



## Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Community Food Coalition Grantee Assistance Partner

### Purpose

The [Colorado Health Foundation](#) (CHF) is seeking proposals from those interested in partnering with CHF to provide: 1) coalition development, 2) implementation planning technical assistance, and 3) evaluation capacity-building to grantees participating in our “Improving Community Food Systems” funding opportunity. The grantee assistance partner will support 10-15 coalitions located throughout Colorado with the development of plans to strengthen local and regional food systems in order to increase access to affordable and nutritious food for those with the highest risk of food insecurity. While our preference is to contract with a single grantee assistance partner to perform the full scope of work (either alone or with partners), we will accept proposals for any of the aforementioned assistance categories. The contract award will cover a 12-month period (from August 2019 through July 2020). This project has a non-negotiable start date of August 15, 2019.

The total budget for this work is not to exceed \$250,000, including all fees and expenses. This represents the first phase of the overall initiative. We anticipate a second phase focused on implementation of the plans, which will likely include continued technical assistance and evaluation support for coalitions. However, any and all second phase consulting contracts will be contingent on phase one outcomes, performance, and the identified needs of the grantees and CHF for this next evolution of the work. Serving as the grantee assistance partner in phase one does not guarantee that this partnership would be continued into phase two.

### Overview

The Colorado Health Foundation (CHF) believes that the opportunity for health is a human right. CHF’s work is grounded in serving Coloradans who are low income and historically have had less power or privilege, putting the creation of health equity at the center of everything we do, and being informed by the community and those we exist to serve.

Our approach aims to strengthen bodies, minds, and communities in the fight against unfair and avoidable differences in health. Under our [Strengthen Community Health](#) focus area, we are partnering with communities to help them identify and tackle health-related challenges. One of our priority areas focuses on food access and security, including investments in collaborative community-level efforts to reduce food insecurity. Our focus is on supporting communities to connect existing assets in more effective ways, to develop relationships, and to more intentionally focus on equity. No one understands the unique challenges that a community faces better than the individuals that live in them. We want to partner with communities and elevate and support their expertise on how to most effectively solve the issues they are facing.

### Project Description

In June 2019, CHF is opening our first funding opportunity around these collaborative community-level efforts. We will be accepting proposals for nine-month grants of up to \$85,000 for new or existing coalitions of partners in order to support them in developing implementation plans that address one or both of the following [Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger goals](#):

- **Goal 2:** Increase the number of Coloradans who can access affordable, nutritious food in their communities
- **Goal 3:** Increase the number of Coloradans who can access food assistance and nutritious food through community-based organizations

CHF anticipates awarding 10-15 planning grants as a result of this funding opportunity. The nine-month planning process is designed to help grantees establish or strengthen collaboration among a set of partners and develop a community-driven or community-informed implementation plan that focuses on improving community food systems to increase access to affordable and nutritious food for those with the highest risk of food insecurity. CHF's aim is to better align and coordinate existing assets and build the capacity of local-level partnerships – not to create new programming or infrastructure. Grantees who develop strong implementation plans may be eligible to apply for two years of implementation funding. Implementation grants are not guaranteed and will involve a separate, competitive process.

Planning grants are designed to support coalitions to:

- Address either or both Blueprint goals
- Focus on addressing the needs of communities in our state with the highest risk of food insecurity and a high percentage of low-income residents, including rural areas and communities of color
- Focus on a specific neighborhood, city, or region in Colorado
- Include a minimum of four partners representing various segments of the community food system (e.g. food policy councils, food providers and feeding sites, public health/nutrition providers, educational institutions and agriculture extensions, government agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, food recovery organizations, food chain worker/labor organizations/associations/unions and agriculture organizations)
- Ensure that individuals with the lived experience of food insecurity are active participants in the coalition, the assessment of the food environment, and prioritization of strategies

At the end of the nine-month planning grant period, grantees will be expected to have:

1. A coalition that is prepared to implement their identified strategies
2. An implementation plan that includes, at a minimum:
  - Assessment of the food environment
  - Selected goal(s) and associated strategies from the Blueprint that will be the focus of the coalition
  - Timeline of activities for each selected strategy
  - A description of coalition partners, their roles and commitments, including how those most impacted by food insecurity will be engaged throughout the project
  - Learning questions, and assessment of what evidence<sup>1</sup> will be needed to understand and track progress

As part of this project, CHF would like to provide 10-15 grantees access to a variety of technical assistance, tailored to their needs and wants. This includes coalition development, implementation planning technical

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation centers equity in its evaluation work, drawing on the principles and practices described as part of the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#).

assistance, and evaluation capacity-building, to support their efforts during the planning process and better prepare them for potential implementation.

As we progress through this planning period, we will be engaging with grantees to understand what assistance might be most useful to them in the implementation phase. CHF will use this information to decide what supports to offer and issue an RFQ for those services once they are known.

## Proposed Scope of Work and Key Deliverables

We are seeking a grantee assistance partner who can provide the following to the 10-15 coalitions during this 9-month planning phase: 1) coalition development support, 2) implementation planning technical assistance, and 3) evaluation capacity building. We anticipate that grantees will require assistance tailored to their level of need and specific issues. Grantees will be located throughout the state of Colorado.

As previously mentioned, our preference is to contract with a single grantee assistance partner to perform the full scope of work (either alone or with partners); however, we will accept proposals for any of three assistance categories. Selected partner(s) will be expected to assess the individual needs of each coalition and tailor the design and delivery of assistance to meet those needs – offering a menu of services from which the coalitions can select based on identified needs.

Below are the three assistance categories for which we are seeking a partner – or partners depending upon applicant expertise and skill sets. We will make our decision based on the ability of those who apply to provide a robust set services to grantees.

### Coalition Development Support

Support grantees with developing inclusive and equitable processes for:

- Structuring collaborative coalitions
- Engaging the community
- Relationship building between actors in the community (e.g., organizations, residents)
- Ensuring opportunities for those with lived experience of food insecurity to be active participants in informing, or making decisions about, the work

### Implementation Planning Technical Assistance

Support grantees with:

- Developing an implementation plan template that provides a roadmap for coalitions to improve and strengthen local/regional food systems
- Providing proactive and reactive training, coaching, and other capacity building support to 10-15 coalitions with developing their implementation plans (e.g., facilitation support; assessing and addressing gaps, barriers, and needs; problem solving; sharing relevant research, tools, and best practices; planning for sustainability; etc.)
- Designing and delivering web-based and/or telephonic peer-to-peer learning opportunities to connect grantees and facilitate the sharing of ideas, promising practices, and lessons learned (e.g., affinity groups, webinars, convenings, etc.)

### Evaluation Around Implementation Planning

Support grantees with:

- Assessing local/regional food environments and systems

- Mapping local/regional food networks
- Completing baseline data collection
- Considering equity in every facet of how evaluation is approached, and what is considered credible evidence<sup>2</sup>
- Developing learning plans that include evaluation questions and a description of what evidence will be needed to understand and track progress

Additionally, the selected partner or partners will meet regularly with CHF staff to provide status updates and will consult with CHF staff on grant application review, as needed.

## Budget

The total budget for this work is not to exceed \$250,000, including all fees and expenses. Our initial estimates are that the coalition development and implementation planning technical assistance components combined will require 30 to 50 total hours of support for each coalition over the nine-month grant term. For the evaluation capacity-building component, we estimate that each coalition may require 20 to 40 hours of support over the nine-month grant term. These estimates are highly speculative given the early nature of this work, and we would expect to work with the grantee assistance partner to adjust as needed to best support grantees. Project management and travel expenses would be additional costs that should be budgeted separately.

At the RFQ phase, we do not expect partners to provide detailed proposals and budgets, but we share the maximum budget to ensure that we have a mutual understanding of the potential scope of the project. Cost effectiveness is considered in review of applications, and partners are expected to revise the budget appropriately if the needs of the evaluation turn out to be less than the maximum anticipated.

## Timeline

A few key timelines include:

- Planning grant applications will be submitted in June 2019
- Planning grants will be awarded in September 2019
- Planning grants will end in June 2020
- Implementation phase planning will occur June-August 2020

## Reporting Structure

The coalition development, technical, and evaluation grantee assistance partner(s) will report to a staff person in the Department of Philanthropy at CHF. However, the partner(s) will need to collaborate closely with other individuals, including CHF learning & evaluation staff, grantees who receive funding, other consultants who may be engaged in the project, and the [Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger program office](#).

## Responding to the Request for Qualifications

Our preference is to contract with a single grantee assistance partner to perform the full scope of work (either alone or with partners). However, given the nature of this engagement, we may contract with more than one partner depending on specific areas of expertise. Since potential partners may apply for any or all of the three

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<sup>2</sup> The Foundation is deeply informed by the work of the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#) and expects partner evaluators to commit to exploring how to embed equity in the work they do with grantees, as well as in the recommendations they make to grantees about potential evaluation approaches.

categories below (coalition development assistance, technical assistance, evaluation capacity-building), we reserve the right to discuss with applicants situations where we may be interested in accepting some, but not all, of the services they offer.

All interested firms, groups, or individuals must demonstrate expertise in the following:

- a) Be able to explicitly incorporate considerations about equity into every component of their approach and thinking about the projects
- b) Expertise engaging with diverse groups and individuals (i.e., those with low-income who may have historically had less power or privilege, such as people of color), as well as with urban and rural communities (preferably with knowledge of Colorado)
- c) Be willing to work closely with CHF and grantees on work that will require agility and flexibility
- d) Strong project management skills
- e) Excellent customer service skills

Additionally, unique expertise is required for each category of assistance. Specifically:

#### Coalition Development Support

- Expertise building collaborative, diverse, and inclusive coalitions
- Significant experience with equitable and meaningful community engagement

#### Implementation Planning Technical Assistance

- Strong facilitation experience (including how to ensure goals for the meeting are met, how to engage participants and move them toward meeting goals, etc.)
- Understanding of local and regional food systems and inequities within those systems

#### Evaluation Capacity-Building

- Significant experience supporting communities and/or coalitions with evaluation activities (e.g., data collection, systems mapping, learning question development, etc.)
- Systems thinking expertise, preferably including systems mapping (e.g., causal loop mapping, actor mapping)
- Expertise around equitable evaluation practices<sup>3</sup>, such as culturally responsive evaluation, community participatory, etc.

If you are a firm, group or individual and are interested in being considered for this engagement, please submit a **proposal response by midnight (Mountain Time) on Friday, June 14** that is clearly structured into the following sections:

- 1) **Organizational Overview:** A summary description of who your organization is, what you do, and what compels you to do the work that you do. Help us learn about who you are! (no more than 1 page)
- 2) **Evidence of Expertise:** Please include two to three descriptions of past projects that involved similar skills to what is needed here, and which speak to the relevant requirements listed above. (no more than 2 pages)

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<sup>3</sup> The Foundation centers equity in its evaluation work, drawing on the principles and practices described as part of the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#). Evaluation partners are expected to put this thinking into practice in their own work, including concepts around what counts as credible evidence (e.g., valuing qualitative methods, appreciation of indigenous methods and ways of knowing).

- 3) **Team Member Qualifications:** Tell us about the team you'd staff for this project (project lead, team members, subcontracted partners, external experts, etc.). We will assume that the team members you propose will be available for the project if your organization is selected. (no more than 2 pages)
- 4) **Approach:** Provide us with a brief narrative (no more than 4 pages) that shares how you would approach this project in partnership with CHF and the grantees, and with an explicit focus on equity in process and outcomes. If your proposal is not responding to the full scope of work, please be explicit about which of the three assistance categories you are applying for. If your organization is not familiar with the context of Colorado, please be explicit about how you would develop that understanding.
- 5) **Budget:** Please provide some general ideas about how you would use your time and resources for this project. You do not need to provide a detailed or line-item budget, but please tell us about the types of fees and expenses you anticipate being a part of the project. Please indicate the hourly rate of the types of individuals you would staff on this project, and the total hours you would anticipate spending on each component the project. This is designed to be an estimate only, and subject to change based on contracting to complete specific work agreed upon with CHF. (Cost effectiveness will be considered in proposal review.)
- 6) **Legal Status:** Your organization's legal status (a 501 C3 or a for-profit organization).
- 7) **References:** Please provide three references who are very knowledgeable about work you have done which would be relevant to this project (please include a description of working relationship and contact information).
- 8) **Primary Contact:** Include the name, title, phone number and e-mail address for the primary point of contact for communication regarding this proposal.

CHF and its partners will keep confidential any materials sent to us and will not use these in any way other than for this process. Please limit application length to no more than nine pages excluding budget, references, writing samples, and any resumes (if you choose to include these).

## How to Apply

The purpose of the RFQ is to provide an opportunity for us to learn about interested applicants, and for them to learn about us. To this end, the RFQ includes the following phases.

<b>Proposal Deadline:</b>	<b>By midnight (Mountain Time) on Friday, June 14</b>
<b>Interview of selected applicants (estimated):</b>	<b>June 24, 2019 – July 12, 2019</b>
<b>Award Announcement:</b>	<b>August 1, 2019*</b>

\*This project has a non-negotiable start date of August 15, 2019.

Please send proposal and supporting documentation electronically in Microsoft Word or PDF format to Dara Hesse, Senior Program Officer, [dhesssee@coloradohealth.org](mailto:dhesssee@coloradohealth.org), (303) 953-3641. You are also welcome to reach out with any questions about the RFQ or process.

## Terms and Conditions

### *Application Rejection*

The Colorado Health Foundation reserves the right to reject any or all applications and to waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received and to accept any portion of an application or all items proposed if deemed in the best interest of the Foundation.

### *Modification or Withdrawal of Applications*

Applications may be modified or withdrawn prior to the established deadline.

### *Expenses*

The Colorado Health Foundation is not liable for the costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFQ.

### *Review*

The review will identify the applications that most effectively meet the requirements of this RFQ. The work will be offered to the contractor whose application conforming to the RFQ will be most advantageous to the Colorado Health Foundation, price and other factors considered.