

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

The Samuel S. Fels Fund was founded in 1935 by Sam Fels, a Philadelphia philanthropist. The Fund is 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.**

Go to [www.samfels.org](http://www.samfels.org) for more information.

### **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
- Policy that mitigates homelessness and supports affordable housing
- Programs for the most vulnerable populations: victims of domestic and child abuse, frail elderly, prisoners, the hungry, and the jobless

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

- Community arts programs
- Neighborhood improvement, beautification, and greening projects
- Social and economic justice including reproductive freedom

#### **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 in the public schools
- Best practices in after-school and pre-school programs
- 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
- Conflict resolution
- 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
- Exhibitions
- Presenting organizations
- Organizations that provide support to cultural groups

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

Each November, recent grantees are invited to apply for internship grants of \$6,000 for a structured ten-week project that can be accomplished by a graduate student. Generally, 15 to 25 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 to organizations whose work fits our goals. 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 accreditation, retraining staff or board, or rethinking the physical plant. It could mean merging or creating a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate with another organization.

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 director. 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.

*Proposals for community arts programs are reviewed under the Community category and can be submitted at any time. Proposals for arts instruction in the public schools are reviewed under the Education category and can be submitted at any time.*

## Deadlines

Only Arts and Culture organizations have deadlines for submitting proposals; see below. All others may apply at any time provided that they have reported on a previous grant before re-applying. Organizations that have been turned-down must wait one year before re-applying.

### Community and Education

Proposals in these categories are reviewed four times a year. Proposals are accepted on an open basis. When a proposal is considered complete it is assigned to the next available board meeting. An organization may not reapply until it has reported on any previous grants.

### 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. We accept proposals by mail or electronically ([robin@samfels.org](mailto:robin@samfels.org)). All proposals are acknowledged. We use the Delaware Valley Grantmakers Common Application Form and Cover Sheet or our own Guidelines and Cover Sheet which are on the web at [www.samfels.org](http://www.samfels.org). 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 Common Application Form are in our office. If current financial information is not submitted, a proposal is considered incomplete. 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 Culmer**, the office manager. **Tim Murray** is a part-time program consultant. The board, which has nine members, meets four 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 board. 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, Pennsylvania
- Grants to individuals
- National, umbrella, or re-granting organizations
- Endowments
- Deficit financing or emergency aid
- Purchase of tickets, tables, ads, or sponsorships
- Parties, conferences, fairs, fundraising and one-time events
- Routine social services or counseling
- Drug and alcohol addiction programs
- Individual daycare or after school programs
- Disease research or prevention
- Summer recreation programs
- Programs for animals
- Hospitals
- Environmental programs
- Support groups for individuals
- Religious education
- Private schools
- Individual public or charter schools
- Higher education
- Community computer programs
- Scholarships, fellowships, grants-in-aid of travel or research
- Publications or university presses
- Amateur or non professional performance groups
- Performing arts organizations without a Philadelphia season
- The making of movies
- Health care