



Responsive Grants 2026 Call for Ideas: Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ is meant for quick reference, answering common questions that come up after reviewing the “2026 Call for Ideas” document. Please refer to the main document for all key details including funding amount range, eligibility/counties served, and what we will/won’t fund.

TIMELINE & KEY ACTIVITIES

March 2	2026 Call for Ideas opens!
March 12	Q&A webinar 10 a.m. to noon <i>Registration opens: 3/2/26</i> <i>Registration closes: 3/10/26</i>
April 8	2026 Call for Ideas closes at 4 p.m. <i>(This timing is a hard deadline)</i>
May 12	Stage 1 decision notifications made
May 18 – 22	Stage 2 process for selected organizations
June 1	Organizations notified of award recommendations
July	Board of Directors confirm award recommendations; notifications of grant awards made
August	Grant agreements finalized
September	Payments disbursed and grant begins!

ABOUT THE 2026 CALL FOR IDEAS

What types of initiatives are you looking to fund? Is there a preference for direct services or access/navigation efforts?

For 2026, proposals must align with at least one of our priority areas: sustaining community services, harm mitigation, or collective strength and security. We do not prioritize one service model over another (e.g., direct clinical services vs. navigation or access support).

Organizations selected for funding will:

- Have established, ongoing relationships with the communities they serve

- Approach their work with an intersectional lens, recognizing that overlapping identities often intensify barriers to health and opportunity
- Support communities that have historically experienced health inequities and are currently facing heightened risk and systemic harm. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Immigrant, migrant, refugee, rural, disabled, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), older adults, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQIA+) communities, and people impacted by poverty

If our proposal aligns with multiple priority areas, how should we address it?

If your proposal aligns with multiple priority areas, that is absolutely acceptable. We are looking to understand how your work aligns with one, two, or all three. What matters most is clearly describing how your work fits within the areas of focus.

What does “established organization(s)” mean for this year’s grant opportunity?

For the 2026 Call for Ideas, established organizations refers to those with ongoing programs or services, demonstrated experience/impact serving their community, and existing relationships with the populations they seek to support.

What does the Health Foundation mean by “meaningful co-design and inclusion with those most impacted?”

We are looking for evidence of how the community identified or prioritized the need and how the proposed solution was developed through meaningful co-design and inclusion with those most impacted. This includes describing your established relationships with the communities you serve and how community members are involved in shaping your work and making decisions.

Meaningful co-design reflects work that is community-informed—not just community-facing. This may include describing how community feedback (e.g., listening sessions, surveys, focus groups, or other engagement efforts) influenced your approach, how community partnerships reflect shared ownership, and how trust and credibility have been built over time.

Community engagement is a process. We recognize that organizations have varying levels of capacity and resources. What matters most is demonstrating authentic engagement and a clear connection between community input and the work being proposed.

COLLABORATION & STRUCTURE

Can multiple organizations apply together? Can coalitions apply?

Yes. Collaborative efforts are **strongly** encouraged and align with this year’s focus on collective strength, coordinated services, and shared approaches to advancing health equity.

Coalitions and partnerships may submit proposals; however, one organization must be identified as the lead organization and will serve as the fiscal and contractual entity and be responsible for submitting the proposal, receiving funds, and ensuring reporting requirements are met.

Will collaborative proposals be prioritized over single-organization proposals?

Collaborative proposals are not prioritized over single-organization proposals. However, we encourage applicants to highlight partnerships that already exist or to formalize existing collaborations, particularly those that demonstrate coordination and shared responsibility.

We recognize that many organizations are operating with limited capacity and may not be positioned to establish new partnerships at this time. We do not advocate for the creation of new partnerships solely for this funding opportunity.

Can an organization that is not a nonprofit use a fiscal sponsor?

Fiscal sponsorship is **not** applicable for the 2026 Call for Ideas. Organizations must hold their own 501(c)(3) or nonprofit status to apply this year. However, an entity without an individual 501(c)(3) or nonprofit status may be subcontracted within projects.

FUNDING PARAMETERS

Are requests for project support or general operating support preferred?

There is no preference given between project support and general operating support requests in our process. Organizations should select the option that best reflects the nature of the work they are seeking to sustain.

- **Project support** is appropriate if you are seeking funding for a defined initiative or specific body of work that aligns with this year's priorities.
- **General operating support** is appropriate if your organization's work aligns with health equity, and you are seeking flexible funding to stabilize and strengthen your overall organization, and the core services you provide.

If we request three years of funding in our proposal, are we less competitive than one-year requests? Are shorter-term requests more likely to be funded?

Requests may range up to three (3) years and from \$25,000–\$175,000 annually, and there is **no** preference for duration of support. Organizations should select the funding term that best reflects the nature and scope of the work they are seeking to provide. Funding decisions are based on overall alignment, clarity of need, and strength of the proposal -- not whether a request is single- or multi-year.

Can we apply for less than \$25K?

Funding requests for this opportunity range from \$25,000 to \$175,000 per year. If your project requires less than \$25,000 annually, we encourage you to consider whether this opportunity is the right fit, or if another funding source may better align with your needs.

Can we include indirect costs in our budget request?

Do not include indirect costs in your request. If awarded, indirect will be added separately.

Can funding be used to cover expenses incurred before the grant period begins?

No, funding cannot be used retroactively. Grants will begin once contracts are finalized with start dates between September – December 2026.

Can this funding be used to support advocacy and community organizing?

Yes — funding may support advocacy and community organizing efforts that advance health equity and strengthen communities.

This includes activities such as:

- Coalition building
- Organizing and outreach
- Efforts that reduce barriers to services or improve systems

However, **this funding cannot be used for lobbying or direct legislative advocacy** (e.g., urging support or opposition to specific legislation).

If you are unsure whether your advocacy activities qualify, please reach out for clarification.

How does an organization's financial position factor into decisions?

Funding decisions are based on alignment with this year's priorities and demonstrated community need—not on an organization's financial position alone. At the same time, organizations must demonstrate the financial and operational capacity to implement the proposed work and/or be in operation during the grant period.

FEDERAL CONTEXT & LANGUAGE

How has the Health Foundation responded to changes and potential impacts occurring at the federal level?

We recognize that this funding opportunity is taking place during a time of great change to nonprofit and funding landscapes. The Health Foundation will remain flexible and responsive and will make changes to review processes and criteria in real-time to ensure resources align with our health equity mission as well as critical community needs.

How should organizations approach the use of equity-based language in their proposals?

The Health Foundation encourages organizations to align your approach and language to follow your funding sources. The Health Foundation will not disadvantage a proposal that might use alternative language to express their racial and health equity efforts.

Will proposals be evaluated in alignment with federal policy changes?

No. Proposals are reviewed based on alignment with the Health Foundation's mission and this year's Call for Ideas priorities.

SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

How do I submit a proposal?

We receive your proposals through our grants management portal, Submittable. Once in Submittable, you'll also input your organization, contact, and other relevant information.

Detailed information on how to access the portal is provided below – we **strongly** encourage you to **set up your account** (or log-in) ahead of the submission deadline to avoid last-minute technical issues.

- Access our grants portal, Submittable, [here](#). On the bottom of the landing page, click ‘Submit’ for the 2026 Call for Ideas.
 - If you already have a Submittable account, log in using your credentials
 - If the account holder is no longer with your organization, you *will* need to create a new account
- Click [here](#) for instructions on how to register and how to submit your proposal
- Click [here](#) for instructions on how to add other members of your organization to your proposal
- For technical assistance or questions about Submittable, please contact Program Officer Rachel Betts at ideas@theqrhf.org

Responses to technical assistance and troubleshooting requests may take up to 48 hours.

Is there a way to revise our proposal after submission?

Once a proposal has been submitted through Submittable, you cannot edit your submission within the system. We encourage you to review your materials carefully before submitting. If you experience a technical issue or realize that something was submitted in error, please contact us as soon as possible at ideas@theqrhf.org. We understand that mistakes happen and will work with you when possible.

Can additional documentation be submitted with the proposal?

Organizations may upload up to three (3) supplemental documents. These materials should be concise, should support and clarify your proposal, and should **not replace required responses**. Examples may include letters of collaboration, memoranda of understanding, transition documentation, or other materials that demonstrate partnership, coordination, or organizational stability. Supplemental materials are **not** required.

What is the earliest start date for the proposed efforts?

Proposed project start dates must fall between **September 1 and December 1, 2026**. Funding recommendations will be presented to the Board of Directors for final approval in July. If approved, grant agreements are expected to be finalized in August, with funds anticipated to be distributed in September 2026.

Can I contact Health Foundation staff prior to submitting a proposal?

We are available to answer any questions and provide guidance on your idea and its potential alignment with our goals before submitting your proposal. We encourage you by sending an email to ideas@theqrhf.org or contact a member of the Responsive Grants team (please allow up to 48 hours for a response):

- Rachel Betts, Program Officer (585) 258-1730
- Hannah Castelli, Program Officer (585) 258-1703
- Monica Brown, Senior Program Officer (585) 258-1710

REVIEW PROCESS & DECISIONS

Who reviews grant proposals?

Grant proposals are reviewed by a team of Health Foundation staff and a group of external reviewers. External reviewers are selected for their knowledge of and familiarity with nonprofit work across our nine-county region.

Following this review process, funding recommendations are presented to the Board of Directors' Program Committee for consideration and then to the full board for final approval.

What happens if a proposal is NOT selected to move forward for funding recommendation?

We recognize the time and care required to submit a proposal. Due to limited funding and significant community need, not all proposals can be funded. A proposal not being selected does not necessarily reflect the quality of the work or a lack of alignment with our mission. In many cases, decisions are influenced by the need to balance investments across multiple counties, populations, and priority areas, while stewarding limited resources. Given this, we will not be offering feedback calls this year. However, we encourage organizations to stay connected and explore future funding opportunities as priorities and circumstances continue to evolve.

We also maintain a regularly updated [webpage](#) of regional and nationwide funding opportunities on our website to help connect organizations with additional sources of support beyond the Health Foundation.