NS4G Grantmaking FAQ

What is Northeastern Students4Giving (NS4G)?
Northeastern Students4Giving (NS4G) is an experiential philanthropy education program in which students use a consensus-based approach to award real-dollar grants to local nonprofit organizations. We manage all aspects of the funding cycle from conducting needs assessments through making grant determinations. Past funding priorities have included trauma treatment, diversity and inclusion, youth violence, households at risk due to financial insecurity, positive youth development, thriving families, intimate partner violence, post-incarceration reintegration, and mental health. Our philanthropy is informed by coursework in human services and nonprofit management as well as many experiences we have had while working and volunteering in the nonprofit sector. NS4G is advised by Social Impact Lab Director Rebecca Riccio and Human Services Director Lori Gardinier, MSW, PhD. Our decision making is completely independent of any other relationships applicants may have with the university.

What is NS4G’s mission?
Northeastern Students4Giving enables students to make a positive and lasting impact in the communities where we live and learn through grant making. We make grants to community-based nonprofit organizations that address critical economic and social challenges facing the Boston neighborhoods of Mission Hill, Fenway, Roxbury, and the South End. Through our grant making and volunteer work, we further strengthen the relationship between the Northeastern University community, our grantees, and the neighborhoods they serve.

What is NS4G’s current funding priority?
We will award a one-time grant of $10,000 to an organization striving to achieve social and economic justice for under-represented and marginalized communities. Specifically, we will fund programs that empower communities to engage with and strengthen social and economic institutions to protect rights and freedoms that may be threatened on the basis of individuals’ identities, including race and ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or other characteristics that put individuals at risk of social and economic injustice. Applicants must recognize communities’ inherent strengths and resilience and work with them directly to build their capacity to address systemic injustice and inequity. Applicants may focus on individual services or collective action, including but not limited to educating communities about their rights and strategies for securing them, legal counseling, social movement building, community organizing, advocacy, and lobbying. These examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. Proposed activities must be permissible for organizations with 501(c)(3) status.
What type of funding is available?

This grant is intended to fund overhead and operating expenses that are essential to, but not directly associated with, the delivery of programs and services.

What type of organization is NS4G’s looking for?
Applicants must be registered as 501(c)(3) public charities and demonstrate an existing commitment and expertise relevant to this funding priority.

We look favorably on applications from organizations that:
- Demonstrate clarity of purpose informed by a deep understanding of the need(s) being addressed and the community being served.
- Are community oriented and use strengths-based and culturally appropriate approaches.
- Have demonstrated expertise in working with at-risk and under-represented populations.
- Provide a rigorous and defensible rationale and strategies for their work and evidence of how it results in systemic change.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility, sustainability, sound management, and ethical governance.
- Work collaboratively with public agencies, other nonprofits and community organizations.

How do organizations apply for grants from NS4G?
Applicants must complete an NS4G Application and a Giving Common profile (described below). Both components must be completed by March 10, 2017. We encourage applicants to submit their Giving Common profile information to the Giving Common by February 17, 2017, if possible, to ensure that it can be processed by the deadline.

How do you apply for the NS4G grant?
We hope that our application process will benefit all applicants by exposing them to a larger pool of funders. Therefore, we ask applicants to complete a two-step process:
1. Submit a brief Grant Application directly to NS4G.
2. Upload an organizational profile to the Boston Foundation’s Giving Common website.

What is The Giving Common?
The Giving Common is a free online resource operated by the Boston Foundation to facilitate philanthropy. It allows Massachusetts nonprofits to tell their own stories and provides tools for potential donors to research, find, and fund them. A “donate now” function facilitates immediate online giving. Visitors to the site can search by issue area, geography and other variables. The Giving Common provides information typically requested by donors, including an organizational profile (history, goals, key
achievements, staff, and volunteers), a copy of the most recent audited financial statement, and a copy of the IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter. The information is formatted to make it easy for individuals, foundations, and other funders to learn about each nonprofit. Organizations are asked to update their profile annually. To learn more about the Giving Common, please visit https://givingcommon.org/.

Why was the Giving Common created?
The Giving Common was created in 2012 to facilitate informed philanthropy and make it easier for nonprofit organizations to provide information about themselves for potential donors. Since its launch in May 2012, the Giving Common already has over 950 nonprofit profiles available for review and has raised more than $1 million for those organizations.

Why is NS4G requiring applicants to create a profile in the Giving Common?
Our hope is that our application process will benefit all applicants by exposing them to a larger pool of funders. In making our grant determinations, we consider many of the qualities showcased in a Giving Common profile, including clarity of mission, an understanding of the need being addressed and the community being served, credible strategies for achieving and measuring impact, sound management and governance, and fiscal responsibility. By using the Giving Common to complement our brief application essays, we are confident that we can maintain our rigorous grant-making standards, help raise our applicants’ visibility, and demonstrate how donors can easily utilize a free, public platform to access frequently requested information about nonprofit organizations.

How long will it take to complete the Giving Common profile?
The Boston Foundation estimates that it takes 4-6 hours. If possible, applicants should try to submit their Giving Common information by February 17, 2017 to enable Boston Foundation staff sufficient time to process it by the NS4G deadline of March 10, 2017.

What if we have questions about how to complete the Giving Common profile?
The Boston Foundation staff is happy to help. For questions about the Giving Common and support for completing your profile, please contact Leigh Handschuh, Senior Program Associate, Nonprofit Effectiveness, at 617-338-1623 or leigh.handschuh@tbf.org.

What if we are unable to complete the Giving Common profile by the application deadline?
Boston Foundation staff will work with you to complete your profile as quickly as possible. NS4G may also be able to accept a draft version of your profile or review the documents you are planning to use to complete your profile. If you have concerns about completing your Giving Common profile on time, please contact Rebecca Riccio, Director of the Social Impact Lab at Northeastern University, at 617-373-4020 or ns4g@northeastern.edu.
What if we choose not to complete the Giving Common profile?
If any concerns or obstacles are preventing you from completing a Giving Common profile, please contact Rebecca Riccio, Director of the Social Impact Lab at Northeastern University, at 617-373-4020 or ns4g@northeastern.edu.

Contact Information
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