

Request for Proposals

Health Equity Capacity Building Grants

Program Period of Funding: 6/1/2022 – 5/31/2023

Background

The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has been awarded a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Health Equity Grant to address the persistent and disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on populations at higher risk and populations that are underserved. The Vermont Department of Health acknowledges that racism is a public health crisis as demonstrated in our COVID 19 data. Therefore, priority will be given to efforts that are working to address this crisis. Additionally, Vermont will extend this opportunity to include:

- Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC)
- People living in rural areas/ internet deserts
- People experiencing homelessness or insecure housing
- Essential and frontline workers
- People with disabilities
- People experiencing substance use disorders
- People who are justice-involved
- Refugees/Immigrants/multilingual communities
- Migrant workers
- LGBTQIA+ people
- People experiencing poverty
- People experiencing mental illness

Community-based organizations (CBOs) will receive priority for these funds. Community-based organizations are knowledgeable and trusted entities. During COVID-19, these organizations have been essential partners in informing health department actions by identifying gaps in prevention and response efforts. They have provided outreach and education, testing, contact tracing, and vaccinations to their communities. Developing partnerships, supporting the development of new local resources and strategies to promote health amongst the impacted population, and providing ongoing coordination of efforts requires new resources for community-based organization to be effective partners. Non-CBOs are welcome to apply, however they must show partnership and engagement with their community and priority populations.

Purpose

These Health Equity Capacity Building grants are meant to enable organizations to continue their efforts and to build additional capacity for future work to address persistent health disparities and inequities. The scope of available funding aligns with the following CDC grant goals:

- Build community capacity to reach disproportionately affected populations with effective culturally and linguistically tailored programs and practices
- Build and implement partnerships to align public health, healthcare, housing, transportation, and social service actions to decrease risk for COVID-19

- Build community capacity with partners (e.g., community health workers, churches, transportation providers, social workers) to reach disproportionately affected populations with effective culturally and linguistically tailored programs and practices for testing, contact tracing, isolating, vaccination, and healthcare strategies
- Establish collaborations to disseminate scientifically accurate, culturally, and linguistically responsive information and facilitate access to health-related services

Examples of Eligible Activities

This funding is for one-time costs related to addressing COVID-19 and persistent health disparities. Examples of eligible activities can be found in **Appendix A**. Please see **Appendix B** for expenses that are **not allowable** through this grant opportunity.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

- Community-based organizations (CBOs) will receive priority for these funds. We define CBO as follows: an organization or entity which is composed or representative of a population at higher risk and engaged in creating desired improvements to this population's social health, well-being, and overall functioning.
- Non-CBOs are welcome to apply, however they must show partnership and engagement with their community and priority populations.
- We also welcome organizations to apply who will work with and sub-award to multiple smaller organizations

Considerations/Criteria for Selection of Awardees

- Value that this effort will bring to your community
- Likely impact on the organization's ability to maintain and/or build capacity for the organization or the community
- Degree to which the recipients are led by members of priority populations (see list above); This could include staff, members of the board of directors, and/or advisors

Amount and Source of Funding

The Health Equity Capacity Building Grants will be managed by the Department of Health. The Vermont Department of Health will make approximately **\$5,000,000** available for community-based organizations through this granting opportunity.

Funding and technical assistance will be offered in **Two Tracks**:

Track One Funding: The minimum level of funding per organization will be **\$25,000**. The average grant funding per organization will be **\$150,000**. This funding will be available on a **reimbursement basis only**. This track is for non-profit organizations with existing infrastructure to manage state and federal grants as follows:

- 1) certificates of insurance; (see Appendix E for details)
- 2) recently signed W-9; and
- 3) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number (note: The UEI replaces the DUNS number as of April 4, 2022).

An applicant without requirements 1-3 in place are welcome to apply with a fiscal agent that does have these requirements in place.

Track Two Technical Assistance: Organizations will be offered tailored technical assistance to prepare applications via Track One and/or other future funding opportunities. Organizations that complete Track Two may be eligible for Track One pending available funds.

- Assistance in establishing a partnership with an umbrella organization and/or fiscal agent with the necessary infrastructure and ability to issue smaller grants; and/or
- Assistance in capacity building to receive state and federal funding directly, for example:
 - finance management and accounting
 - obligations of subrecipients, and necessary administrative capacity
 - organizational/strategic planning
 - grant writing

Timeline & Process

Track One

April 1, 2022 VDH announces funding opportunity

- One application per organization.
- All grant payments will **be reimbursement only**. We are not able to provide upfront funding or make prospective payments.
- Time preparing the proposal can be included in the budget.
- Note that this is one-time funding.

April 12, 2022 There will be two Optional Question and Answer Sessions on this day. The first is at 9:00 am and the second is at 3:00 pm.

Please use this link to register for the 9:00am Session:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcldOiqpjlRgtL9EiHeS5ivjttXwALNAVy0>

Please use this link to register for the 3:00pm Session:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlVf-CgpzwwGN1N6yriMgKFzNCkK7w0lceK>

May 1, 2022 The initial deadline for applications is May 1, 2022, for funds that will be available on June 1, 2022. Submit your proposal online using the VCF grantmaking system Foundant by midnight on May 1, 2022.

- Proposals will be reviewed by a team from the State of Vermont, the VT Community Foundation and members of the Vermont Health Equity Advisory Council.

May 31, 2022 Initial awards for **Track One** finalized and announced.

Please be aware that finalization of the grant award takes an average of six weeks to process. The start date for the grant and work, however, can be May 31st, with reimbursement for documented activities upon signing.

May 31, 2023 All activities must be completed by May 31, 2023.

August 30, 2023 All final invoices and close out reports must be submitted by August 30, 2023.

Track Two:

June 1, 2022 Applications open for Technical Assistance track. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Organizations that complete Track Two may be eligible for Track One pending available funds.

Application Guidance

The application will be collected online using the Vermont Community Foundation's online grants manager (OGM). To help you prepare, a preview of the application questions may be viewed below.

To view and begin working on the application, login to the Online Grants Manager (OGM), which can be accessed at www.vermontcf.org/OGM. New users will be asked to set up an account. Visit the Online Grants Center page to register for a new account in the OGM, or [click here](#) to access your existing account. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Scott at kscott@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355, Extension 267.

We have designed the application to be as simple as possible while gathering the essential information. We have built in character limits to indicate that scale of the response we are seeking. We are committed to providing access, equal opportunity, and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities or for whom the English language is a barrier. To request reasonable accommodation in completing the application, please contact grants@vermontcf.org or call 802-388-3355 ext. 247.

Helpful hints for completing the application:

- Character limits include spaces.
- The size of text boxes can be adjusted by dragging on the lower right corner.
- Links to other websites can be added if information already exists elsewhere.
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page to access the "Save" and "Submit" buttons.
- The Online Grants Manager will log out after 90 minutes of inactivity, so save often.

- Create a PDF version of your application, including attachments, via the “Application Packet” button at the top of the page.

If you are viewing a PDF version of the application questions, please note that you must log on to your online account to access the online form to enter information at www.vermontcf.org/OGM. For assistance with opening a new account or gaining access to a previous account, contact Karen Scott at kscott@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355, Extension 267.

Details regarding the application process are available online here: <https://vermontcf.org/healthequity>

From there you can select Track One or Track two applications. There are two similar applications. To ensure your application is routed correctly, please click on the right track. If you are unsure which track to apply to, please contact Al Belluche at abelluche@vermontcf.org or Karen Scott at kscott@vermontcf.org.

The questions on the application are listed below:

1. Title of your Project/Activity

2. Project Concept Please use the following questions to share with us your vision and thoughts about this project.

a. What value will this project bring to your community?

b. How will this funding impact your organization’s ability to stabilize and build capacity for the organization or the community?

3. Please describe the leadership of your organization and how members of priority populations (see list above) are engaged in your leadership and setting organizational direction. This could include staff, members of the Board of Directors, and/or Advisors.

4. Partners: This is not required. Please list other partners that will be involved, if applicable.

5. Fiscal Agent: If you are working with a fiscal agent please list here. If not, please denote as “N/A.”

6. Amount Requested:

7. Project Budget

Attach a copy of your itemized project budget. Use the Appendix C: Budget Template to construct and report your budget. A budget justification should include a description for how the costs are estimated or determined. Grantees can include work with other community partners and sub-awardees.

8. Signed and current W9 Required Attachment

Hand signed by applicant organization, or fiscal sponsor, within the past four months: Name and contact information of the applicant organization as well as the Authorized Signatory (if different), including an email address for electronic signature.

9. Certificate(s) of Insurance: Required Attachment. Before beginning work on an executed Agreement with the Vermont Department of Health, the applicant must provide certificates of insurance to show minimum coverages are in effect. The certificates must be signed within the last four months. (See Appendix E for additional information about minimum required coverages).

10. UEI Number (Formerly DUNS number) Enter in field below.

The federal government has moved away from using the Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number as an entity identification number. As of April 4, 2022, all entities registered in SAM.gov will be assigned a Unique Entity ID (UEI). Current SAM.gov registrants have already been assigned their Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) and can view it within SAM.gov. **It is critical that grantees log in to SAM.gov and review their registration or establish a Unique Entity ID (UEI) before initiating a new agreement. The Unique Entity ID will be required for all new agreements beginning April 4, 2022.**

Appendix A: Eligible Activities The following outlines the expected focus of activities funded by the CDC Health Disparities CDC-RFA-OT21-2103 Work Plan Guidance – June 2021. All grant funding will be directed to supporting populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Please consider the outcomes, activity focus, racial and ethnic population, and population of focus in developing your proposal to the Vermont Department of Health.

Outcomes

- Reduced COVID-19-related health disparities
- Improved and increased testing and contact tracing
- Improved state health department capacity and services to prevent and control COVID-19
- Increased community and cross-sector partnerships
- Improved data collection, management, analysis, and reporting
- Expanded workforce and capacity to address COVID-19 health disparities
- Other infrastructure and/or capacity-related outcomes

Examples of Activities (this list is intended to give ideas; it is not exhaustive).

- Data gathering (quantitative and/or qualitative) among the populations most impacted by COVID and recommending improvement plans
- Community health worker, cultural liaison, and peer leader development
- Outreach, education, and promotional efforts in communities which are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Education and training for health, mental health, public health, and social service providers on culturally and linguistically appropriate engagement and service delivery
- Wellness and healing programming (non-clinical)
- Funding for staff to participate in outbreak response efforts (e.g., vaccination clinics, outbreak response efforts, education efforts)
- Documenting lessons learned and best practices identified through the COVID-19 pandemic emergency response, to be used as protocol for future emergency responses.
- Enhancing partnerships among state agencies and community-based organizations to support alignment in public health and outbreak response efforts.
- Planning for sustainability to increase capacity, sustain partnerships and continue the work started.

Racial and Ethnic Populations

- Alaska Native
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders

Populations of Focus

- People experiencing homelessness/insecure housing
- People living in congregate housing
- People who are justice involved
- People with disabilities
- People experiencing substance use disorders
- Refugees/Immigrants/Multilingual Persons
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
- People experiencing poverty
- People experiencing mental illness

Appendix B: Funding Restrictions per CDC

Restrictions that must be considered while planning the programs and writing the budget are:

- Recipients may not use funds for research that would require review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects' protection.
- Recipients may not use funds for clinical care.
- Recipients may use funds only for reasonable program purposes, including personnel, travel, supplies, and services.
- Other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, no funds may be used for:
 - publicity or propaganda purposes, for the preparation, distribution, or use of any material designed to support or defeat the enactment of legislation before any legislative body
 - the salary or expenses of any grant or contract recipient, or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations, regulation, administrative action, or Executive order proposed or pending before any legislative body
- See Additional Requirement (AR) 12 for detailed guidance on this prohibition and additional guidance on lobbying for CDC recipients.

Appendix C: Budget Template

GRANTEE NAME:	
LINE ITEM	BUDGET AMOUNT
PERSONNEL	
Salary	
Fringe (XX%)	
TOTAL PERSONNEL	
OPERATING	
Advertising/Marketing	
Materials/Supplies	
Printing	
Postage	
Telephone	
Training & Education	
Travel	
TOTAL OPERATING	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	
INDIRECT COSTS (<i>see notes below</i>)	
10% de minimis rate	
Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate	
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS	
TOTAL	
<p>Indirect Costs: Indirect (F&A) costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. The Uniform Guidance expressly requires pass-through entities (typically states and local governments, as well as some larger nonprofits) using federal funds and all federal departments/agencies to reimburse a nonprofit for the reasonable indirect costs it incurs. Nonprofits that have never had a federally approved indirect cost rate can elect either the <i>de minimis</i> rate of 10 percent of their modified total direct costs (MTDC) or negotiate a higher rate in accordance with the federal cost principles. Nonprofits that have already negotiated a federal indirect cost rate must be paid that amount.^[4] Generally, the mandate to pay indirect costs applies to most federal grant funds. The mandate does not apply in cases where a <i>federal</i> statute expressly caps the rate at which indirect costs can be reimbursed.</p>	

Appendix D: UEI/DUNS Number

The federal government has moved away from using the Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number as an entity identification number. As of April 4, 2022, all entities registered in SAM.gov will be assigned a Unique Entity ID (UEI). Current SAM.gov registrants have already been assigned their Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) and can view it within SAM.gov. It is critical that grantees log in to SAM.gov and review their registration or establish a Unique Entity ID (UEI) before initiating a new agreement. The Unique Entity ID will be required for all new agreements beginning April 4, 2022.

If your organization does not yet have a UEI number please visit the [U.S. General Services Administration's](#) information page for the UEI Update.

You will need the information listed below to obtain a UEI number:

- a. Name of organization
- b. Organization address
- c. Name of the chief executive officer (CEO) or organization owner
- d. Legal structure of the organization (e.g., corporation, partnership, proprietorship)
- e. Year the organization started
- f. Primary type of business
- g. Total number of employees (full and part-time)

Appendix E: Insurance Coverage Requirements

Insurance: Before commencing work on this Agreement the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverages are in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the State through the term of this Agreement. No warranty is made that the coverages and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.

- **Workers Compensation:** With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary to comply with Vermont law.
- **General Liability and Property Damage:** With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:
 - Premises - Operations

- Products and Completed Operations
- Personal Injury Liability
- Contractual Liability

The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

- \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence
 - \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
 - \$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
 - \$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury
- **Automotive Liability:** The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.
 - **Additional Insured.** The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.
 - **Notice of Cancellation or Change.** There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days written prior written notice to the State.

The State must be listed as additionally insured with general liability coverage.

The state is only able to reduce the amount of automotive coverage to \$300,000, if the \$500,000 cannot be met.

Use of A Fiscal Agent:

If your organization does not meet the administrative requirements, please identify a possible fiscal agent for your project in your application. Note that the fiscal agent is eligible to receive up to a 10% administration management fee. Include this fee in your budget proposal.