FAQs
Tech and Society Challenge: Youth Voice in the Digital Age

GETTING STARTED
What are the key steps to this process?
All interested candidates must follow the steps below to be considered for this funding opportunity.
1. **LOI Stage:** All candidates must submit a letter-of-inquiry (LOI) in our Foundant portal. Submissions of the LOI will be considered on a rolling basis until the deadline of 5:00pm CST on January 31, 2020.
2. **Application Stage:** Following a review period, SCE will contact the most promising candidates to request a formal application (i.e. grant proposal). Candidates will have approximately 4-6 weeks to complete the application. We will provide more specific dates later in the process. SCE will review submitted applications and contact applicants with clarifying questions or requests for additional information as needed.
3. **Decision Stage:** All grantees require approval by SCE's Board of Directors. Candidates who make it to this stage will be notified of the funding decision by early summer. SCE will provide specific dates later in the process.

Do I need to create an account in Foundant to access the LOI?
Foundant is SCE's grant management system. If you have not previously created a Foundant account, you will be prompted to do so prior to submitting the LOI.

Do I need to submit the LOI in Foundant, or will you accept Word/PDF versions?
Letters of inquiry must be submitted in Foundant. If you are invited to complete a formal application (i.e. grant proposal), this will also need to be submitted in Foundant.

Who do I reach out to with questions?
For issues related to Foundant, please reach out directly to Kevin Connors (kevin@scefdn.org). For questions related to the Challenge, please email challenge@scefdn.org and include "Youth Voice in the Digital Age Challenge" in the subject line.

GENERAL QUESTIONS
I have a project in mind, but I'm not sure if it is a good fit for this initiative. Would it be possible to connect with SCE to determine whether I should submit an LOI?
To be fair to all candidates, we are not able to discuss the merits of potential proposals. We encourage you to submit an LOI if you think your project may align with this initiative.

My project is longer than two years. Can I still submit an LOI?
Yes. We request that you include the full budget for your project but clearly articulate which parts of the budget will be supported by SCE funds. SCE will provide funding for up to two years.

Can I submit multiple LOIs?
Yes. If you have multiple projects that you would like considered, you may submit multiple letters of inquiry. If projects are related enough to be bundled into a single LOI, we encourage you to do so.

Are fiscally-sponsored organizations eligible?
Only 501 (c)(3) organizations are eligible to apply. We will also accept applications from programs that have a fiscal sponsor.

Are schools and/or school districts eligible?
Yes. While SCE has historically funded nonprofits working in out-of-school time, we are interested in receiving a diverse set of ideas for this emerging issue area.

Are organizations from outside the Chicagoland area eligible? Is there a regional focus to this initiative?
Yes, you can submit an LOI if you are outside the Chicagoland area. There is no regional preference. This Challenge is a national initiative. We will not accept submissions from organizations based outside of the United States.

Can you provide additional clarification on the eligible age range?
The primary age of the youth served must fall within the 12-18 age range. Organizations that serve some youth outside of the age range are eligible to submit an LOI as long as the main focus of the project is 12-18 year olds.

Is there a specific number of youth my program should serve?
There is no minimum or maximum number of youth participants required. We are looking for a diverse set of program types and sizes.

Do I need to submit an LOI with a partner organization?
You are not required to partner with another organization for this Challenge. In the case that you do work with a partner, we request that one organization serves as the "lead organization."

Can I start a new program with these grant funds or is this opportunity only open to organizations with already established programs?
We invite submissions for both new and existing programs. We expect to award grants at two tiers: 1) prototype, experimental, or early-stage grants of up to $50,000 per year (up to two years), providing new innovators the space to stress test their assumptions, elevate best practices and pilot their initiative; and 2) implementation grants of $100,000–$250,000 per year (up to two years) to organizations with established records and detailed plans who want to scale their work.

What do you mean by "individual and collective well-being"? Are there any frameworks that I can refer to?
Many universities and health organizations have developed well-being frameworks, including Harvard University's Center for Wellness and Health Promotion. Comprised of eight interconnected dimensions, such as emotional well-being and mental well-being, it is a meaningful outcome for both individuals and society. It reflects a state of health, happiness, and prosperity, and supported by decades of research, it has become a popular indicator for policymakers, organizations, and health practitioners. In the Digital Age we believe that ubiquitous technology presents acute challenges and opportunities that may impact well-being.

What criteria will you use to determine who receives a grant?
In the letter of inquiry stage, we are interested in the most compelling ideas that authentically elevate youth voice. Your letter of inquiry should clearly connect to the issue area, articulate the problem for which you are solving, and make us want to read more.

If you are invited to the application (i.e. grant proposal) stage, we will consider a range of criteria when evaluating proposals. This includes: leadership capacity, organizational stability, alignment with the initiative's challenge question, potential for impact, quality of the implementation plan, financial sustainability/stability of the program, and the ability to measure outcomes. We have a rigorous selection process, and all grantees require approval by the SCE Board of Directors.