

## **SAMUEL S. FELS FUND / Guidelines for Applicants**

The Samuel S. Fels Fund was founded in 1935 by Sam Fels, a Philadelphia philanthropist. We are a private foundation with broad interests in Community, Education, and Arts and Culture.

According to our charter, we seek to support organizations or projects “which prevent, lessen or resolve contemporary social problems,” or which seek to provide permanent improvements “in human daily life”.

**Our grants are restricted to activities or services taking place in the City of Philadelphia.**

### **G R A N T M A K I N G P R I O R I T I E S**

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#### **Community**

In this category we support many types of organizations. Our priorities include projects that improve the lives of the least fortunate. To that end we are interested in:

- Services for immigrants
- Legal aid
- Programs that mitigate homelessness
- Access to affordable housing
- Programs for the most vulnerable populations: victims of domestic and child abuse, frail elderly, prisoners
- Advocacy and public policy

To preserve the quality of life for all citizens we are also interested in:

- Community arts programs
- Neighborhood improvement, beautification, and greening projects
- Reproductive freedom
- Social and economic justice
- Advocacy and public policy

#### **Education**

Our primary focus in education is strengthening the Philadelphia public schools and providing programs for Philadelphia children when they are out of school. In this area we are interested in funding:

- Teaching and learning in the public schools
- Arts instruction in the public schools
- College attainment for public school students
- Citizen and parental involvement
- Conflict resolution
- Service learning
- Best practices in after school and pre-school
- Programs that engage adolescents in hobbies, athletics, and culture
- Advocacy and public policy on behalf of the public schools and youth development

Programs that educate the general public are also of interest to us. We are particularly interested in:

- Literacy
- Financial literacy
- Dissemination of information that is essential to the citizenry

#### **Arts and Culture**

Our support here goes primarily to emerging, small, and medium sized organizations. We support:

- Music
- Theatre
- Applied Arts
- Dance
- Science
- Exhibitions
- Presenting organizations
- Advocacy and public policy

#### **Internships in Community Service**

Each November, former grantees **are invited** to apply for an internship grant of \$6,000 for a structured ten-week project that can be accomplished by a graduate student. Twenty-five organizations are chosen for internship grants. Each organization is responsible for identifying the graduate student and reporting on the internship project.

#### **Other**

Our founder was deeply connected to a small number of organizations, some of which bear his name. These organizations are of special interest to us and may be funded on an ad hoc basis.

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# FUNDING RANGE, FREQUENCY, & TYPES OF GRANTS

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## Community and Education

Since Fels has a small grants budget—approximately \$2 million a year—we could not possibly provide ongoing operating support to hundreds of organizations. Instead, we try to make *grants at critical junctures*. Critical junctures are points in an organization's life when there is a need to change methodologies. This could mean growing, shrinking, trying a new type of programming, experimenting with staffing, piloting a project that might support itself eventually, opening a satellite, seeking new accreditation, retraining staff or board, or rethinking the physical plant.

A critical juncture could also be related to policy. It could be the point where a new case must be built to change existing practice, to add new services, or to draw attention to problems. Another critical juncture is the appointment of a new head. We often support a new director's first priorities with a *new director's grant*.

For small organizations we generally make grants for general support. For larger organizations we like to focus on a project.

We prefer to make grants on a modest scale and to try to have a maximum impact on institutions and service patterns in the Philadelphia area. Our grants in Community and Education range in size from \$3,000 to \$30,000 with most in the \$5,000 to \$20,000 range. Occasionally, we make a larger grant in an exceptional situation.

## Arts and Culture

Since our support in this category goes primarily to emerging, small, and medium sized organizations we are receptive to requests for either general operations or specific projects. Grants in the Arts range from \$3,000 to \$15,000 with the majority under \$5,000.

## Deadlines

Every organization must either report on a previous grant or wait a year after a previous proposal has been declined before submitting another proposal.

### Community and Education

Proposals in these categories are reviewed throughout the year. When a proposal is considered complete it is assigned to the next available board meeting. A proposal will not be reviewed until all reports on previous grants have been received and approved.

### Arts and Culture

Proposals in this category are reviewed only twice per year. Arts and Culture organizations must meet a deadline of 5 p.m. on January 15 or 5 p.m. on May 15. These are NOT postmark deadlines. An organization may not reapply until it has reported on any previous grants.

## Grantmaking Process

After reviewing our guidelines or talking to our director to determine eligibility, a full proposal should be sent. All proposals are acknowledged. We accept the *Delaware Valley Grantmakers Common Application Form* or a proposal prepared with our (similar) guidelines and our Cover Sheet. We ask for one, unbound copy only. A preliminary letter or abbreviated proposal is NOT necessary. We consider a proposal complete when all the items listed in the guidelines are in our office. Only complete proposals will be accepted for board consideration. Once a proposal is received, staff reviews it and makes phone calls or site visits, as necessary. Our staff consists of two full-time people: **Helen Cunningham**, the executive director and **Robin Scott**, the office manager. **Tim Murray** is a part-time program associate. The board, which has nine members, meets six times a year to make grants. We provide notification of approval or decline of a proposal within the week after a decision by the board. Grant checks usually accompany the award letter. A narrative and financial report is required on every grant, to the satisfaction of the staff. **If you need help shaping a proposal call Helen Cunningham at 215.731.9455.**

## What we do NOT fund

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| ■ Activities or services taking place outside Philadelphia | ■ Drug and alcohol addiction programs   | ■ Individual public or charter schools (we support these as consortia) |
| ■ Grants to individuals                                    | ■ Individual daycare or after school programs (we support these as consortia) | ■ Higher education   |
| ■ National, umbrella, or regranting organizations          | ■ Disease research or prevention  | ■ Community computer programs  |
| ■ Endowment  | ■ Summer recreation programs  | ■ Scholarships, fellowships, grants-in-aid of travel or research       |
| ■ Deficit financing or emergency aid                       | ■ Programs for animals  | ■ Publications or university presses                                   |
| ■ Purchase of tickets, tables, ads or sponsorships         | ■ Hospitals   | ■ Amateur or nonprofessional performance groups                        |
| ■ Parties, conferences, fairs and fundraising events       | ■ Environmental programs  | ■ Performing arts organizations without a Philadelphia season          |
| ■ Routine social services or counseling                    | ■ Feeding programs  |  |
|  | ■ Support groups  |  |
|  | ■ Religious education   |  |
|  | ■ Private schools   |  |