

- 1. What is your organization?**
- 2. Where are you located?**

In the chat box, please share your organization name and location.



Aging Out Institute Webinar

10 Tips for Completing the AOI Awards Application

This PowerPoint will be sent to you after the
webinar is over

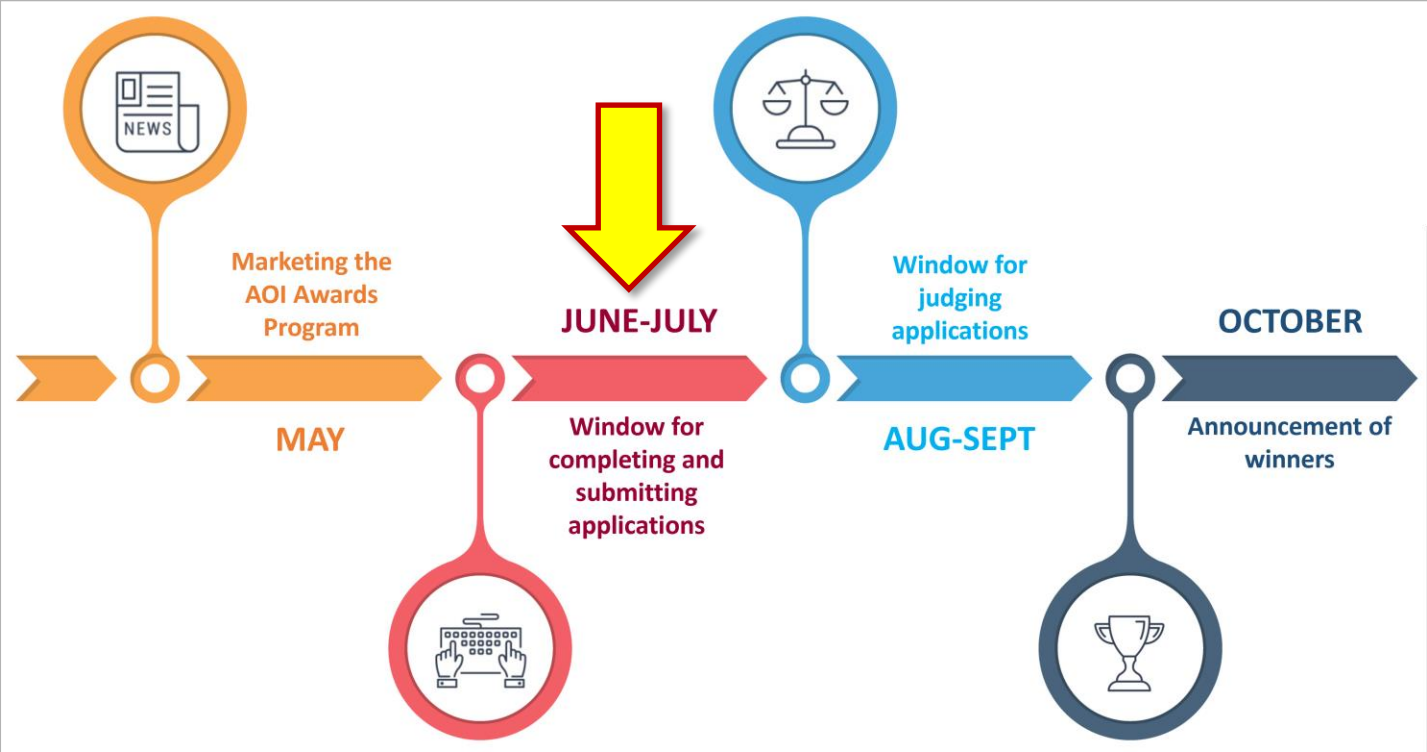
Today's Facilitator



Lynn Tonini
Former Foster Youth
Founder & Executive Director
Aging Out Institute

AgingOutInstitute.org

2024 AOI Awards Program Timeline



2024 AOI Awards Program Categories



2024 FLAME AWARD **Small Program**

Organization (or program within an organization) with 1-10 full-time and/or part-time employees
(Volunteers are not included in this count)



2024 FIRE AWARD **Mid-Size/Large Program**

Organization (or program within an organization) with 11+ full-time and/or part-time employees
(Volunteers are not included in this count)



2024 PHOENIX AWARD **Youth Impact**

Any organization or program that applies in one of the other categories may also choose to apply in this category, which focuses on the impact on the youth served and the process to measure and track that impact

2024 AOI Awards Program Prizes



2024 FLAME AWARD
Small Program

PRIZE

The monetary prize for this category will be

\$40,000

Four (4) winners will be selected in this category and each winner will receive this amount



2024 FIRE AWARD
Mid-Size/Large Program

PRIZE

The monetary prize for this category will be

\$50,000

Three (3) winners will be selected in this category and each winner will receive this amount



2024 PHOENIX AWARD
Youth Impact

PRIZE

The monetary prize for this category will be

\$90,000

One (1) winner will be selected in this category

2024 AOI Awards Program Criteria

- Representative of a 501(c)(3) organization (nonprofit or education institution) in the United States...or a program within a 501c3 organization
- Provide services to youth aging out of foster care – either preparing them to age out or supporting afterward
- Must have been providing services to youth aging out of care for at least 3 years (started after May 2021)
- Previous winners are not eligible, unless they won their award in 2017-2019

10 Tips for Completing the Application

Provide details	Tell a story	Address AOI's questions	Use AOI's suggested format
Ensure consistent writing style	10 Tips for Completing the AOI Awards Application		Check grammar and spelling
Submit for full programs only	Include actual data	Focus on the present (not the future)	Include relevant attachments

Tip #1: Provide Details

Mistake: Being too brief and/or high level in your descriptions

Advice: Err on the side of providing more information than less and do not skip sections.

Provide details	Tell a story	Address AOI's questions	Use AOI's suggested format
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WHO

- Youth
- Leaders
- Staff
- Partners
- Community
- Government
- Etc.

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- Etc.

WHAT

- Goals
- Achievements
- Staff training
- Skills
- Elements
- Topics
- Schedule
- Tools
- Materials
- Benefits
- Etc.

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- Nonprofit Location
- Activity location
- Online location
- Recruiting geography
- Etc.

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WHEN

- Ages of youth (when they participate)
- Activity time of year
- Length of time in program
- Etc.

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WHEN

- Ages of youth (when they participate)
- Activity time of year
- Length of time in program
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How

- Process/Steps
- Youth experience (beginning to end)
- How it is youth driven
- Etc.

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- Youth
- Leaders
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- Government
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WHAT

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- Outcomes
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- Skills
- Elements
- Topics
- Schedule
- Tools
- Materials
- Benefits
- Etc.

WHERE

- Nonprofit Location
- Activity location
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WHEN

- Ages of youth (when they participate)
- Activity time of year
- Length of time in program
- Etc.

How

- Process/Steps
- Youth experience (beginning to end)
- How it is youth driven
- Etc.

WHY

- Tie program activities to the mission
- Why youth participate
- Why youth succeed
- Why the program methodology was selected
- Etc.

Tip #2: Tell a Story

Mistake: Answering in lists or just “the facts”

Advice: Paint a thorough, descriptive explanation of your program and the youths’ experience from the beginning to the end of the program.

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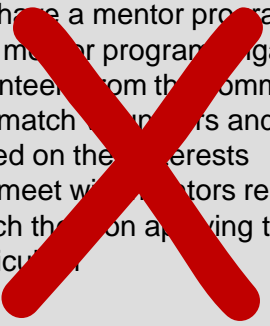
List of Program Elements	Story of How Youth Experience the Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a mentor program The mentor program engages volunteers from the community We match volunteers and youth based on their interests We meet with mentors regularly to coach them on applying the life skills curriculum Etc. 	

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List of Program Elements	Story of How Youth Experience the Program
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a mentor program • The mentor program engages volunteers from the community • We match mentors and youth based on their interests • We meet with mentors regularly to coach them on applying the life skills curriculum • Etc. 	<p>When youth are accepted into our mentor program, we ask them to fill out a questionnaire about their interests. We also ask our volunteer mentors to fill out the same questionnaire. This way, we can compare the applications and find the best matches based on interests and goals. After the matches are identified, we bring the mentors and youth together to talk and decide if they want to move forward with the relationship. Throughout the time the youth are part of the mentor program, we meet with coaches regularly to help them understand how to help youth build the life skills that they need to meet their goals.</p>

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Make sure that the story is not all “fluff” (e.g., “aren’t we awesome”) – instead, focus on relevant activities that address how you work with the youth

Tip #3: Address AOI's Questions

Mistake: Simply copying other grant applications or program literature (brochures, etc.) to the AOI application

Advice: Even if you leverage information from other sources, be sure to customize it for the AOI application.

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We understand the value in leveraging existing content. However, if the descriptions you provide don't align with the expectations of the AOI application, it will likely lead to lower scores.

Part of this customization is to ensure that the content matches with the recommended headers (see next slide).

Tip #4: Use AOI's Suggested Headers

Mistake: Not utilizing the suggested content headers in the instructions

Advice: Organize your answers under the headers that AOI has provided.

1. What services do you offer youth aging out of care in this Area of Service?
2. How are youth engaged to help define and direct their experience?
3. What services do you provide that are evidence-based (i.e., rooted in research and/or evidence-based programming that demonstrate that certain strategies are effective)?
4. What partnerships have been developed to implement these services?
5. What knowledge and skills do youth learn while in your organization/program and how they are taught?
6. What specific methods do you use to guide youth to develop self-sufficiency?
7. What intangible characteristics (e.g., patience, confidence, integrity) do your services help youth build?
8. How is youth success measured and tracked in this Area of Service, and what impacts do your services have on the youth you support?

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****EXTREMELY IMPORTANT:****

For each Area of Service, judges will be looking for the following information at a minimum. ****In each Area of Service you select, use this list to create headers for each of these key sections of information so none are missed****. Include the headers in your description of each different Area of Service that you select. You have unlimited space in each Area of Service answer block, so ****BE SURE TO INCLUDE ALL THESE HEADER SECTIONS IN YOUR ANSWER(S)****!

Tip #5: Ensure Consistent Writing Style

Mistake: Including different writing styles of more than one contributor

Advice: Ensure the application reflects a single, consistent writing style.

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Example of different writing styles:

Writer A	Writer B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes “Youth” Uses a lot of contractions (can’t, don’t, etc.) Writes short, simple sentences Uses bullet lists to share service area information Indents paragraphs Makes a lot of spelling errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes “Client” Does not use many contractions (cannot, do not) Writes long, complicated sentences Writes in story format to share service area information Does not indent paragraphs Makes very few spelling errors

- Consistent writing style includes using the same terminology and/or references, using the same grammar and punctuation decisions, etc.
- Hire a grant writer if you don’t have a good grant writer on staff.
- Have one person on staff – someone who can write well – write the entire thing.
- Have one person go through different contributions and edit to ensure a consistent writing style (allow enough time if doing this one).

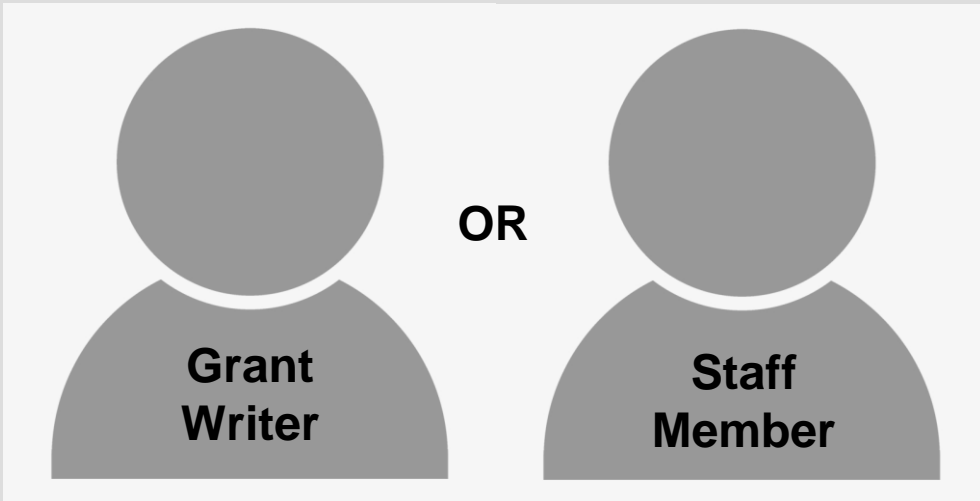
Tip #6: Check Grammar and Spelling



Mistake: Submitting the application with grammar and spelling mistakes

Advice: Ensure someone proofreads the entire application and corrects any grammar and spelling mistakes.

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- Hire a grant writer if you don't have a good writer on staff.
- Have one person on staff – someone who can proofread well – review the application.
- Have one person on staff - someone who can write well - proofread the entire thing (allow extra time at the end to do this).

Tip #7: Submit for Primary Area(s) of Service



Mistake: Trying to portray secondary activities as separate Areas of Service

Advice: Only submit in service areas (housing, employment, education, etc.) that are “primary” to your core mission.

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Example: Primary Service (Education)	Example: Secondary Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps youth identify best educational track (college, trade school, etc.) Helps youth fill out necessary forms to apply to school Provides tutors, when needed Ensures youth connect with other foster youth in the same educational institution Meets regularly on progress toward education goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps youth identify their desired career track (Employment) Provides a mentor for youth while they are pursuing their educational goals (Relationships) <p>NOTE: If secondary activities support your primary Area of Service, include them in your primary Area of Service description.</p>

- If you only have an activity or two in a particular service area (e.g., housing, employment, education, etc.), do **not** select those Areas of Service in the application.
- It does not count against you if you only submit in one service area.
- Don't try to make your program look more impressive by selecting several Areas of Service – it may end up earning a lower score.

Tip #8: Include Actual Data

Mistake: Being vague regarding data (e.g., “some,” “many,” “often”)

Advice: Where it is appropriate, share actual numbers, percentages, etc.

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Vague	Includes Data
“Many youth in our program who select the goal of achieving their GED are able to acquire it successfully.”	“In 2021, 29 (93%) of the youth in our program who selected the goal of achieving their GED were able to acquire it successfully.”

Data demonstrates the specific impact you are having on youths’ lives.

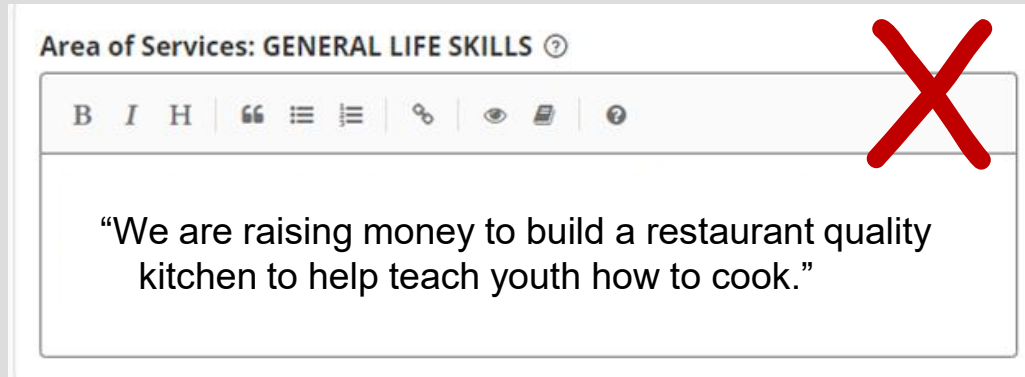
NOTE: This is especially important for the Youth Impact application, but it will also raise your score in the “size” applications.

Tip #9: Focus on the Present

Mistake: Including future plans as representative of service area activities

Advice: Keep the application focused on your current program (only include the past if it helps explain the development of your program).

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Judges are looking for what your program looks like **today**, not what you are planning for the future.

Tip #10: Include Relevant Attachments

Mistake: Not including attachments, including attachments that are not directly relevant to the described Area(s) of Service, or referencing attachments instead of filling in the service area section of the application

Advice: Utilize attachments only to supplement information provided in the application.

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- Attachments should not be submitted in place of narrative in the application.
- Don't only refer to attachments in the application – they are to supplement something described in the application.
- Make sure the attachments relate to the service areas for which you have submitted.



Open
Questions



Wrap-Up

AOI Community

<https://agingoutinstitute.org/aoi-community>



"We love the opportunity presented by the AOI Community - meet other people working in this sphere, hear common struggles and successes, and know you're not alone in this work. We can do so much more together and serve youth aging out of state care as a collaborative network!"

-Miriam Cobb, Empty Frames Initiative (NC)

"Love this community! The suggestions and advice, inspiration from and learning about other programs, and just the opportunity to meet others who work with transitioning youth. If there is another space like this, we certainly haven't found it. Thank you, Aging Out Institute."

-Susan Punnett, Family & Youth Initiative (D.C.)

"Aging Out Institute has created a very thoughtful place where like minded folks can come together and share ideas and resources about working with TAY."

-Lisa Addy-Peat, The Taylor House (CA)

AOI has funds to donate money to organizations that join the AOI Community this summer. (This is NOT a requirement to apply for or win an award.)

Small Orgs/Programs (>10 employees)

\$500 donation after \$199 annual access fee

Mid-Size Orgs/Programs (11-40 employees)

\$600 donation after \$299 annual access fee

Large Orgs/Programs (41+ employees)

\$700 donation after \$399 annual access fee

*Thank
you*

