

2025 NUTRITION & HEALTHY LIFESTYLES INITIATIVE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

MICHIGAN HEALTH ENDOWMENT FUND

Grant Timeline

March 3, 2025	Grant portal opened for applicants
March 20, 2025	Concept papers (two pages max) due by email at 5:00 p.m. ET (strongly encouraged)
May 1, 2025	Application due by 5:00 p.m. ET
September 3, 2025	Awards announced
October 1, 2025	Earliest start date

A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

MISSION AND STRATEGY

The mission of the Health Fund is to improve the health of Michigan residents, emphasizing the health and wellness of children and older adults, while reducing the cost of health care. The 2025 Nutrition & Healthy Lifestyles (NHL) Initiative supports this mission by addressing critical nutrition and lifestyle challenges that negatively impact Michigan children and older adults.

Team NHL views healthy food access and lack of physical activity as social determinants of health based on [the Healthy People 2030](#) framework. Our team aims to address these factors and improve the health of communities through four areas of strategic focus: food access, food systems, physical activity, and the built environment.

FOOD ACCESS



Food access projects encourage healthy food consumption, enhance nutrition knowledge, and shape healthier behaviors. These interventions are pivotal to improving health outcomes and preventing diet-

related chronic diseases.

Applications addressing this strategy should aim to develop innovative approaches to combating diet-related chronic diseases, enhancing nutrition security, driving systemic change, and/or scaling replicable program models.

We will prioritize sustainable, innovative, and equitable solutions addressing food security, access, and nutrition.

Examples:

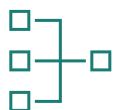
- Supporting healthy food access in Early Childhood Education centers
- Addressing capacity barriers to engaging in reimbursable activities in Medicaid
- Partnering with schools to promote/enhance food access, such as sourcing local food for students or enhancing food literacy
- Creating sustainable approaches to food security

CONSIDERATIONS

Proposals to implement Food is Medicine-style programming will not be competitive during this grant round. This includes produce prescriptions, healthy food boxes/packs, or meal

delivery programs. While we have funded the implementation of these efforts in past years, we are currently focused on **strengthening critical statewide systems and partnerships** to help individuals access this support through Michigan Medicaid.

FOOD SYSTEMS



Food Systems interventions should focus on local food systems and address critical factors that affect communities' ability to attain equitable access to nutritious foods. This includes food production, processing, transportation, and consumption.

Applications under this priority may address governance and economics of food production, sustainability, food waste, environmental impact of food production, or the effects of food on individual and population health. Projects should promote equitable access to food, integrate community voices, or empower youth.

Examples:

- Identifying regional solutions to creating sustainable food systems
- Addressing food waste
- Generating interest and pathways in the food systems workforce
- Improving relationships and networks working to improve food systems across Michigan

CONSIDERATIONS

Our funding is dedicated to supporting programmatic initiatives and **does not cover infrastructure-related costs or capital investments**; applications will not be considered if the proposed project budgets include these types of expenses.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT



Built Environment projects focus on supporting healthy communities through enhancements to the physical spaces where communities live, learn, work, and play.

Applications should support design and/or planning activities that ensure communities are well-prepared to implement improvements to their built environment that promote health in the future. Proposed projects should prioritize long-term sustainability and community engagement.

Learn more about our built environment work and examples of projects we've funded previously in our [recent blog post](#).

CONSIDERATIONS

Grant funding is dedicated to supporting **planning, design, and community engagement efforts** and does not cover infrastructure-related costs or capital investments (i.e., construction, land acquisition, wayfinding sign purchases, etc.). Applications will not be considered if the proposed budget includes these types of expenses.

Examples:

- Supporting planning, design, and pre-engineering of pathways, trails, and parks
- Assisting parks and recreation departments to incorporate active design principles into community playgrounds
- Advancing development of non-motorized transportation and recreation plans
- Implementing community engagement strategies to ensure local input is central to built environment planning

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Physical Activity interventions aim to provide equitable access to health and well-being for all individuals through exercise.

Applications should focus on eliminating barriers that limit full participation in recreation and fitness activities, promoting access for everyone, regardless of ability.

Learn more about our work expanding access to opportunities to physical activity for people with disabilities in our [recent blog post](#).

Examples:

- Increasing physical activity opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Addressing environmental and/or social barriers that prevent full inclusion in recreation and fitness

To explore examples of successful Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles projects within these four focus areas, please visit the Health Fund's [grant database](#) on our website.

CONSIDERATIONS

Across all priority areas, requests should aim to develop **new programming or expand or introduce innovative enhancements into existing programs**. We will not provide support for ongoing operation of existing programs.

B. ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT AMOUNT

ELIGIBILITY

Nonprofits, federally recognized Tribes, local units of government, and the State of Michigan are eligible for grants. To be eligible to apply for a grant under this initiative, applicants must:

- ✓ Be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization;
- ✓ Serve Michigan residents;
- ✓ Have a current certified financial audit or independently reviewed financial statements; and
- ✓ Have at least 1 FTE.

EXCLUDED FROM FUNDING CONSIDERATION

- ✗ Clinical research
- ✗ Loans
- ✗ Health-related emergencies*
- ✗ Capital projects
- ✗ Litigation
- ✗ Ongoing program operations and staffing
- ✗ Lobbying activities
- ✗ Tuition costs and related fees
- ✗ Organizations that discriminate because of age, race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or gender

*The Health Fund might in some situations consider support to address longer-term rebuilding or other needs following emergency situations.

GRANT AMOUNT

The Health Fund anticipates awarding grants between \$50,000 to \$500,000. We welcome proposals toward the smaller end of that range. Applicants may apply for a one or two-year grant, but the total request is limited to \$500,000. Please be sure to clearly identify your funding requests per year in your proposal, along with any other associated program revenue.

An organization may apply for a grant no larger than 20% of its annual operating budget. Fiduciary, or financial sponsor, agreements may be considered for small organizations to meet the budgetary or eligibility requirements listed above. We welcome ideas from all types of eligible organizations, regardless of size or funding request.

The Health Fund recognizes the importance of supporting indirect expenses and encourages organizations to request the maximum amount to support those costs. Applicant organizations with annual operating budgets less than \$10 million may request indirect costs up to 30% of the total grant budget. Applicant organizations with annual operating budgets at or above \$10 million may request indirect costs up to 20% of the total grant budget. The percentage is based on the primary applicant's operating budget size. The indirect cost line item should include indirect costs for all project partners.

C. REVIEW CRITERIA AND EVALUATION

REVIEW CRITERIA

The Health Fund aims to solicit innovative proposals that align with the priorities of the organization and the needs of Michigan communities. Proposals are evaluated holistically based on the criteria below. We understand some submissions may not be as robust in some of these elements. In this case, we encourage applicants to illustrate their intent and concrete action steps to address areas where detail may be currently lacking during the course of the grant.

- **Collaboration.** The project demonstrates collaboration, including community/participant involvement in planning and implementation, multi-sector partnerships with defined roles and responsibilities related to the project, and leverage of external resources.
- **Empowering communities.** The project empowers communities to support their ongoing health needs or challenges, and it engages with community leaders to share in decision-making.
- **Health equity.** The project benefits the populations most affected by the health issue, removes barriers to health, empowers communities to support their ongoing health needs or challenges, and engages with community leaders to share in program design and decision-making.
- **Innovation.** The project supports new or enhanced programs or strategies.
- **Long-term impact.** The project has the potential to achieve significant long-term impact by implementing effective models or supporting needed innovation.
- **Measurable outcomes.** The project has clear outcomes and the potential to have a measurable impact on improving health or quality of life.
- **Strategic alignment.** The project aligns with the Health Fund's mission, strategies, and goals and with the priorities in this RFP.

EVALUATION

To be considered for funding, all proposals **must** have evaluation plans including measurable health outcomes, with the understanding that all health outcomes may not be achieved within the grant period. While some outcomes are specific to your program or project, the Health Fund strongly encourages applicants to use indicators that can speak to the effectiveness of the

interventions as it relates to systemic, behavioral, or biological changes. These indicators include:

- Physical activity minutes
- Impacts of physical activity interventions on the total health of children and older adults
- Fruit and vegetable consumption
- Behavioral change
- Body mass index measurements pre-and post-intervention in clinical settings
- Improvements in chronic disease indicators (blood pressure, A1C, etc.)

Some projects will focus on structural changes that facilitate positive behavioral and biological change. In this case, a detailed qualitative evaluation should speak to the system impact of the grant award to children and older adults.

All proposals are required to submit a document outlining a proposed project evaluation approach. This document should not exceed three pages in length. This evaluation approach could be a logic model, theory of change, or another format. The document should describe the relationship between project activities, outputs, short- and long-term outcomes, and overall impact(s). Evaluation templates are provided [here](#).

D. APPLICATION PROCESS

KEY STEPS

1. Submit a concept paper (**two pages max**) via [email](#) by 5:00 p.m. (ET) on **March 20, 2025**.
2. Applicant receives initial feedback, including whether the concept is likely to be competitive.
3. Apply using Health Fund [grant portal](#) by 5:00 p.m. (ET) on **May 1, 2025**.
4. Applications are reviewed by program staff and subject matter experts. Clarifying questions may be sent.
5. Awards are announced on September 3, 2025.

CONCEPT PAPERS

We strongly encourage concept paper submission for review and feedback by the Health Fund prior to submission of a full proposal. While not required, this may result in a stronger, more competitive proposal that aligns with Health Fund goals.

Concept papers should address the following:

- Project title
- Organization name
- Description of health problem, with a focus on groups and localities that experience disproportionate impact
- Description of proposed intervention, including measurable outcomes
- Key collaborative partners and their roles
- Estimated budget (Note: a detailed budget breakdown is not required. However, please include an overview of what the budget would cover)

Concept papers need to be submitted to grants@mihealthfund.org before 5:00 p.m. on March 20, 2025, and be **no more than two single-spaced pages** to be considered. We will not review concept papers submitted after the deadline.

APPLICATIONS

Applications must be submitted electronically using Fluxx, the Health Fund's [grants portal](#). We ask applicants to keep the total narrative within the equivalent of 10 standard pages. The workplan, budget, budget narrative, letters of support, and organizational documentation are excluded from this page limit.

Please note: You will need an account to create and submit an application. If you have not registered with our Fluxx portal before, you can request an account on the grants portal home page. New accounts must be requested at least two business days before the application deadline. Once your account is approved you will receive login credentials via email.

Full proposals must be received by **5:00 p.m. on May 1, 2025**. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The Health Fund reserves the right to confidentially share proposals with external reviewers and other foundation partners. Applicants may be asked to provide follow-up information to address reviewer questions. This request will be sent to the primary contact on the application in June 2025, and questions will be available in Fluxx. Responses are due in Fluxx within two weeks of the notification. If an organization does not receive questions, it is not an indication of our funding recommendation.

If a proposal is not recommended for funding, we will notify the primary contact no later than September 2025. We will offer opportunities to discuss your proposal and why it was not recommended. The Health Fund Board of Directors has sole responsibility for all grant decisions.

E. MORE INFORMATION AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and seniors.

For additional information, please visit the [initiative page](#) on our website. For more information on our grantmaking, view our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). The following resources may be useful as you develop your proposal.

- a. [2024 Health Fund Year in Review](#)
- b. [2024 ECE Strategic Plan](#)
- c. [10 Cents a Meal](#)
- d. [The Built Environment Assessment Tool](#)
- b. [Michigan Food Security Council Final Report](#)
- c. [The ALICE Project](#)
- d. [Kids Count](#)
- e. [Michigan County Health Rankings](#)
- g. [Michigan Good Food Charter](#)
- i. [Michigan Model for Health](#)
- j. [Self Sufficiency Standard for Michigan](#)
- l. [Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community \(WSCC\) Model](#)
- m. [CDC Healthy Schools](#)
- n. [CDC Adolescent and School Health](#)
- o. [CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase Physical Activity in Communities](#)
- p. [Advancing Health Equity and Preventing Chronic Disease](#)