



# On Your Mark

## Cultivating Healthy Communities

2018 Request for Proposal

**aetna**<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION

[www.aetna-foundation.org](http://www.aetna-foundation.org)

# Aetna Foundation 2018 Request for Proposal

Communities across America are committed to creating better, healthier places to live for all their residents. So are we. Through local programs, dynamic partnerships and proven models, the Aetna Foundation works with hundreds of national and local leaders in our shared goal of Building Healthy Communities. Because working together is the best medicine for nurturing **healthy communities everywhere**.

## Overview and Purpose

The Cultivating Healthy Communities (CHC) grant program is geared specifically towards nonprofit organizations that work with underserved, low-income, and minority populations in the contiguous United States. CHC seeks to catalyze measurable improvements in community health outcomes. Our funding directly supports efforts to make underserved communities healthier places to live, work, learn, play and pray. Through this RFP, we invite submissions for projects that address the [social determinants of health](#) and participants' physical, mental, and social

well-being. Projects must address the domains shown in Table 1.

Applicants must commit to improving the health of community residents by focusing on activities that align to at least one of these domains. Applicants must also use at least one indicator in their selected domain(s) to measure their program's impact. Throughout the life of their project, grantees will be held responsible for demonstrating progress along the indicator(s) of their choosing.

**Table 1: Cultivating Healthy Communities Domains and Indicators**

Domain	Indicators
<b>Built Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved walkability, bikeability, and use of public spaces in a community</li> </ul>
<b>Community Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased collaboration between local law enforcement and community members to proactively address immediate public safety issues, public health issues, or both</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Exposures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased exposure to air and water contaminants</li> <li>Increased understanding, monitoring, and reporting of local environmental hazards by community residents</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy Behaviors*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables</li> <li>Increased physical activity and stress reduction activities</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Economic Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased access to healthy foods through the development of new or enhanced retail options, including resident-owned businesses</li> </ul>

\*Applications under this domain are very strongly encouraged to focus on changing local policy. We will prioritize policy-focused projects when selecting sustainable approaches to healthy behaviors.

## Project Guidelines

In 2017, the Aetna Foundation selected 25 projects from a pool of 2,500 applications. Due to the increasingly competitive nature of the program, we encourage prospective applicants to consider the information in Table 1 together with the following guidelines about the type of projects that will receive special consideration in 2018. These include:

- **Projects that advance resident- or youth-led initiatives:** Do local residents play a pivotal role in the planning and implementation of your activities? Is developing resident leadership essential to your project's success?
- **Projects that seek to influence and strengthen local policies:** Does your project examine and address how the policies of local institutions impact the health of residents in your community? Does your project hold itself accountable for achieving policy changes?

We are looking for projects that will make a lasting impact on the health of a well-defined group of people in a community. Projects that have solid methods for measuring change over time will have a competitive advantage over projects that have limited or sporadic contact with participants (e.g., health fairs, school presentations). You can find more information about the types of projects we fund in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of this RFP.

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## Funding Guidelines

We expect to award up to \$2 million in grants through this RFP. Applicants can request a total grant award between \$50,000 and \$100,000 for the entire project period. Projects can last between 18 and 24 months, and must start between August 20, 2018 and October 15, 2018. We will not accept applications from organizations with Aetna Foundation grants that are still active as of June 30, 2018.

Any nonprofit in the contiguous United States, including federally recognized Indian tribes, is eligible to apply. However, we will not consider applications from organizations with annual operating budgets below \$250,000. Furthermore, a funding request may not exceed 20 percent of an organization's annual operating budget. (If an organization has a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor's operating budget will not be considered.) Indirect costs cannot exceed 15% of the total amount requested.

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## Application Process

This is a highly competitive funding opportunity. The Foundation will review proposals in two stages. Eligible organizations may submit a Stage 1 application, which will be reviewed and scored for alignment with the programmatic priorities of this RFP. Applicants whose Stage 1 applications pass the initial review will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application. Final awards will be made after the review of Stage 2 applications. Key dates in the process are shown below.

Stage 1 applications due	April 18, 2018 by 3 p.m. EST
Notification of Stage 1 decisions	May 18, 2018
Stage 2 applications due	June 15, 2018 by 3 p.m. ET
Notification of Stage 2 decisions	July 27, 2018
Allowable project start dates	August 20 through October 15, 2018

## Requirements for Stage 1 Applications



Stage 1 applications must be submitted through the Aetna Foundation's [grant application portal](#) on or before **April 18, 2018 by 3 p.m. ET/12p.m. PT**. Applicants will have to complete a short eligibility quiz prior to starting their application. Because high system traffic near the deadline can create system slowdowns or errors for applicants, organizations should aim to submit their application *at least one day in advance* of this deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted. No changes or additions will be accepted after the deadline. If there are any updates on the day applications are due, they will be published on the Aetna twitter page, [@aetnaneews](#).

### The Stage 1 application should include clear and concise information about the following items:

- ✓ **Domain and Indicators**  
Specify the domain(s) that your project will address and the indicator(s) it will use to measure results. Your application will be evaluated against other applications in the primary domain you select. Historically, the Healthy Behaviors domain has been the most competitive.
- ✓ **Elevator Pitch**  
Tell us what you would say if you had only 30 seconds to explain why your project stands out from the thousands of other projects we will review. (150 words)
- ✓ **Use of Funds**  
Summarize how you would spend Aetna Foundation funds to carry out this project. (100 words)
- ✓ **Statement of Need**  
Describe the specific need in your community that the project meets and how you know this need exists. Include relevant demographic and community health data to support your case. (100 words)
- ✓ **Target Audience**  
Explain who exactly will benefit from the project. Use concrete numbers as much as possible. Specify whether these individuals will have leadership roles in the project, and if so, what those roles will be. (150 words)
- ✓ **Project Activities**  
Describe the actions that grant funding will make possible. Explain who will take these actions and when. Tell us how these activities directly address your Statement of Need. (250 words)
- ✓ **Capacity**  
Explain your organization's qualifications to carry out this project. (150 words)

**Only complete Stage 1 applications will be reviewed. Applicants must demonstrate tight alignment with this RFP's domains and desired results in order to move to Stage 2.**

## Requirements for Stage 2 Applications

Stage 2 applications must be submitted through the Aetna Foundation's [grant application portal](#) on or before **June 15, 2018 by 3 p.m. ET/12 p.m. PT**. Late submissions will not be accepted. No changes or additions will be accepted after the deadline.

### Stage 2 applications should include clear and thorough information about the following items:

- ✓ **Project Goals**  
Describe the results that your project seeks to achieve. (100 words)
- ✓ **Project Activities**  
Describe the actions that grant funding will make possible. If invited to Stage 2, you will be able to add or edit what you entered in this field in Stage 1. (250 words)
- ✓ **Timeline**  
Present a chronological description of key project activities. (250 words)
- ✓ **Project Outcomes**  
Copy the indicator(s) you selected in Stage 1. While referencing these indicator(s), explain the specific impacts that your project activities will have on your target audience. Outcomes should describe changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and behaviors. They can also describe changes in the policies of local institutions. (100 words)
- ✓ **Evaluation Plan**  
Specify the methods you will use to measure progress toward the outcomes you stated above. (250 words)
- ✓ **Staff Qualifications**  
Provide brief descriptions of your proposed staffing plan and the qualifications of your staff members to carry out this project (100 words)
- ✓ **Sustainability**  
Explain your plan for sustaining the impact of your project beyond the Aetna Foundation grant period. We are interested in continuation strategies that are not contingent solely on the receipt of new external funding. (100 words)
- ✓ **Communication/Social Media**  
Describe the platforms you have at your disposal to communicate information about your proposed project. List any local media contacts. (100 words)

### Stage 2 applicants must also submit the following attachments:

- Project budget in Aetna Foundation format
- Names and affiliations of your Board of Directors/Trustees
- Disclaimer forms from your Board of Directors, if applicable



## Reporting Requirements



All grantees will be required to submit interim and final impact reports, as well as financial reports. Grantees will also be expected to track and share aggregated data about their projects and participants. The Aetna Foundation will provide customized surveys in English and Spanish for grantees to use with their participants. To ensure grantees are successful in meeting these evaluation requirements, we will assign each grantee a technical assistance provider who will serve as a resource.

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## Notification



Organizations submitting a Stage 1 application will be notified by email of the Aetna Foundation's decision no later than May 18, 2018.

Organizations invited to submit a Stage 2 application will be notified by email of the Aetna Foundation's funding decision no later than July 27, 2018.

Due to the large volume of applications we review, we regret that we are unable to give feedback on declined applications.

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## What We Will Not Fund

Through this RFP we will not support the following:

- Feasibility studies or needs assessments
- Projects that collect, track and/or report on biometric data such as weight and body mass index.
- Matching funds for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits doubling programs.
- Projects that focus only on food distribution. We will consider this aspect only if it is presented as part of a larger program that aligns with our stated priorities.

In addition, we will not fund the following:

- Endowments or capital campaigns
  - Capital expenses, construction projects, and purchases of large equipment
  - Direct delivery of reimbursable health care services
  - Basic biomedical research
  - Grants or scholarships to individuals
  - Advertising
  - Advocacy, political causes or events
  - Sacramental or theological functions of religious organizations
  - Existing deficits or retroactive funding
  - Event sponsorships
- 

## Right to Reject

The Aetna Foundation reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals submitted
- Reject a proposal that doesn't include all required attachments
- Adjust program guidelines, including submission deadlines
- Contact you to discuss your proposal and/or request additional information

***Submitting either a Stage 1 or Stage 2 application does not guarantee funding by the Aetna Foundation.***

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

For general FAQs about applying to the Aetna Foundation, please visit our [website](#).

### What are the key dates?

- April 18, 2018 by 3 p.m. EST - Stage 1 applications due
  - May 18, 2018 - Notification of stage 1 decisions
  - June 15, 2018 by 3 p.m. EST – Stage 2 applications due
  - July 27, 2018 – Notification of final award decisions
  - August 20, 2018 – Earliest possible project start date
  - October 15, 2018 - Latest possible project start date
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### Am I eligible for this grant opportunity?

#### Who can apply for an Aetna Foundation Cultivating Healthy Communities grant?

This grant program is open to nonprofit organizations exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code, federally recognized Indian tribes, and state/local government agencies.

#### Beyond the scope of this particular proposal, what are your general funding guidelines?

You can find our general funding guidelines at this [page](#).

#### What cities or states are eligible to apply for a Cultivating Healthy Communities program grant?

This RFP is open to projects based in the contiguous United States and the District of Columbia.

#### Will you fund projects in the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, U.S. Virgin Islands, or American Samoa?

No, we will not fund projects in these locations through this RFP.

#### Will you fund projects outside of the United States?

No, we will not fund projects outside of the United States through this RFP.

#### Can an organization submit more than one application in response to this RFP?

No, an organization may only submit one application. The Foundation may make exceptions in the case of large universities or hospital systems. These exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. All applicants are responsible for contacting the Foundation to determine their eligibility for this type of exception.

#### Our organization is not a 501(c)(3). Can a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor apply on our behalf?

A fiscal sponsor may be able to submit an application on your organization's behalf provided that your organization's annual operating budget is \$250,000 or more. We will not consider the fiscal sponsor's budget. A copy of your fiscal sponsorship agreement is required in a Stage 2 application.

#### My organization has a fiscal sponsor. Can our fiscal sponsor apply on its own behalf for a different project?

Yes, the fiscal sponsor can submit a separate application. It is the fiscal sponsor's responsibility to notify the Aetna Foundation that they will be submitting two proposals. Unless the Foundation receives advance notice, both proposals will be automatically disqualified.

#### What types of government agencies are eligible for funding?

State government agencies, such as public universities, are eligible. So are local government agencies,

such as towns/cities or public schools. However, we don't fund federal government agencies, such as national parks.

**Can our project select more than one domain? Does my application have a greater chance of being funded if my project includes more than one domain?**

You may select up to two domains for your project. However, this will not affect your application's chances of being funded. Your application will be evaluated against other applications in the primary domain you select.

**Will you consider pilot projects, or are you only interested in existing programs?**

We'll accept proposals for either new or existing programs that clearly address the indicators described in Table 1 of the RFP.

**Are there community types you're interested or not interested in, such as urban or rural areas?**

We are seeking projects that benefit underserved, low-income and minority communities. In the application's "Statement of Need" section, you can describe the audience your project will reach and the specific need(s) it will address. You can also include information about the specific city, neighborhood, or community that your proposed project will serve. National statistics are typically not useful to include.

**Can multiple organizations partner together to submit an application?**

Yes, we encourage collaboration across organizations. Please be sure to clearly describe the planned role and responsibilities of each partner at all stages of the project. Only one organization will receive the grant and be contractually responsible for grant administration, reporting and delivery of the project.

**If I currently have an active grant from the Aetna Foundation, can I submit an application?**

Grantees that will have active grants as of June 30, 2018, may not submit an application under this RFP. A grant is considered active if project activities are still underway. If project activities have ceased, but the final impact report has not yet been submitted, the grant is still considered active.

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## How do you decide which applications you'll fund?

**How will you evaluate my application?**

We look for applications that align closely with the RFP's stated priorities and include clear responses to the components of each stage of the application process. Due to the large volume of applications we receive, our small staff is unable to provide feedback on declined applications.

**What type of impact are you looking for projects to make?**

We're looking for projects with the potential to make lasting changes in the communities we serve, and we want to understand the impact our funding has in these communities. The RFP includes indicators that you should use to demonstrate your project's impact. You can use additional indicators, but these should not replace those included in the RFP. We'll provide surveys in English and Spanish that you'll be required to use with your project's participants. These surveys will assist us in tracking common measures and aggregating data across all our funded projects.

**How do I know if my project addresses the social determinants of health?**

As [defined](#) by the World Health Organization, the social determinants of health are "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels." The opportunity for health begins in our homes, jobs, neighborhoods, and places of worship. Projects should look at these environments as starting points for improving the health of their participants. We're looking for this expanded view of where health begins and how it continues.

### **What evaluation metrics and methods are you looking for?**

You'll be expected to evaluate your results by using at least one of the indicators in the primary domain you select. The evaluation methods you choose will depend on your proposed outcomes. In some cases, your plan should include methods that will demonstrate changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. We are also very interested in changes in local policies that directly impact residents' health and safety.

### **Will we be asked to report on our progress if we're awarded a grant?**

Yes. If you get a grant, you'll be expected to submit interim and final progress reports. These reports will describe your organization's progress toward your stated goals and outcomes. The Aetna Foundation will provide a worksheet that you will be required to use for your reporting. You'll also be asked to submit financial reports. All reports are a requirement of our grant contract.

### **Can you review my application prior to the deadline to let me know if I'm on the right track?**

Due to the large volume of applications we receive, we are unable to review applications in progress. However, we provide several documents that can guide the preparation of Stage 1 applications on our [website](#). We can only review completed applications submitted by April 18, 2018, at 3 p.m. EST. We reserve the right to reject incomplete applications.

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## **What are the funding guidelines and requirements?**

### **What's the dollar range of grant awards?**

You can request an amount between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Your project must last at least 18 months and no more than 24 months. For a 24-month grant, you can request up to \$50,000 *per year*.

### **How many grants will you award?**

We expect to award up to \$2 million in grants through this RFP. The specific number of grants will depend on the amounts requests per application.

### **What are indirect costs?**

These are overhead expenses that relate to overall operations of your organization or are shared among projects or functions. Examples of indirect costs include accounting, insurance, legal services, utilities, rent and facilities.

### **Do you support any type of indirect costs?**

Up to 15% of an Aetna Foundation grant can support indirect costs, as defined above. For example, if your total funding request is \$50,000, \$7,500 of that amount can be used for indirect costs. If your total funding request is \$100,000, \$15,000 of that amount can be used for indirect costs.

### **Do you have any other financial limits to grant requests?**

Our grant can support no more than 20% of your organization's annual operating budget. To be eligible for a \$50,000 grant, your organization's annual operating budget must be at least \$250,000. Similarly, to be eligible for a \$100,000 grant, your organization's annual operating budget must be at least \$500,000.

### **Are there restrictions on how much of the budget can go toward salaries, equipment, etc.?**

We recognize that organizations have different priorities and funding sources, so we try to be flexible. Generally, we prefer to see budgets that include both project-related personnel and other direct costs that support programming.

### **Can we use grant funds for capital costs, materials, equipment, renovations, etc.?**

Your project expenses should reflect broader community engagement. In general:

- Small equipment and materials, such as jump ropes or cooking utensils, are eligible
- Large equipment, construction and capital costs are not eligible

## **Can we request funds for incentives that are part of our project?**

We will consider modest incentives for program participation like small cooking utensils or gift cards. Our grant funds can't be used for "doubling" programs using SNAP or WIC benefits.

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## **How do I apply?**

### **How do I submit my Stage 1 application?**

You can use your email address to set up an account in our online grant system [here](#). Once you have an account, you can fill in the application form. You can update your application until the deadline on April 18, 2018. You must hit Submit in order for your application to be processed. Once you click Submit, you will not be able to make changes to your application. You'll receive an email confirming that we received your application. Please allow several hours for this confirmation to arrive. It is typical for us to receive over 2,000 applications during the 36 hours prior to the deadline. To avoid delays or complications in submitting your application, we strongly advise that you *do not wait until the last day* to submit your completed application.

### **Will I need to complete the online application all at once?**

You can start an application and then save it and finish it later. You'll need to re-enter the online application portal to do this. Log in with the e-mail address and password you used to create your application. You'll see a list of your organization's applications. Click on the one you need to finish.

### **Will you have any materials that can assist applicants in preparing their proposal?**

We have materials that further explain our priorities and timeline posted [here](#) on our website.

### **We are a municipality, and do not have a tax-exempt ID number that's requested in the on-line application. What number should we use?**

State and local government agencies should enter their Employer Identification Number (EIN).

### **Do all members of our Board of Directors have to sign a board disclaimer?**

No. We ask for disclaimers from your board as part of a Stage 2 application. A Board member has to sign a disclaimer only if he/she has influence or authority in selecting employee benefits for your organization, his/her own place of employment, or any other organization(s). We need each of those board members to certify that an award by the Aetna Foundation would not influence their decisions in that employee benefits selection process. Please submit one PDF of all applicable disclaimers, signed by board members.

### **Can our Executive Director or Board Chairperson sign a disclaimer on behalf of Board members?**

No. We need a signed disclaimer from each Board member who meets any of the criteria described above.

### **Will my application be shared publicly?**

If we decide to fund your project, we'll have the right to display and promote your work to the public on our website and through other communications. We'll also be allowed to publicize your organization's name in connection with the Cultivating Healthy Communities grant program.

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## **How will I learn of the status of my application?**

### **Where can I find out the status of my Stage 1 application?**

A Stage 1 application is considered final once you submit through the online grant management system. Changes can be made up to submission or before April 18, 2018 by 3 p.m. EST/12 p.m. PST. You will receive an email from [mail@grantapplication.com](mailto:mail@grantapplication.com) with our decision no later than May 18, 2018. Please

note that this is not a monitored email address and emails should not be sent to it. To avoid missed communications, please add the email address to your contact list or electronic address book. We also recommend that you check your spam folder periodically.

**Where can I find out the status of my Stage 2 application?**

If your Stage 1 application is accepted, you will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application. This application is considered final once you submit through the online grant management system. Changes can be made up to submission or before June 15, 2018 by 3 p.m. EST/12 p.m. PST. You will receive an email from [mail@grantapplication.com](mailto:mail@grantapplication.com) with our decision no later than July 27, 2018. Please note that this is not a monitored email address and emails should not be sent to it. To avoid missed communications, please add the email address to your contact list or electronic address book. We also recommend that you check your spam folder periodically.

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