



Collective Impact – Healthcare Workforce RFP A Challenge for Louisiana’s Healthcare Workforce

Overview

Summary

- **Purpose** – These grants are made to organizations working to implement targeted and comprehensive educational, recruitment, retention and related programs to meet pressing needs in Louisiana’s healthcare workforce.
- **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** – Our grant process requires all applicants to outline measurable results as deliverables and commitment to achieving those results as part of the grant contract.
- **Applying** – Requests are made through a Letter of Intent, submitted online at bcbslafoundation.org
- **Deadlines** – March 1, June 1, Sept. 1 and Dec. 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. In many Louisiana communities, there are critical shortages in the healthcare workforce (general practitioners, dentists, specialists, nurses, mental health providers and other allied health professionals).

These gaps compound Louisiana’s health disparities, limiting the efficacy of healthcare interventions in those areas of the state where it is needed the most.

As such, 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 build sustainable and lasting solutions for Louisiana’s healthcare workforce shortage.

Project Design

The ideal project will work within communities to implement comprehensive educational, recruitment and retention efforts to improve the local healthcare workforce.

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, with the healthcare workforce group (or groups) to be impacted clearly outlined and explained

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 health outcome gaps related to workforce issues will involve multiple collaborators acting in concert to change policies, norms, practices and programs. 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. Applicants may want to consider:

- Educational efforts that attempt to prepare future generations of Louisianans to meet the identified gap
- Recruitment efforts that attempt to sustainably close the gap in healthcare workforce
- Retention efforts that slow or stop the loss in healthcare workforce
- Related efforts that aid in one of the above and/ or improve the healthcare workforce issue identified

This list is illustrative, but in no way comprehensive.

Healthcare Workforce Gaps

While different communities in Louisiana have different healthcare workforce gaps and this RFP can apply to any well documented and meaningful healthcare workforce gap, the following are some widely evident gaps that communities might consider:

- General practitioners, nurses and nurse practitioners, particularly those serving and living in low-income and rural communities
- Mental healthcare providers, particularly counselors, Psychologists and Psychiatrists
- Dentists and other dental health professionals

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.

What types of work have proven successful in this arena?

There are a few strong comprehensive programs that address healthcare workforce needs and a number of promising ideas being tested across the US. Ultimately we advise that communities research extensively and think carefully about what would work best in a local community. We believe it is up to the local community to identify what will work best in their context but among the ideas to consider:

- Strengthening High School, Community College and Collegiate training programs either through recruitment, resourcing etc. This can include training the needed trainers.
- Using scholarships, recruitment efforts and other tools to attract and retain the needed workforce early in their career, at the time when they are establishing local connections
- Creating an organization or partner organizations that consistently track, report out on and suggest actions related to addressing these gaps – these organizations

generally decrease unhelpful efforts that don't increase the total workforce and/ or duplication and direct efforts towards efforts that increase the workforce and utilize available resources

- Creating career pathways that aid in retaining top talent

The most successful programs do these comprehensively for targeted populations since each of these efforts can connect to other related efforts and since efforts used to address one gap can aid in closing the gaps for others.

What types of work have proven un-successful in this arena?

It is difficult to generalize in a way that can be particularly helpful for communities related to specifics of a program. What is reasonably clear is that (1) efforts that aren't carefully thought through, (2) efforts that primarily or exclusively rely upon "artificial economies" or financial incentives to move job seekers to a location and cannot work without ongoing financial investments and/ or (3) efforts that aren't consistently refined and concentrated on are likely to be less successful than those that navigate these challenges well.

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 additional funders and long term sustainability at any point during the application and granting process.