



Grand Challenges for Social Work Doctoral Award
Funded by The New York Community Trust

Application Guidelines
February 2025

Areas of Funding

Awards of \$3,000 are available to help support dissertation or capstone project expenses of doctoral students whose studies have the potential to significantly advance knowledge germane to addressing the Grand Challenges for Social Work. One award will be made for each of the 14 Grand Challenges:

 Individual and family well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Ensure healthy development for youth> Close the health gap> Build healthy relationships to end violence> Advance long and productive lives	 Stronger social fabric <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Eradicate social isolation> End homelessness> Create social responses to a changing environment> Harness technology for social good> Prevent gun violence	 Just society <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Eliminate racism> Promote smart decarceration> Build financial capability and assets for all> Reduce extreme economic inequality> Achieve equal opportunity and justice
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Who May Apply

Applicants must be enrolled in a social work doctoral program in the United States and its territories. Doctoral students who anticipate completing a capstone project or dissertation by August 31, 2026 are eligible to apply. Students from underrepresented populations or historically marginalized backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Examples of marginalized backgrounds include, but are not limited to, first-generation college graduates; individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds; individuals from communities of color; individuals from LGBTQ2SI+ communities; and individuals with disabilities.

Expectations

The doctoral student applicant must agree to abide by the governing administrative rules for the project. They must submit a brief 6 month progress report, a 12 month progress report (this can be the final report if the project is complete) and a final report to the GCSW administrative office at director@grandchallengesforsocialwork.org.

The following acknowledgement statement should be used in any disseminated materials: *Partial support for this dissertation/capstone project was provided by the New York Community Trust through a Grand Challenges for Social Work Doctoral Award.*

Application Deadlines

The deadline is 8 p.m. Eastern Time March 31, 2025. **All application materials must be submitted through the online [Application Form](#) by the deadline.**

Review Process

All completed applications will be reviewed by at least one, and no more than two, Grand Challenge networks, which will make recommendations for funding to the GCSW Doctoral Awards Committee (composed of Grand Challenge leaders and representatives of GADE Member-Institutions).

The committee will consider the following criteria in evaluating each proposal:

- 1. The compatibility of the proposed work with the Grand Challenge/s identified by the applicant.**
- 2. The significance and expected impact of the study or project.**
This includes the scope of the problem addressed (numbers of people potentially impacted); salience or severity of the problem addressed (is this an issue of major importance in the lives of those affected?); and the likelihood of impact on the field.
- 3. The conceptual and technical merit of the proposed study or project.**
This includes the clarity and soundness of the logic of the proposed study or project and the appropriateness of the methodology. The GCSW welcomes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches. Proposals should address the potential for application of the knowledge developed with the assistance of this award.
- 4. The extent to which projects are informed by interactions with stakeholders.** Research informed by stakeholders is likely to have greater significance to an array of audiences who might facilitate the translation of the findings into advocacy for policies, programs, and practices that are broadly helpful.
- 5. Specificity and appropriateness of dissemination plans.**
Proposals must include plans for disseminating results. This may include plans to present at a conference; to connect with practitioners, community organizations and partners; to share results back with study participants, community members, or the general public; or to submit manuscripts for scholarly publication (note journals or other venues).

Applicants will be notified of the final decision by email May 26, 2025. Awardees will receive a confirmation letter and will be asked to submit a W9. The funds will be issued directly to the awardee within 1-2 months of notice. It is not possible for the GCSW to provide feedback on applications that are declined.

Application Requirements

1. Completed online [Application Form](#).
2. Project Summary
The Project Summary should be formatted using the headings below and should be no longer than 5 pages (including references) double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times Roman typeface. List of references and citation formatting should follow APA formatting. Cover Sheet will not count toward the 5-page limit.

- a. Background and Purpose of the Proposed Project. Cite relevant literature to support the purpose and the innovativeness of the project.
 - b. Methodology.
 - i. If a *research study or dissertation*, briefly describe the study design and methodology, including the unit(s) of analysis in the study, the sampling plan, and approach (quantitative/ qualitative/ mixed method). Also include the conceptual framework or model of the study; the hypotheses/study questions guiding the study; any sources of data employed in the study and the methods of data collection; the major variables in the study and how each major variable is operationalized; and data analysis plan.
 - ii. If a *capstone project*, describe the problem addressed, methods (e.g., literature review, case study, community project), dissemination/implementation plan and anticipated impact of the project.
 - c. The anticipated alignment of the project with the [Vision, Mission, Domain, Guiding Principles, & Guideposts to Action](#) of the Grand Challenges for Social Work.
3. A timeline for completion of the dissertation or capstone project.
 4. A brief budget narrative including anticipated uses of the award to facilitate completion of the dissertation/capstone. Appropriate uses include but are not limited to expenses related to data acquisition or analysis, expenses related to community engagement or dissemination, and living or childcare expenses during the writing period. (Some of these expenditures may be taxable.)
Note: Funds are not allowed for use in lobbying, or for political activities.
 5. A letter of agreement from the applicant affirming that they will:
 - a. Make all reasonable efforts to complete the dissertation or capstone project on a timely basis;
 - b. Send a brief progress report to the GCSW administrative office by January 5, 2026;
 - c. Submit a report to the GCSW administrative office after 12 months (this can be the final report if the project is complete) and a final report;
 - d. Regularly interact with a mentor from the Network under which the proposal was selected;
 - e. Endeavor to secure advocacy results—such as a policy paper, informational correspondence, or meetings with an elected official or administrator—that address the relevant Grand Challenge.
 6. Letter from the applicant's primary faculty capstone/dissertation sponsor or DSW mentor. The letter should include the faculty sponsor's assessment of the likelihood that the applicant will produce a quality product in a timely manner, and its potential contribution.
 7. Proposals should provide evidence of having initiated the process of obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval as applicable.
 8. Applicant's Curriculum Vitae (CV).

All documents (PDF files) must be uploaded to the [Application Form](#) by 8 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, March 31, 2025.

Communications should be sent via email to the Grand Challenges for Social Work administrative office at director@grandchallengesforsocialwork.org.