count as a capital cost if it was used to transport adults for hands-on job training?

Answer: Yes, a vehicle is a capital expense and would not be eligible for funding.

Would a theater that offers autism-friendly performances be eligible as a service?

Answer: A theater offering autism-friendly performances may be eligible for funding if the request focuses on supports that enhance accessibility, such as sensory kits, sensory-friendly spaces, or free admission for autistic individuals and their families. However, we do not fund the production of performances themselves, including costs such as actor salaries or general show development.

Have you/ do you fund autism specific sensory playground space?

Answer: This would be a capital project and would not qualify for funding.

Will you send us this presentation?

Answer: This presentation is available to access on our website [here](#).

We were considering producing some videos as part of the Demand Creation project - our staff is using autistic individuals on the creation of these videos - so would this again not be considered an acceptable cost for this grant?

Answer: If the videos are designed as a resource for the community, such as instructional content, part of a curriculum, or an e-learning tool, they would be considered eligible for funding. However, if the videos are primarily entertainment-focused without a clear educational or programmatic purpose, they would not qualify under this grant.

If there are people in the program under 13 and over 13 is that still allowed?

Answer: Yes, as long as you are also serving people 13 and older.

If we have an existing space/building as a program, would it be appropriate to use grant funds to help operate this space or would it be capital costs?

Answer: It depends on how the funds would be used within the space. From your description, it sounds like general operating support, which is not eligible for funding under this opportunity. However, if the funding would be used for a specific program or service, it may qualify. We encourage you to join us for an office hour session to discuss the details and ensure alignment with funding guidelines.

Do you not fund organizations that provide transition programs for adults starting at age 22?

Answer: We provide funding to organizations providing services to individuals 13 and older.

Can you send written instructions on how to get the list of questions. That will help. I'm Autistic and sometimes verbal makes it a little challenging to follow through without difficulty. Thank you!

Answer: [Here is a link to the downloadable questions.](#)

Is the preference for projects that provide direct services and benefits to autistic individuals or are projects that involve educating the community about autism or training service providers in meeting the needs of people with autism acceptable?

Answer: There is no preference between direct services and programs focused on education or training. We welcome both approaches. We encourage you to submit the program that is most innovative and demonstrates meaningful impact, particularly those that serve marginalized or underserved populations, as these elements align strongly with our scoring criteria.

Would a training program to help parents, educators, and other professionals learn how to give communication access to nonspeaking or minimally speaking individuals be covered? We don't work with autistic people directly, but we impact them directly.

Answer: Yes, a training program like this would be eligible. While you may not work directly with autistic individuals, we encourage you to clearly demonstrate how your work creates meaningful impact within the autism community. Including data or examples that illustrate this connection will strengthen your application.

Are current NEXT Volunteers and/or Advisory Council Members allowed to apply on behalf of their own organization(s)?

Answer: Yes, current NEXT Volunteers and Advisory Council Members are welcome to apply on behalf of their own organizations. To ensure a fair and impartial review process, any reviewer with a connection to an application will recuse themselves from scoring or discussing that submission.

We are a small organization (40 people served). Are you mainly interested in funding large programs?

Answer: We support programs of all sizes, including those serving smaller populations. While the number of individuals served is one factor we consider, it is not the deciding factor. We also place strong value on innovation, the depth of impact, and how well a program supports marginalized or underserved communities.

Can either collaborators submit?

Answer: Yes.

Can you share more about the supplemental attachments? How many attachments can you add? Is there a limit on video lengths? Thank you!

Answer: You may upload one supplemental attachment, up to 1000 MB in size. We encourage you to be thoughtful about what you include, keeping in mind both the reviewers' time and the added value of the content. Consider whether the attachment provides something new or compelling that isn't already conveyed in your application. Photos, videos, or stories that vividly illustrate your organization's impact are often the most effective.

What is the process for requesting an office hours meeting? I looked online but could not find a link. Thank you!

Answer: Office hours are now available first come first serve [here](#).

I noticed that at the beginning on the PowerPoint there was a map with pinpointed locations. Are those locations pinpointed the states that have received funding or the states eligible to apply?

Answer: These are the 37 states and territories that have received funding. If you are located in the United States you are eligible to apply. To see all of the states and territories we have funded to date reference our latest [Impact Report here](#).

For free resources- is this only weighed higher if the resource is specific to autistic people? We offer multiple webinars and programs that are free to the community. They are neurodiverse affirming but not specific to any population.

Answer: This would count as a resource.

Are Autism/DD community housing projects eligible to apply? EG for a scholarship fund to offset residents' community fees and/or for any of your other areas of funding.

Answer: If you are a 501c3 this would qualify under the category of home.

Are furnishings considered to be capital funding?

Answer: Yes.

Is the funding given all at once or is provided based on milestones?

Answer: All funding will be issued prior to December 1, 2025.

Do you provide partial funding ever?

Answer: Not typically.

Will applicants be notified if their organization is not chosen?

Answer: Yes, we will notify those who are awarded and those who are not awarded. Please be sure emails from smapply.io are not going to spam.

Autistic people struggle with concise explanations, and distilling our programs in such a small amount of words is a little scary. Any tips?

Answer: We understand that summarizing complex programs in a limited word count can feel challenging. A good approach is to focus on the core purpose and impact of your program, what you do, who you serve, and the difference you make. Try breaking it down into simple, clear sentences and avoid jargon. If helpful, draft a longer version first, then edit down by keeping only the most essential points.