



Collective Impact – Health and Education Disparities RFP A Challenge for Louisiana’s Children

Overview

Summary

- **Purpose** – These grants are made to coalitions working to close to gaps in health and education for Louisiana’s children by addressing structural inequities and access.
- **Amount** – Grants range from \$250,000 to \$1 million over three years (full awards will be made in one-third increments per each year of the project upon meeting annual performance benchmarks).
- **Matching** – Collective Impact grants require a minimum one-to-one match (may come from multiple sources; up to one-half may be in-kind).
- **Results** – As part of their grant contract, all grantees must outline measurable results and deliverables as well as their commitment to achieving those results.
- **Applying** – Applications are made through a Letter of Intent, submitted online at bcbslafoundation.org
- **Deadlines** – 4:30p.m. CST on March 1 and September 1; If the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday we will accept Letters of Intent through the deadline, but we will not be in the office to answer questions. In this case, we recommend submitting your Letter of Intent no later than 4:00pm CST on the last work day preceding the deadline.

Purpose

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Louisianians. Serious health issues in Louisiana disproportionately impact the economic vitality, educational attainment and quality of life in the state and in communities.

In Louisiana, systemic discrepancies in access to essential services in health and education, in addition to various other factors, have created disproportionately negative outcomes for children and particularly African American children. Data show that when compared to people of other backgrounds, black Louisianans are 1.5-4 times more likely to experience negative outcomes in health status and mortality¹, social services² and educational achievement³ – regardless of their income status⁴. African American children are especially vulnerable to these same impacts, particularly so when other compounding factors are present such as poverty, family situation (single parent households as one example) and geographic isolation.

Too many of our state’s children aren’t able to access the happy, healthy futures they deserve. The obstacles are clear, and a growing body of evidence suggests that attempts to address gaps in health care and education at an early age are especially likely to yield positive results. Furthermore, projects around the country have proven that closing the gaps along racial and socio-economic lines for children leads to better outcomes not just for these children but for the whole community.

The Blue Cross Foundation is issuing a challenge to communities across the state to help address this major public health concern. We are seeking community-level proposals that mitigate the impacts of inequity for the whole child; multiple partners acting to improve outcomes in health, education and social services/child welfare.

Blue Cross' Challenge for Louisiana’s Children will help provide much needed resources to communities across the state being to address systemic challenges and reshape their environments to ensure that children who have traditionally faced the most obstacles get the resources and supports they need to grow up to live happy, healthy, productive lives in our state.

Project Design

The ideal project will work within communities to implement comprehensive health, educational and/ or socio-economic programs that include measurable outcomes to support the development of Louisiana’s children most affected by systemic inequity.

1 "Louisiana: Minority Health Indicators," Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://www.kff.org/state-category/minority-health/?state=la>

2 Crane & Ellis, 2004; Race Matters in Child Welfare, 2005

3 "Louisiana State Snapshot," Ed Data Express, <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-report.cfm/state/LA/>

4 "Dollar for Dollar: Racial and ethnic inequalities in health and health-related outcomes among persons with very high income," Wilson et al., http://hsrc.himmelfarb.gwu.edu/sphhs_policy_facpubs/816/

Specifically, the ideal project will work to close gaps for Louisiana's African American children, particularly those children living in single-parent households or a low-income or geographically isolated community.

To accomplish this work, the ideal project will include each of the following components in its project design:

Comprehensive Analysis and a Proven Logic Model

While there is no required format for this analysis, we do ask applicants to identify and explain the thinking behind:

- Who will be affected by grant activities and why
- A thoughtful analysis of the barriers and challenges impacting the affected individuals
- What resources are currently available
- How the grant proposal addresses a critical need
- A proposed scope of the project and how it will lead to the desired impact

For applicants in need of an example, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has a strong logic model development guide available at <https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2006/02/wk-kellogg-foundation-logic-model-development-guide>

Multiple Collaborators

We believe that any realistic attempt to close outcome gaps for Louisiana's children will involve multiple collaborators acting in concert to change policies, norms, practices, programs, social supports and the physical environment to dismantle the structural inequity that children experience. The collective impact model is built on coalitions of actors effecting change across multiple sectors and levels of impact.

Participatory Design & Community Representation and Inclusion

Evidence closely ties participatory design to improved rates of success in improving outcomes in health and education, particularly where there are race-based and other disparities. Successful applications will include soliciting and incorporating input on project design and outcomes from the communities being directly impacted by grant activities, with the ultimate goal of empowering communities to have ownership of and a sustained positive improvement and innovation after grant activities end.

We believe that representation and inclusion of impacted communities at every step of planning and implementation is essential to tackle issues that stem from structural inequity. As such, successful applicant teams will, at a minimum, mirror the demographic breakdown within the geographic area where grant activities will take place and preference will be given to applications that include representation and engagement at all levels of work in the project.

Finally, while project activities may include people of all ages, successful applications will tie those activities back to the impact on children and addressing gaps in health and education.

Potential Project Components

Project components should be tailored to an applicant community's needs, driven by evidence and best practices. The complexity of closing gaps for our state's children calls for not only outcome-based activities in health, education and childhood development, but also concurrent activities to address issues of structural inequity head on. Applicants may want to consider:

- Pre-natal and early childhood health supports and efforts
- Parental and community supports related to childhood development, parenting and children's health
- High quality early childhood care and education programs, both increasing access to and improving on existing programs
- Creating, updating and sustaining safe and healthy neighborhoods, facilities and programs
- Mentoring and other similar programs that help individuals or families navigate complex health, education and childhood development
- Support the development of organizations, programs and efforts that address the myriad socio-economic issues impacting children and their families, along with race-based disparities in access to care

This list is illustrative, but in no way comprehensive. Additional resources related to health data and programs are noted in the appendix.

Application Components

- **Letter of Intent** - We accept Letters of Intent on a semiannual basis. Letters of Intent should outline the project, its partners, a brief statement of need, indicators and outcomes for success, evaluation methods and how funds will be used.
- **Full Application** – Based on Letters of Intent, we will invite the most compelling applicants to complete a formal application. This formal application will provide a narrative outline of the project, target audience/geography, need, deliverables, evaluation method and use of funds and partners (if applicable).

Selection and Awards

Submitting a Letter of Intent is only the first step. If a project is selected for consideration, we will ask applicants to submit a formal application online.

Submitting a full application is not a guarantee of funding. We cannot guarantee that we will invite every interested organization to submit a full organization. Funding is limited; we cannot fund every project even if it meets our criteria for success.

The maximum amount awarded per grant will be \$1 million over three years.

Blue Cross Foundation staff will evaluate full proposals based on a number of criteria with assistance from a panel of experts. This information will be presented to the Foundation's Board of Directors. Funding for Collective Impact grants is at the sole discretion of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation's Board of Directors.

The ideal Collective Impact project is:

- Based on a clear challenge to a community's health
- Backed by theory or research
- Comprehensive and systemic, addressing root challenges of public health issues
- Properly staffed by an organization with capacity to complete the project, and backed by a community coalition substantial enough to achieve desired outcomes
- Scalable and, if successful, able to replicated in other places

If your organization receives a Collective Impact grant award, your grant contract will stipulate an annual report on progress/program with data.

Additional Information and FAQ's

Our group/ community has an idea, but it isn't fully built out yet, should we apply?

Probably not. Instead, we'd suggest two action steps:

- First, use the Blue Cross Foundation's application process as a guide/ prompt to the sort of work that your group and community will need to do. This includes the initial analysis, identification of desired change, identification of partners etc.
- Second, contact us to start a conversation. We seek to be a partner with our grantees and are always open to conversations in advance of the great deadline and/ or to help guide applicants to build strong plans and put forward their ideas in the most compelling way.

Do we really need to have matching funds identified in advance?

Yes. While it isn't necessary to have the funds in a bank account, we do want to know who else is bought into and committed to this project. As a state-wide funder, we always want to make sure that programs we support have a good base of local support. We are happy to talk with applicants about potential and additional funders and long term sustainability at any point during the application and granting process.

Where can I find additional resources?

Several research programs and grant efforts focused on these areas are currently underway, both in Louisiana and around the country. Please reference the below resources for additional information:

- "Louisiana: Minority Health Indicators," Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://www.kff.org/state-category/minority-health/?state=la>
- "Integrating participatory design and health literacy to improve research and interventions," Neuhauser, <http://content.iospress.com/download/information-services-and-use/isu829?id=information-services-and-use%2Fisu829>
- "Louisiana State Snapshot," Ed Data Express, <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/state-report.cfm/state/LA/>
- "Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Education Achievement and Juvenile Arrest," Reynolds et al., <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/193816>