

MEHAF

MAINE HEALTH ACCESS FOUNDATION

2022 COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE GRANTS PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) – GUIDELINES

Important Dates & Deadlines:

- **RFP Posted:** Monday, May 9
- **Informational Sessions via Zoom:** To register, please email [Holly Irish](#). A recording will be available following the sessions.
 - Thursday, May 12 – 10:30-11:30 and 1:00-2:00
 - Friday, May 13 – 9:00-10:00
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted:** Tuesday, May 17
- **Letter of Inquiry (LOI) due:** **Monday, June 13 at 4:00 pm**
- **Invitations for full proposal:** Wednesday, July 27
- **Informational Sessions for invited applicants:** August 8 & 9
- **FAQs for full proposal posted:** Monday, August 15
- **Full proposal (invited applicants) due:** **Tuesday, September 13 at 4:00 pm**
- **Applicants notified of award status:** Thursday, November 10
- **Grant Period:** December 1, 2022 – November 30, 2023 or 2024

Funding Available:

- Total grant funding: approximately **\$500,000**.
- Individual grants: one-year planning grants up to **\$30,000**, or one- or two-year implementation grants up to **\$50,000** per year.

Key Staff Contacts:

- **For program questions and to discuss proposal ideas:** [Frank Martinez Nocito](#), Program Officer, (207) 620-8266, ext. 116.
- **For technical questions about the online application or the MeHAF grants portal:** [Holly Irish](#), Grants Manager, (207) 620-8266, ext. 115.

Please Note:

LOIs and full proposals must be **submitted using an online application** on the [MeHAF grants portal](#) by **4:00 pm** on the due date. If you are having problems with the online application, need access to a computer, or are in need of help with your submission, please contact [Holly Irish](#) **at least two days before the due date**.

We see ourselves not as just a funder, but also part of the health and nonprofit communities in Maine. We value our relationships with organizations and strive to build relationships with applicants whether they are awarded funds or not. We encourage you to reach out with any questions you may have throughout the process and use us as a resource. If you have questions at any point in the grant process, please do not hesitate to contact Program Officer [Frank Martinez Nocito](#) or another member of the [MeHAF staff](#).

HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

The following terms appear in this RFP and are defined here to help applicants understand how MeHAF is using them. When these terms are used, they will be *italicized*, so you may refer back to the definitions as necessary.

1. **Community** is a group that has a shared identity, a common cause, common geographic location, similar health and health access needs, or other shared experiences or characteristics. Some examples are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, refugees and migrants, LGBTQ+, older people, people experiencing homelessness, people experiencing incarceration, people with low incomes, and people with disabilities.
2. **Community(ies) of focus** is the specific population that will be at the center of the work you are proposing. MeHAF expects members of this *community* to have meaningful involvement (leadership and decision-making power) at each stage of the process from planning/project conception to the end of the grant period. This includes identifying the issue or opportunity, designing potential solutions, and determining how well the project met the identified need(s).
3. **Community engagement** is intentional, genuine, and includes ongoing interactions with and involvement of the *community(ies) of focus* in most or all levels of the proposed planning or project. Some examples include deliberate dialogue, working collaboratively, and co-designed assessment and planning.
4. **Health equity** means that all people have what they need to lead healthy, productive, and purposeful lives. This includes, but is not limited to, access to quality, affordable health care. The goal is to address health disparities created by those in power, which have systemically advantaged some groups and disadvantaged others both historically and currently. Achieving health equity requires a commitment to examine and address barriers across services, systems, and sectors and begin to compensate for the impact of cumulative disadvantages to achieve fair and just health outcomes for all.
5. **Implementation grants** support the implementation of a project that has a clear and specific action plan already developed with existing leadership from the *community(ies) of focus*, and that is ready to move forward.
6. **Planning grants** support a collaborative process of exploring and developing ideas into a plan of action or project concept that could be implemented.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Community Responsive Grants (CRG) program is to provide funding for communities to plan or implement projects that align with one or more of [MeHAF's Four Goal Areas](#): equitable access, systems change, better health for specific groups, and shared leadership (see **Appendix A**). The CRG program is intended to respond to *community* needs, address emerging opportunities, test innovative approaches or new ideas, or implement programs informed by the experiences of communities on how to address barriers to achieving *health equity*.

The CRG program aligns with [MeHAF’s mission and values](#), and grew out of the recognition that those closest to a given problem often have the best ideas about potential solutions. Therefore, MeHAF’s goal is that these grants will focus on improving *health equity* and that the communities facing inequities in health access or outcomes will lead the project being proposed and will play a central role in developing and implementing the solutions proposed. Funded projects will focus on changing policies, practices, and perceptions that create barriers to health care and good health, and must be organized such that the communities who face the greatest barriers have a leadership role in creating the solutions that address their needs.

Applicants may apply for either a one-year *planning grant* of **up to \$30,000** or an *implementation grant* for one or two years at **up to \$50,000 per year**.

Planning versus Implementation Grants

Planning Grant	Implementation Grant
<i>Stage of Development:</i> Your work on the issue or need is just beginning and requires exploration to fully understand it and flesh out what you will do to respond in greater detail.	<i>Stage of Development:</i> A degree of groundwork for your project has already been completed – you understand the problem your project will be trying to solve, based on what you have heard from the community, and have a good idea of how you will go about addressing it.
<i>Relationships:</i> A significant part of your work will be establishing relationships with other people or organizations that will help you to accomplish the work you want to do.	<i>Relationships:</i> You have the important relationships already in place that will be essential to the success of the work you are proposing.
<i>Readiness:</i> You are at the stage of needing to gather more information from the community or others that will be important to informing how you move forward.	<i>Readiness:</i> You have a clear and specific plan of action that you and your partners are ready to move forward.
<i>Expected Results:</i> The expected outcome of your work may be described as having learned more about an issue, problem or possible strategy that will support future action. For example, what you will have to show for the work you have done may include things like an action plan, a report or paper that shares what you have learned and makes recommendations, a roadmap for moving forward, etc.	<i>Expected Results:</i> You have a clear idea of the specific changes that will make a difference for the community your project seeks to serve that will result from your work, if successful. For example, what you will have to show for your work may include things like quantitative or qualitative data that illustrates the impact of a change, changes to policies, practices and/or perceptions that have been made in existing systems that the community identified as problematic, etc.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

Any applicant for this grant program must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit; a local, state, or government entity; or an educational institution. If your community would like to apply but your organization is not eligible, consider looking for a fiscal sponsor – an organization that meets the eligibility criteria and is connected to your community and willing to serve in this role. If you have not previously worked with a fiscal sponsor to apply for a MeHAF grant, please contact [Frank Martinez Nocito](#) for guidance on the process prior to starting an LOI. If you will be working with a fiscal sponsor, that organization must be the grant applicant.

Eligible organizations may submit only one application for CRG (either a planning or implementation proposal). Current MeHAF grantees with grants under other programs **are** eligible to apply for a CRG. Separate administrative units of large organizations (e.g., different departments of a larger health system) may each submit individual proposals. Potential applicants with any questions regarding organizational eligibility should contact [Holly Irish](#) for clarification before starting a LOI.

PROGRAM CRITERIA & APPLICATION RATING

CRG proposals are evaluated using the following criteria:

- 1) Aligns with one or more of MeHAF's Four Goal Areas (See **Appendix A**).
- 2) Responds to a *community*-defined need or opportunity with a *community*-defined solution.
- 3) Improves *health equity* by addressing policies, practices and/or perceptions that create disproportionate barriers to health for some groups of people relative to others.
- 4) Describes meaningful *community engagement* and includes community leadership and decision-making throughout the project.
- 5) Defines what success will look like for the project and demonstrates that both the applicant and the *community(ies) of focus* have participated in defining success.

Rating

In both the LOI and full proposal phases, responses to the application questions will be evaluated on how closely they align with each of the five CRG program criteria (above), using this rating scale (1–4):

- 1 – Does not align with the criteria.
- 2 – Minimally aligns with the criteria.
- 3 – Somewhat aligns with the criteria.
- 4 – Strongly aligns with the criteria.

HOW TO APPLY & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Step 1: Letter of Inquiry

The Letter of Inquiry (LOI) must be submitted through the MeHAF grants portal. The online application includes the following required sections:

- Organization's tax status
- Organization's mission and/or vision statement (up to 500 characters)
- Project title
- *Community(ies) of focus* (up to 300 characters)
- Alignment with MeHAF's 4 Goal Areas (check box)
- Brief project description (up to 500 characters)
- Grant request amounts (annual amount, if requesting a 2-year grant, and total)
- Project start and end dates
- Primary contact's name, title, email and phone number
- Geographic area, cities and towns served (check box)
- Race and ethnicity of *communities* to be served under this proposal (check box)
- Verify compliance with MeHAF's Nondiscrimination Policy

A. LOI Narrative Questions

At the LOI stage, both *planning grant* and *implementation grant* applicants are asked to briefly address the same two narrative questions. Please provide succinct, focused, high-level responses (i.e., the highlights). Since you will have limited space to respond to the LOI questions, and you have already included your mission and/or vision statements in your application (see above), there is no need to restate them. Please focus your responses on your project and how it meets the five program criteria (see bottom of page 2).

Each question has a **2,000-character limit total** (including spaces - a maximum, not an expectation).

Question 1: What is your proposed planning process/project? How it will address *health equity* for the *community(ies) of focus*?

Question 2: How has the *community(ies) of focus* been involved in defining the need, the solution, and what success will look like? What leadership and decision-making power do they have in the proposed work?

In addition, the LOI must include the following:

B. Preliminary Budget Narrative

In a few sentences, please describe how you plan to use the funds being requested from MeHAF (not the individual budget line amounts).

C. Other Attachments

1. For applicants applying as a fiscal sponsor for another organization, submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the fiscal sponsor relationship.
2. If not already submitted in the last 12 months, submit a current Board list/Tribal Council list (if not listed on organization's website).

To upload a document as an attachment, go to the MeHAF grants portal and follow the instructions: click on "Upload a file", select the appropriate document from your computer, and click on "Open".

Step 2: Full Proposal (For invited applicants, following the review of the LOIs.)

A. Full Proposal Narrative Questions

At the full proposal stage, you will be able to add details to your original LOI responses. A set of prompts to guide your expanded responses are included in the full proposal questions below. MeHAF will put the text of your LOI responses into the full proposal template in the MeHAF grants portal. At this stage, you are also asked to respond to a third question, which is different depending on whether the application is for a *planning* or an *implementation grant*.

Question 1: What is your proposed planning process/project? To fully address the program criteria, please be sure to describe the need or opportunity your work will address, the actions you will take in response to that need, and how this work will improve *health equity* for the *community(ies) of focus* by addressing policies, practices and/or perceptions that create disproportionate barriers to health.

Question 2: What role has the *community(ies) of focus* played and will they play in the planning process/project? To fully address the program criteria, please describe the level of *community engagement* in determining that the issue you will address is an important priority, the role the *community(ies) of focus* played and will play in determining the actions you will take, and how they will be involved in leadership and decision-making roles throughout your work, including in defining and measuring success.

Question 3 (planning proposals only): What key things do you hope to learn through your proposed planning process that will lead to the next phase of this work?

OR

Question 3 (implementation proposals only): What will be different for the *community(ies) of focus* as a result of implementing this proposed project?

Each question has a **6,000-character limit total** (including spaces). Keep in mind that this is a maximum. You are not required to use the full character limit.

In addition, the full proposal must include the following:

B. Budget and Budget Narrative

Submit a budget that details the income and expenses for the proposed work. If the application is for a two-year grant, a detailed budget is requested for the first year only. If funded, you will be asked to develop and submit a second-year budget near the end of your first grant year. Please complete the [MeHAF budget form](#) and brief [budget narrative](#), using the templates provided, to explain how your organization will use the grant and other funds to carry out the proposed activities.

Include the following details about how the funds will be used:

1. Amount for applicant organization;
2. Amount for partners or participants;
3. Will you have accessibility expenses (such as interpretation services)? If so, for what? See **Appendix C** for information about MeHAF's Accessibility Expense Policy; and
4. Although matching funds are not required in this program, be sure to include matching or in-kind support from the applicant, partner organizations or other funding sources in the appropriate columns, if applicable. This helps reviewers understand the resources available for the full scope of a project if the MeHAF grant is part of a larger whole.

Submit the **completed budget form and budget narrative** as attachments, by going to the MeHAF grants portal and following the instructions: click on "Upload a file", select the appropriate document from your computer, and then click on "Open".

Reviewers will consider how the budget aligns with the scope of the work described. *Planning grants* can be **up to \$30,000**. One- or two-year *implementation grants* can be **up to \$50,000 per year**. Funds requested must be proportionate with the work to be completed.

- **Matching Funds Requirement:** There is no matching funds requirement for this grant program.
- **Indirect Costs:** MeHAF encourages applicants to budget for indirect costs of up to 20% of the requested grant amount. Please note that both direct and indirect costs must be included in the total amount requested, and taken together, may not exceed the maximum amounts noted above by grant type. See **Appendix B** for more information on indirect costs.
- **Accessibility Expenses:** MeHAF may provide funds in addition to the maximum grant amount to offset accessibility-related expenses with the goal of reducing barriers to equitable participation in the project. Please note that requests for accessibility-related expenses may not exceed 20% of the total grant amount requested. See **Appendix C** for more information about our Accessibility Expense Policy.

C. Other Attachments

If you have not already submitted the following items in the past 12 months, they must be included with your application.

1. For applicant organizations requesting \$25,000 or more, include either the organization's most recent Audited Financials, IRS Form 990 or confirmation of filing of form 990-N (for organizations with gross receipts of \$50,000 or less).

2. For applicant organizations that do not have an audit or IRS Form 990, including those that submit proof of filing a form 990-N, submit a current balance sheet and your organization's operating budget, including current fiscal year revenue and expenses and previous fiscal year budgeted and actual revenue and expenses.

You may also upload one other document (non-financial) with your application, if relevant to the application. Briefly describe the contents of the optional attachment. Note, this is not a requirement.

REVIEW PROCESS AND AWARDS

MeHAF is committed to a thorough and fair review of all applications, and follows a policy to avoid conflicts of interest for all reviewers and committee members responsible for funding decisions.

Letter of Inquiry: A staff team will review and discuss LOIs to select those invited to submit full proposals. Applicants will be notified about the status of their LOIs on Wednesday, **July 27**.

Full Proposal: Full proposals will be reviewed by a team of community members with relevant knowledge and experience, as well as by MeHAF staff. The review team will meet to discuss their reviews and recommend a slate of grants to MeHAF's Program and Grants Committee. To finalize their recommendations, the team will consider the scores reviewers assigned to each application as well as the overall makeup of the proposed grantee cohort. This will include factors such as geographic distribution and ensuring a diversity of populations and issues covered by the group of recommended grantees, taken as a whole. The Program and Grants Committee will carefully review the recommended slate and make the final funding decision. During the review process, MeHAF may contact applicants with clarifying questions and ask for responses either verbally or in writing.

- All invited applicants who submit a full proposal, regardless of funding decision, will be notified about the status of their applications by Thursday, **November 10**. If you do not receive a notification email, please contact [Holly Irish](#).
 - Applicants whose proposals are approved by the Program and Grants Committee will receive an award letter and grant agreement by email.
 - Applicants not selected for funding are encouraged to participate in a debriefing call with MeHAF staff to receive feedback on their application and to ask questions.

GRANTEE EVALUATION, REPORTING, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

MeHAF will engage an evaluation consultant to work in cooperation with grantee organizations and the foundation. The evaluation plan will be developed collaboratively. The foundation-supported evaluation will include qualitative assessment of the degree to which the grant funding supported accomplishments, such as identification of barriers and facilitators to achieving the proposed activities, degree to which the work was framed and carried out with an equity perspective, the nature of *community* involvement, and actual or potential eventual systems improvement.

Reporting expectations – grantees will:

- Have an interim check-in with a Program Officer, initiated by MeHAF;
- Submit a financial report at the mid-point of each year of funding; and
- Submit annual/final narrative and financial reports at the conclusion of each year of the grant period.

MeHAF may also include a structured interview with grantees at the end of the program.

Grantees will not be required to participate in a learning community, but may be offered opportunities to participate in other forms of peer learning or technical support if relevant and applicable. MeHAF will work with grantees to identify ways to support this type of peer learning. When feasible and appropriate, MeHAF also hopes that grantees will learn from each other and connect with other organizations and communities doing similar or related work. MeHAF staff will support making relevant connections whenever possible.

QUESTIONS AND INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

Applicants are strongly encouraged to join the informational sessions prior to completing both the LOI and full proposal, and to contact MeHAF staff with questions at any point in the process. Guidance and clarification of LOI and full proposal requirements can help you to prepare a stronger application.

Applicants are advised to log into the MeHAF grants portal well in advance of the due dates to avoid technical issues which may interfere with a timely submission.

Answers to initial **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQs) will be posted on MeHAF's web site on:

- Tuesday, **May 17** for the Letter of Inquiry (LOI); and
- Monday, **August 15** for the full proposal.

The FAQs will be updated periodically as applicants raise additional questions that are broadly applicable. Additionally, applicants that are invited to submit a full proposal will be emailed whenever an updated version of the FAQ is posted.

APPENDIX A

MEHAF GOALS AND STRATEGIES

MEHAF GOALS AND STRATEGIES: 2018 – 2022					
	<p>Ensure equitable access to affordable, quality care.</p>	<p>Insurance Coverage & Free Care Promote high quality public and private coverage, while ensuring free care options when needed.</p>	<p>Workforce Strengthen and expand the health, mental health, and dental workforces, with a focus on recruiting from Maine communities.</p>	<p>Rural Health Support rural health care transformation into new systems that coordinate and maintain essential services.</p>	<p>Costs Promote learning and problem solving regarding economically sustainable health care, particularly concerning rising costs.</p>
	<p>Support systemic changes to address critical health issues in Maine.</p>	<p>Behavioral Health Care Help to build a robust, trauma-informed, integrated behavioral health care system in Maine, especially treatment and recovery for substance use disorders.</p>	<p>Oral Health Ensure ongoing access to high quality dental care and improve the oral health status of individuals with low incomes.</p>		
	<p>Advance efforts to improve the health of specific populations.</p>	<p>Children Support efforts to improve the health of Maine children, focusing on early childhood and infant and maternal mortality.</p>	<p>Older Adults Improve the health of Maine’s older adults, focusing on health care linked to mental health care, as well as social services and community supports.</p>	<p>Equity Support groups that experience health inequities to build capacity to improve health in their communities.</p>	<p>Social Determinants Participate in cross-sector efforts to address social determinants of health (such as transportation, security, and housing).</p>
	<p>Promote shared leadership to achieve equitable health outcomes for everyone in Maine.</p>	<p>Public Awareness & Commitment Build public commitment to achieving equitable health outcomes.</p>	<p>MeHAF’s Leadership Build MeHAF’s leadership skills and capacity to live out our commitment to equity.</p>	<p>State & Community Leadership Support efforts to foster equity-minded leadership, to advance access to health care and improve the health of everyone in Maine.</p>	

APPENDIX B

MEHAF INDIRECT COSTS POLICY

The Maine Health Access Foundation (MeHAF) has established the following policy guideline for grant applicants related to indirect costs.

MeHAF offers funding for both “direct” and “indirect costs” associated with all project grants except for Discretionary Grants, and in very unusual circumstances, other grants as may be specified by the Foundation. This policy does not apply to unrestricted grants providing general operating support, which may be used for any purpose at the grantee’s sole discretion.

“Direct costs” are those costs *directly related to the design, planning and implementation of a particular project*. MeHAF allows the following costs directly related to the project:

- Salaries and benefits of project and administrative personnel who assist or manage;
- Subcontractors, consultants, or professional services;
- Equipment: Purchase or Maintenance;
- Equipment or Facilities: Rental;
- Office Supplies;
- Program Materials;
- Postage & Courier;
- Printing & Copying;
- Rent;
- Stipends and Honoraria;
- Telephone & Internet;
- Travel: Local;
- Travel: Other;
- Utilities; and
- Other costs directly related to the project (with Foundation approval; must be included on budget form).

In some cases, the calculation of direct costs is straightforward: for example, the portion of staff FTE (full-time equivalent), expressed as a percentage of salaries and benefits, devoted to a funded project, or materials, such as pamphlets, used exclusively for a funded project. In other cases, such as telephone costs, a reasonable formula may need to be developed. For example, if an agency has five projects with roughly equal telephone usage, it would be reasonable to allocate 20% (one fifth) of telephone expenses to each project. Direct costs should be presented on the MeHAF budget form, and their rationale and method of calculation should be explained in the proposal in the budget narrative.

“Indirect costs” are costs which are incurred by an organization in the execution of its activities but which cannot be readily identified with a particular activity. Indirect costs include general overhead costs, such as bank, payroll processing and audit fees; liability insurance; office equipment purchase or maintenance not directly related to the project; and salaries and benefits of executive or administrative personnel who are not directly engaged in the project. Organizations may request an indirect cost rate of up to 20% of the total grant amount. This should be calculated on the MeHAF budget form by multiplying the total grant amount

requested by the requested rate. As an illustrative example, for a total grant of \$25,000 up to \$5,000 of the budget may be allocated to cover indirect costs ($\$25,000 \times .20$).

Please note that the total of direct and indirect costs taken together may not exceed the maximum grant amount specified for the program. Using the above example, for a program with a maximum award amount of \$25,000, a grantee requesting the maximum of \$25,000 may allocate up to \$5,000 to cover indirect costs, leaving \$20,000 to budget for the direct costs of implementing the project.

APPENDIX C

MEHAF ACCESSIBILITY EXPENSE POLICY

Applicant organizations whose project focuses significantly on a specific community facing disproportionate barriers to inclusion/participation in the project may request funds in addition to the maximum grant award to cover costs associated with addressing such barriers. The goal of this approach is to address barriers to equitable participation, such as language or physical accessibility. Project costs related to items such as:

- Translation of written project materials;
- Interpretation services at project-related meetings or gatherings;
- Costs related to ensuring physical accessibility of project-related activities; and/or
- Transportation to project-related activities

may be requested in addition to the maximum grant award under this Accessibility Expense Policy. Funds requested under this policy may **not** be used to cover the costs of any accessibility accommodations that applicants are required to provide under state or federal law.

Applicants requesting additional funding under this policy should list accessibility-related expenses in the worksheet provided on the MeHAF budget form and indicate the total amount requested for accessibility expenses in the field provided in the online application.

The intended use(s) of these funds should be detailed in the applicant's budget narrative. Budget narratives should also include a brief description of the specific community or communities of focus for the expense and the disproportionate barriers to be addressed.

Accessibility expense funding is provided in addition to the total grant amount requested and may be up to 20% of the total grant request.