2020 Nutrition & Healthy Lifestyles Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY

Q: Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

A: The Health Fund makes grants to nonprofit organizations, local units of government, and the State of Michigan. Non-government applicants must be recognized by the IRS as a nonprofit organization, be based in Michigan, have a current certified financial audit, and have at least one full-time employee.

Q: My organization has previously received a grant from the Health Fund. Are we eligible to apply for this program?

A: Yes, previous and current grantees are welcome to apply.

Q: If I apply to this program, may I apply to upcoming Health Fund opportunities as well?

A: Yes! Applying to one program and receiving a grant does not preclude you from responding to future funding opportunities from the Health Fund.

Q: Can the project team include for-profit organizations, so long as the applicant is a nonprofit?

A: Yes.

Q: Can an organization submit multiple proposals?

A: Yes, an organization may apply for more than one grant. However, it is unlikely that the Health Fund will approve more than one grant per organization in a single grant cycle. The program team at the Health Fund is happy to provide feedback on multiple ideas through the concept paper submission process to identify which project(s) would be most competitive.

Q: Can an investigator be involved in more than one application?

A: Yes. However, it is important to keep in mind that the Health Fund will likely only fund one project per organization. The program team can help you decide which project(s) to proceed to a full application with through the concept paper process.

Q: In terms of collaborative approaches if multiple agencies are handling individual pieces of a project should we cite each other and submit individual proposals (assuming the pieces could be standalone) or is it preferred that we submit one as a group?

A: Please submit as one group.

Q: Will you provide more information on fiduciary organizations?

A: The Health Fund allows non-profit organizations to serve as a fiscal sponsor, or fiduciary, for other non-profit organizations whose annual operating budgets limit the proposed project budget or who do not have the bandwidth or resources to administer a grant. Fiduciary organizations must submit the application, and if the grant is awarded, the Health Fund will issue the grant to the fiduciary organization. However, the organization requesting the fiduciary must provide a letter of commitment from an authorized signer, documentation of the organization's tax exempt status, its organizational chart, and a list of its Board of Directors with affiliations. Fiduciary organizations may apply for another grant in the same program.

CONCEPT PAPERS

Q: How soon should we expect feedback after submission of the concept paper?

A: The program team will do their best to get you timely feedback, usually within about two weeks. We anticipate receiving many concept papers and will respond to them in the order received, so we recommend submitting your concept paper early in order to get feedback more quickly. **Concept papers are due Monday, March 23 at 5 pm.**

Q: Will you accept concept papers after Monday, March 23 at 5 pm?

A: No.

Q: Is there a template for concept papers?

A: No, we do not require you to adhere to a specific template or formatting requirements. Please include the following sections in this order:
- Project title
- Applicant name
- Project information
    - Description of health problem, including groups and localities that experience disproportionate impact
    - Description of proposed intervention, including measurable outcomes
    - Key collaborative partners and their roles
    - Information specific to either of the Health Fund's cross-cutting goals
    - Sustainability plan
    - Description of potential for replication, sharing of knowledge, or to inform policy.
- Estimated budget

Please note a detailed budget breakdown is not required, but you should include a brief overview of what the budget would cover.

BUDGET AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

Q: Is it OK to request a budget less than maximum amount?

A: Absolutely! As a reminder, project budgets are limited to $500,000 and an organization may not apply for a grant larger than 20% of their annual operating budget.

Q: How do you define overhead costs? Are hourly employees who provide direct program services included?

A: We consider overhead or indirect costs to include costs associated with a project that are not in direct services of the project, such as administrative support, general office expenses, rent,

and utilities. Employees who provide direct program services, whether hourly or salaried, should be included in the salary portion of your project budget.

Q: Is there a limit on overhead costs?

A: For this grant round, an organization may request up to 10% of their total project budget for overhead or indirect costs.

Q: What is excluded from funding?

A: Please see our website for a list of activities and expenses that are excluded from funding: https://www.mihealthfund.org/grantmaking/frequently-asked-questions

Q: Can we include assets we've invested in over the past few years in the program budget? For instance, we've acquired 17 hoop houses worth $170,000 that will be used for the launch of our program.

A: You may not include previously purchased equipment, supplies, etc. in the budget request. You may budget for equipment, supplies, etc. that will be purchased for the project during the project period.

Q: Is retrofitting considered a capital project or an acceptable expense if another funder will cover a new space?

A: We generally do not support retrofitting existing physical spaces. If you need to acquire software, equipment, or other supplies in order to carry out the proposed project, that's an allowable expense. We do not fund projects to build new parks, clinics, youth centers, etc.

Q: May we include tuition costs in our budget?

A: No. Tuition costs and related fees are not allowed. You may include salaries or wages for students who will contribute to the project.

Q: Does the Health Fund provide funding for software development?

A: It depends. We encourage you to submit a concept paper to get specific feedback on your project.

Q: Can we reimburse participants for their time?

A: Yes, you may provide reasonable reimbursement to participants for their and/or transportation expenses.

Q: How are grant payments structured? May we request more funds in Year 1 or are funds evenly split across the project period?

A: Your budget should match your expected spending. If you anticipate higher costs in Year 1 than in Year 2, please budget accordingly.

Q: Clinical research is listed under "excluded from funding considerations" in the RFP. How do you define clinical research, and can you elaborate on that?

A: We do not fund clinical trials, such as drug or device trials, human subjects research, or animal research. If you have a specific project idea you would like to propose, please send in a concept paper and we can provide targeted feedback on your idea.

Q: Are matching funds required?

A: Matching funds are not required but are viewed favorably especially when the applicant is a health system, university, or a nonprofit with a significant operating budget.

Q: Is there a page limit for the full proposal?

A: All responses should be included in the application fields within our grants portal. We respectfully request that you limit your application narrative to a total of 10 printed pages, excluding any attachments.

Q: Will you clarify the requirements for organizational financial materials?

A: We prefer applicants to submit an independent financial audit for the most recent fiscal year. If that is not available, please upload the most recent audit or independent review of your financial statements.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES
Q: Can you talk about how the strategy of the NHL RFP may have changed over the years? And have you seen any trends over time of the projects that you've funded?

A: Early on, the Health Fund supported programs that were varied, but aligned with goals specific to the nutrition and healthy lifestyles scope. Through perpetual learning and subsequent grant rounds, we have been able to "fine-tune" our efforts toward more specific, evidence-based work that still aligns with our goals, but allows us to be more targeted in our efforts to realize greater impact on the treatment and/or prevention of chronic health conditions, the engagement of children and older adults in regular physical activity, and the reduction of some of the challenges and barriers that contribute to food insecurity.

Q: Given the Health Fund's primary interest in children and older adults, would the Health Fund consider an evidence-based physical activity promotion intervention designed for adults with obesity, age 18-64?

A: Yes, we would consider evidence-based physical activity promotion interventions for this age range. However, when difficult funding decisions must be made, we will almost always choose programs that are within our primary interest populations, which are children, aged 0-18 and older adults aged 60+.

Q: Would allowable interventions include infrastructure-based treatments and engineering countermeasures that encourage greater use of existing trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.?

A: No. We understand that some infrastructure-based treatments and engineering countermeasures can be effective at encouraging people to use trails and public spaces. However, we are specifically looking to support programming and activities that are implemented *in* trails, parks, and other public areas.

Q: Are we required to have a third-party evaluator for the project, or can the evaluation be done internally? If both are allowed, do you have a preference?

A: No, you are not required to hire a third-party evaluator for your project. You can conduct the evaluation internally. We do not have a preference for either scenario, but we do have a preference for a well-thought out evaluation plan that clearly articulates how a project's various components work together, and how you'll measure success toward key outcomes.

- For resources to help you design your project's evaluation plan, you can download our Evaluation Approach.

- For help identifying a third-party evaluator for your project, please view our Evaluation Partners list on our website: https://www.mihealthfund.org/grantmaking/evaluation

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is the earliest start date for grants?

A: Projects may begin any time on or after September 1, 2020.

Q: Where can I find more information on previous Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles grants?

A: Our website includes a list of grantees and project titles for all previous grant cycles. A list of the 2019 awards is available here: https://www.mihealthfund.org/health-fund-announces-15-million-in-new-funding

Q: What is the typical funding rate for this opportunity?

A: In the previous cycle, we received 104 concept papers and 48 full proposals. We made 19 awards.

Q: If we've applied and received grant funding from the Health Fund, do we need to resubmit the administrative documents, including our confirmation of our tax-exempt status, our organization's current annual operating budget, etc.?

A: Potentially. Some previously submitted documents are available at the end of the application below the Attachments box. If these documents are accurate and up to date, no further action is needed. If these documents are outdated, you must upload the correct documents to the Attachments box.

Q: What is the timeline for the grant review process?

A: Applications are due Thursday, April 30, 2020 at 5 pm. Our program team will review each proposal and contact applicants with any questions in May and June, then present recommendations to our grantmaking committee in July. If our grantmaking committee does not recommend your proposal to our Board of Directors, we will notify you that your proposal was not approved after the grantmaking committee meets. We will send award notifications after our Board of Directors meets on Thursday, August 13.

Q: I have a question that is not listed in this document. Who should I contact?

A: If you have specific questions about whether your proposed program would be responsive, please submit a concept paper. For other programmatic inquiries, please contact a member of the Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles team:

- Jan Delatorre, Program Officer (jan@mihealthfund.org)
- Tayo Moss, Program Manager (tayo@mihealthfund.org)
- Laurie Solotorow, Director (laurie@mihealthfund.org)

For evaluation questions, please contact Rory Neuner (rory@mihealthfund.org).

For administrative questions or issues with the grants portal, please contact Sharon Karaboyas (sharon@mihealthfund.org).