

2025 CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

MICHIGAN HEALTH ENDOWMENT FUND

UPDATE, MAY 2025: *Please note, due to very high interest in Cycle 1, we’re adding an additional requirement. You must submit a concept paper or complete a concept call and receive feedback from our staff inviting you to apply before submitting a full proposal. We’re making this change to bring a faster resolution for concepts not aligned with our RFP priorities, with a goal to save applicants significant time spent developing full proposals that will not be competitive.*

The Health Fund’s Capacity Building grant program for organizations and collaboratives will be open through **July 22, 2025**. We will review proposals and announce award decisions in two cycles.

[Click here](#) to view our informational webinar, which provides more details and answers common questions about the RFP. Proposal consideration will be based on the following deadlines.

CYCLE 1	CYCLE 2
January 16, 2025 Concept papers (2 pages max) due at 5 p.m.	June 10, 2025 Concept papers (required — 2 pages max) due by email at 5 p.m.
February 20, 2025 Proposals due at 5 p.m.	July 22, 2025 Proposals due at 5 p.m.
May 2025 Awards announced	November 2025 Awards announced
June 1, 2025 Earliest start date for funded projects	December 1, 2025 Earliest start date for funded projects

A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Health Fund views capacity building as supporting nonprofits to identify, invest in, and carry out specific changes that they believe will help better achieve and sustain their missions. This grant program is unique among Health Fund initiatives because it invests in the core functions of organizations and their collaboratives, rather than specific project-related objectives.

The intent of this grant program is:

1. To assist health-focused, community-based organizations in becoming stronger, more effective institutions within their community, allowing them to spend more time and energy focused on their mission and collaborative efforts.
2. To increase or improve collaboration among providers, service agencies, the business community, and community-based organizations within a community to address health issues in a sustainable way.

Applicants can choose to apply for either an organizational or a collaborative capacity building grant through our Capacity Building program. Please review the descriptions below and select the appropriate application in the grant portal.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Organizational capacity grants are designed to increase health-focused, community-based organizations' effectiveness and sustainability across Michigan. We will prioritize funding for organizations that have an explicit focus on a health issue that aligns with the Health Fund's [priorities](#).

Capacity building grants will cover time-limited, one-time expenses to help an organization reach a specific operational goal. Requests for general operating support or unrestricted funds will not be considered.

Requests should focus on internal organizational capacity rather than coalition, community, or program development. Applicants should consider what internal work would be most essential to ensuring the organization's consistent, effective, and sustainable function within the community it serves. Some examples include:

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Financial management
- Streamlining operations
- Business or revenue development
- Merging resources or administrative functions between nonprofits

EVALUATION AND LEARNING

- Creating a learning organization
- Developing an organization-wide evaluation plan
- Data collection and management
- Interpreting and utilizing findings

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Staff or board training*
- Succession planning
- Initiatives to combat employee burnout

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

- Streamlining services through technology improvements
- IT infrastructure to support health and community information exchange

While the examples above are not exhaustive, these four categories represent the areas in which we have seen the most impactful organizational change through our grantmaking over the past three years.

**NOTE: When we review requests for training, we look for specific trainings that promote sustainability or add new expertise to an organization to help it serve its community better. General professional development requests will not be competitive.*

COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY

Collaborative capacity building grants will support community-based and community-led work that creates a sustainable foundation for cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination designed to spur progress on a key health issue(s). Projects should target a specific place such as a neighborhood, school(s), city, county, or region and/or a specific group within a defined

geography. These grants are intended to assist with startup costs for new cross-sector, collaborative efforts or to expand the scope and health impact of an existing collaborative.

The Health Fund seeks proposals that plan to work through cross-sector collaboration to address health issues aligned with the Health Fund's [priority areas](#), health disparities, or social determinants of health. **Proposals should focus on building the structure and capacity of the collaborative rather than implementing programming.**

Applicants are encouraged to use an existing framework or model for collaboration and to work with a neutral party, such as a consultant or facilitator, throughout the planning process.

The lead applicant or backbone organization must demonstrate the ability and capacity to lead a collaborative effort. Additionally, each member of the collaborative must be committed to providing either monetary or in-kind resources to the effort.

B. 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 one paid FTE (e.g., one full-time employee or two half-time employees)

EXCLUDED FROM FUNDING CONSIDERATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clinical research | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lobbying activities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loans | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuition costs and related fees |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health-related emergencies* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organizations that discriminate because of age, race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or gender. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capital projects and major equipment purchases, including vehicles | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Litigation | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing program operations and staffing | |

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

NOTE ON ORGANIZATION SIZE

Capacity-building grants are highly competitive, and we often prioritize organizations with limited financial resources where our funding can serve as a critical enabler of strategic growth. This approach allows us to equitably support initiatives where external funding is more critical to success. **Larger organizations or those with capacity to implement work through discretionary dollars are less likely to be funded through this initiative.**

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Grant requests may not exceed a **maximum budget of \$200,000. Grants can be up to 2 years in duration, but the total request is limited to \$200,000.**

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 operating budgets less than \$10 million may request indirect costs up to 30% of the total grant budget. Applicant organizations with 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. We expect the indirect cost line item to include indirect costs for all project partners.

C. APPLICATION PROCESS

STEP 1: CONCEPT PAPER/CONCEPT CALL, REQUIRED

We **require** you to register for a concept call or to submit a two-page concept paper for feedback. Concept papers that are competitive will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal. Non-competitive concept papers will not be invited to apply.

Please note this is a new step required in the process for Cycle 2 in 2025. Due to very high levels of interest in this program, this step allows applicants to refine their proposals to make them more competitive, while preventing others from investing significant time on applications that are not aligned with our funding priorities.

Whether submitting a written paper or presenting on a call, applicants should prepare to address the following:

- Organization or collaborative name and mission
- The primary health issues the organization or collaborative focuses on
- Project information
 - Title
 - Brief description
 - How the project will continue or have an impact after the grant period ends
- Estimated budget (no detailed breakdown required, just tell us what the budget will cover, and the total requested).

Use [this link](#) to register for a concept call or send a concept paper to grants@mihealthfund.org by 5:00 p.m. on the date listed in the chart above. **Please note that written concept papers longer than two pages will not be accepted.** Please do not send a paper in addition to scheduling a concept call: these are two unique options for engaging with our staff.

Before signing up for a concept call, please [read this document](#) that outlines what to expect and shares tips on making the most of this time. Calls are limited in availability and are meant as an accessible option to organizations, such as those with resource constraints.

STEP 2: APPLICATION, BY INVITATION ONLY

Applications must be submitted through the [Health Fund's grants portal](#) after confirmation of invitation by our staff. While the grantee portal does not have a word limit function, please limit the total narrative to the equivalent of 8 single-spaced pages using standard 12-point type and one-inch margins. Attachments do not count toward the 8-page limit.

D. MORE INFORMATION AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

HELPFUL HINTS

- **Make use of resources already at your disposal.** Check to see if the work you are proposing can be completed with support through [Catchafire](#) or one of our other capacity
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building resources before applying for a grant. [Click here](#) to learn more about these tools, including resources to [improve fundraising results](#), [engage client and community feedback](#), [upgrade technology](#), and more. Grant requests for projects that could be completed using these non-grantmaking resources are unlikely to be competitive.

- **Start with an organizational assessment.** Organizational capacity needs may appear to be clear, but an [organizational assessment](#) can help determine where to focus your capacity efforts first and make your proposal more competitive.
- **Clearly explain your project and the internal capacity issues it will address.** Limit the use of buzzwords and jargon throughout your proposal in favor of plain language that accurately describes your intended impact.
- **Anticipated organizational or collaborative improvements should be clear.** Describe how the funding will help your organization or collaborative reach a specific goal, and the impact it will ultimately have on the community you serve.
- **Select outcomes that will help you know how your grant is doing.** The outcomes you choose to measure should be related to your grant activities, should change over time, and can be qualitative or quantitative. For more information about our capacity building outcomes, [please click here](#).

For more tips and additional information:

- Visit the [Capacity Building program page](#).
- View our [FAQ](#).
- Visit the [grants portal](#) to view the application questions and required documents.
- Check out our list of [resources for health data](#) and other tools.
- Check out [our guide for capacity building outcome measures](#). If you have additional questions about how to select an outcome measure, please contact Veronica Marchese (veronica@mihealthfund.org).

If you have further questions, please contact us at grants@mihealthfund.org. **The Health Fund Board of Directors has sole responsibility for all grant decisions.**