

NUTRITION & HEALTHY LIFESTYLES INITIATIVE

RFP OVERVIEW WEBINAR Q&A

APPLICATION & CONCEPT PAPER PROCESS

Q: Is the "Concept Paper" submitted to grants@mihealthfund.org or to the Fluxx portal, Health Fund's grants portal?

A: Concept papers should be submitted via email to grants@mihealthfund.org. Concept papers are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, March 20th.

Q: Is there a minimum \$ amount for grants?

A: \$50,000. More information is in the RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

Q: Are these 1-year awards, or is multi-year an option?

A: You may apply for a period of up to 2 years. Please note that the maximum grant amount would apply to the total grant duration and is not an annual amount.

Q: Do you prioritize new projects? Or can groups that have funding in the past also apply to build new programs?

A: No. Please look at our review criteria in the RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

Q: If we submit our concept paper prior to 3/20, can we get feedback?

A: Concept papers are due by the 3/20 deadline. Applicants can expect to receive feedback no later than Friday, April 11th.

Q: If we submit our concept paper and it isn't favorably received, will we still be able to submit a grant proposal for a different project?

A: We prefer that you submit a concept paper so that we can provide you with the necessary feedback on the project you are hoping to get funded.

Q: Will the feedback to the concept paper involve encouragement to "not apply," or should every concept paper submit a full proposal for a final decision about funding the project?

A: We will provide you feedback that includes whether your concept is competitive in this grant round or aligns with Health Fund goals. When we describe an application as "competitive" within the grant round, we are referring to how well it aligns with the grant's priorities and how it compares to other submissions, not financial profitability. A competitive application typically includes:

- Closely aligns with the grant's funding criteria.
- Demonstrates a clear impact and a feasible plan for implementation.
- Effectively communicates the need, approach, and expected outcomes.
- Stands out among other proposals due to innovation, readiness, or alignment with the Health Fund's goals.

PRIORITY AREAS & ELIGIBILITY

Q: While listening to the priority areas, I cannot see where breastfeeding/lactation support initiatives could fit in? Is it because this is not considered an innovative approach that was mentioned? Could you explain what constitutes something being innovative?

A: Breastfeeding/lactation support initiatives have been awarded under the Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles program in the past and are considered an approach to food access. However, proposals focused on breastfeeding and lactation support are better suited for our Maternal and Infant Health program.

Q: We are working on improving/strengthening food access through the Medicaid In Lieu of Services mechanism - which is currently at risk due to federal Medicaid cuts. Would working on this with the state be considered in scope?

A: Yes, if the impact is statewide. We no longer fund local implementation of Food is Medicine programming. Please refer to our RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

Q: If you are working on a collaborative network that addresses healthy food access, does the Health Fund consider this food systems priority or food access?

A: This could be considered both. We don't ask applicants to distinguish which priority area they are applying under. We simply outlined them to help guide applicants in understanding if their proposed idea fits this round of funding.

Q: Could you please clarify whether applications that do not involve direct collaboration with community partners, but instead focus on modeling hypothetical benefits of interventions, are eligible for consideration under this funding opportunity?

A: Please refer to the review criteria in the RFP. Community collaboration is an integral part of a successful proposal: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

Q: Would regional work in food security align with your priorities? I know you just mentioned state-wide work (vs. local) is preferred/acceptable.

A: Yes, regional work in food security aligns with the priorities outlined in the RFP.

Q: Are workforce training programs around nutrition allowed?

A: Yes. Submit a concept paper for additional feedback.

Q: Are you no longer supporting grants for improving health outcomes through nutrition via food pantries supplied by the doctor's office/hospital?

A: We continue to support improving the health outcomes for Michigan residents. At the same time, our investment in Food is Medicine have shifted towards statewide initiatives. We no longer support local implementation of Food is Medicine-type projects.

Q: Would you consider food as medicine initiatives if they were in partnership with the public school system or provided within the public schools?

A: We no longer support Food is Medicine implementation at the local level. Our investment in this area has shifted to initiatives that have a statewide impact.

Q: Would a mobile clinic bringing healthcare access to the homeless population in Lansing fit into any of your priorities?

A: No.

Q: Understanding that you're not funding 'food is medicine' proposals, would funding for a marginalized group who have no access to healthy and nutritious food and suffer from health ailments because of this lack of access be considered?

A: Yes. Please refer to the RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

BUDGET & ALLOWABLE COSTS

Q: Please provide an example of a programmatic cost. Infrastructure costs are not allowed. What would be an example of a cost MIHEF would view as “programmatic”?

A: Programmatic costs are expenses directly related to executing the proposed program/project. Examples include:

- Staffing costs (salary and fringe to cover the portion of staff time dedicated to executing the program)
- Materials and supplies used for program delivery
- Expenses to develop, design, print, or implement communications and marketing for the program
- Travel costs directly related to program execution
- Fees for consultants or contracted services, including funds going to partner organizations for their expertise and direct work on the program
- Expenses required to evaluate the program, including fees for an external evaluator

Q: Could a portion of the request be used to support an outside consultant to help with evaluation? We are very new with evaluation and could use some help with it.

A: Yes, consultative services could be included in contracted services/fees within a proposed budget.

Q: Please clarify is the total amount of the grant for direct costs or direct + indirect costs? If pursuing a \$500,000 grant, is that the direct plus indirect amount or just direct?

A: The maximum of \$500,000 includes direct AND indirect costs.

Q: Are one-time program-related capital costs allowed under Nutrition food access?

A: No. Capital costs are excluded from funding consideration.

Q: Our biggest expense for setting up a new project will be staffing cost, is this an allowable expense to request?

A: Yes, staffing costs for a new project may be supported (salary and fringe to cover the portion of staff time dedicated to executing the program).

Q: Is equipment allowed for infrastructure?

A: Please refer to the RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

Q: Would costs for purchasing and customizing software to support a program be an appropriate ask?

A: Yes, if supportive of the project.

Q: Can we include irrigation in the grant as a programmatic fund? We have a garden in our community that we want to increase food productivity for the community.

A: No. Irrigation is considered capital spending.

Q: Is covering the cost for a fundraiser for a non-profit eligible?

A: No, we would not support fundraising costs as a direct expense.

Q: What about produce seeds, compost, shovels, etc.?

A: Yes. At the same time, you would need to illustrate that these are necessary components to your program.

Q: Should we use the budget template for the full grant application or the budget accompanying the concept paper? Or do we include a shorter budget in the 2-page limits?

A: The budget template is intended to be used for the full application submitted through the grants portal. For the concept paper, please provide your estimated budget total, along with a very brief overview of the types of costs it would cover.

Q: If the work is for engineering services and the local agency is the applicant and MDOT is the agency doing the engineering, do we need to break out indirect rates? I'm concerned we will be over the 20-30% rate because of the state agency overhead rate.

A: Please email Tayo@mihealthfund.org.

Q: Hello, can your grant be used as a federal or state local match on planning/feasibility studies?

A: Yes.

Q: Changing a gravel walking path to asphalt—is that considered new construction?

A: This is considered new construction and not allowed.

Q: Would engineering and design for a multi-use pathway be eligible? The trail property was acquired through the DNR Trust Fund grant, but it is not yet designed or improved.

A: Yes.

FIDUCIARY & FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

Q: I'm part of a coalition that doesn't have non-profit status. However, one of our member orgs agreed to act as fiduciary for the grant. I'm wondering if the coalition submits the application or if the fiduciary submits the application.

A: When one organization is serving as a fiduciary to apply on behalf of another organization, the fiduciary organization is listed as the applicant. In the application, we collect information about both organizations, and contacts from both organizations can be added to ensure both can review and access the application. In terms of eligibility, note that the Health Fund makes grants to nonprofit organizations, federally recognized Tribes, local units of government, and the State of Michigan. Non-government applicants must be recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt organization.

Q: Does our fiduciary have to align with the grant/work we are doing?

A: No. If you are working with a fiduciary in order to apply for a grant, the fiduciary organization would need to meet our eligibility criteria (please look at our [FAQs](#)) But they are not required to be specifically aligned with your work.

Q: And does the fiduciary have to apply instead of us? I saw that in the application as well.

A: When one organization is serving as a fiduciary to apply on behalf of another organization, the fiduciary organization is listed as the applicant. In the application, we collect information about both organizations, and contacts from both organizations can be added to ensure both can review and access the application.

Q: I am not sure I understand the process of our fiduciary applying on our behalf when we are submitting a concept paper on behalf of the direct organization. Will the fiduciary be submitting our proposal then?

A: Please email us at grants@mihealthfund.org for more clarification.

REVIEW PROCESS & EVALUATION

Q: Are there any major changes in review processes or goals of the Health Fund in the last year or so that applicants should be aware of?

A: There are no major changes to the review process this year. The team will be going over our priority areas during this webinar, and the review criteria can be reviewed in the RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf>

Q: How should built environment projects develop evaluation models? Any advice?

A: Here is a link to CDC's Built Environment Assessment Tool and Manual: <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity/php/built-environment-assessment/index.html>

Q: What resources does the Health Fund recommend for understanding the current health challenges in specific Michigan communities?

A: Here is the County Health Rankings website with some information:
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/michigan?year=2024>.

Q: Are advocacy efforts allowable? There are policies that are needed for systems change.

A: The Health Fund supports educating decision-makers on health issues that align with Health Fund goals.

Q: Are community evaluations relating to nutrition and physical activity allowed as a fundable project? Would this fit under another grant opportunity?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a list of the questions for the Food & Nutrition Access priority area?

A: The full application can be accessed through Fluxx, but we've also provided a PDF document that provides our list of questions on our website: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-NHL-Application-Worksheet.pdf>.

If you are interested in the questions we posed while introducing the food systems and food access priority areas; they are not listed in the RFP but we can make them available alongside the FAQ when it's posted to the website after the webinar.

Questions to consider when applying for a FOOD ACCESS focused project:

Projects that aim to Develop Innovative Approaches to Combatting Diet-Related Chronic Diseases should address:

- How does the approach address the root causes of diet-related chronic disease?
- What makes the approach innovative?
- What evidence supports the proposed approach?

Enhancing Nutrition Security:

- How does the proposed approach improve access to and availability of nutritious foods?
- What strategies will you use to ensure long-term, sustainable nutrition security?
- How will you measure improvements in nutrition security?

Throughout Food Access related programming we encourage applicants to think about driving systemic change and scaling replicable models. As such, some questions to consider include:

- What specific policies, practices, or structures does your program aim to influence?
- How will you engage key partners, and furthermore how will you enable these key partners to work together for greater systemic change?
- How will you document and share best practices to facilitate replication?

Applications focused on the implementation of Food Is Medicine programming will not be competitive during this grant round.

Questions to consider when applying for a FOOD SYSTEMS focused project:

Governance & Economics of Food Production:

- What policies and economic structures impact food accessibility?

Sustainability & Food Waste:

- What solution do you have in mind to reduce food waste and improve environmental sustainability?

Food Production & Processing:

- How do we enhance community-based food production and processing systems?

Community & Youth Empowerment:

- How will you ensure community voices are included and create pathways for youth involvement in food systems?

Collaboration & Network Building:

- How will you leverage relationships and networks to improve food systems across Michigan?

It is also very important here to mention that funding excludes infrastructure-related costs or capital investments but supports programmatic initiatives that drive systemic change.

EXAMPLE PROJECTS & PREVIOUS AWARDS

Q: Will this video be available? Are there any sample projects that were previously awarded?

A: We'll be sending the recording in a follow-up message later this week. We have information about all of our previous grant-funded projects in our grant database:

<https://mihealthfund.org/grant-database> .

Q: Food literacy is listed as a priority under food access. What are some examples of food literacy programs that might be competitive?

A: We have information about all of our previous grant-funded projects in our grant database: <https://mihealthfund.org/grant-database> . When we describe an application as "competitive" within the grant round, we are referring to how well it aligns with the grant's priorities and how it compares to other submissions, not financial profitability. A competitive application typically:

- Closely aligns with the grant's funding criteria.
- Demonstrates a clear impact and a feasible plan for implementation.
- Effectively communicates the need, approach, and expected outcomes.
- Stands out among other proposals due to innovation, readiness, or alignment with the Health Fund's goals.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Are there locations/cities that you are focusing on in Michigan?

A: No. We are a statewide funder.

Q: Is the total amount being awarded \$35M? Sorry, missed the very first part.

A: That total is not specific to the Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles program. The Health Fund awards about \$35 million in grants annually across all programs.

Q: This is overwhelming, so in the future, it would be helpful to have more slides with all of the major questions/priorities posted.

A: Thank you for your feedback. More detailed information about our priority areas can be found in our RFP: <https://mihealthfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Health-Fund-2025-NHL-RFP.pdf> .

Q: If a community is undertaking a project which is broken out into five phases and two of the phases have been completed, what is the best way to integrate the previously completed work into a proposal?

A: Please email me at Tayo@mihealthfund.org.