

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

### “Promoting Health Equity & COVID Immunizations in Underserved Populations Across the Commonwealth of Kentucky”

<b>DEADLINE:</b> 4:00 pm (ET) Thursday, June 30, 2022 (or when funds are exhausted)	<b>ISSUED BY:</b> Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Office of Health Equity and the Immunization Branch
<b>ADDRESS QUESTIONS TO:</b>  <a href="mailto:DPHGrantsCoordination@ky.gov">DPHGrantsCoordination@ky.gov</a>  Department for Public Health Office of Health Equity and Immunization Branch	<b>SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:</b> Leslie Proctor, Buyer  <a href="mailto:leslie.proctor@ky.gov">leslie.proctor@ky.gov</a>  Only Electronic Applications Accepted No Hard Copies

#### SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Eligible entities are 501c3 non-profit organizations, quasi-governmental organizations, and government entities.
- The following are interchangeable: Commonwealth, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Office of Health Equity (OHE) and Immunization Branch
- The following are interchangeable: Application, Proposal, Response, Application Proposal
- The Commonwealth reserves the right to waive minor informalities and/or request clarifications from applicants.

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

# **“Promoting Health Equity & COVID Immunizations in Underserved Populations Across the Commonwealth of Kentucky”**

### **Announcement**

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), Department for Public Health (DPH), Office of Health Equity (OHE) and the Immunization Branch are pleased to announce a funding opportunity designed to ensure that all marginalized and vulnerable populations receive equitable distribution and vaccine uptake through education, outreach, and community engagement using best practices and evidenced based tools and interventions, with the intent of improving overall health outcomes across the Commonwealth in the years to come.

Awards are based on each applicant’s ability to promote either or both the OHE and Immunization Branch goals and are limited in amount only to the detailed and reasonable amount of the application itself. Award amounts range from the cost of an individual, up to \$100,000 or to multi-staffed, highly sophisticated effort to meet as many goals as possible in the time period of the award. An award amount will vary based on the associated costs required to implement the project, from date of execution until June 20, 2022. The Immunization portion of funding set aside is up to \$6,000,000 for multiple vendors.

### **Background**

The Kentucky Department for Public Health Office of Health Equity mission is to promote the understanding of the root causes of health disparities and promote health equity among racial, ethnic, rural, and low-income populations in Kentucky. Health equity is achieved when all individuals can attain their full health potential, access to health information, and achieve balanced healthcare access of information across the Commonwealth. OHE supports goals and evidence-based strategies to address health disparities and health inequities to achieve and sustain community-based health equity. Health Equity also supports activities and services to address health disparities through partnerships with health departments, universities, nonprofit organizations, and private health systems. Health Equity is committed to support efforts that ensure all marginalized and vulnerable populations receive equitable distribution and vaccine uptake through education, outreach, and community engagement using best practices and evidenced based tools and interventions.

To help achieve the mission, the Office of Health Equity and the DPH Immunization Branch were awarded two Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grants. The intended outcomes of these grants are to reduce COVID-19 related health disparities, improve and increase equitable access to testing, and vaccine uptake with 501(c)3 non-profit, non-traditional partners, community-based and faith-based organizations, quasi-governmental organizations, and government entities. This RFA focuses on the creation of formal collaborations between critical partners on the ground. Direct funding will be available to existing and new community

partners who serve high-risk and underserved populations. Funds may be awarded to support the expansion of existing operations, or the creation of new operations that support the proposed project goals. DPH will disburse grant funding to entities whose projects help, build, leverage, and expand capacity to support COVID-19 prevention and the dissemination of information populations that are at higher risk and underserved. The Community Engagement grants will be awarded based on a Department of Public Health rubric currently utilized for other programs.

The DPH Immunization Branch's mission is to prevent, promote and protect through education and collaboration to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases in Kentucky. As part of the COVID-19 vaccination response, the Immunization Branch is responsible for increasing vaccination capacity across the Commonwealth, ensuring high quality and safe vaccine administration through provider training and education, and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, it is working to increase vaccine confidence through education, outreach, and partnerships, collaborating with partners on developing and implementing community engagement strategies to promote vaccination, and use of KYIR (state immunization information system) to support efficient COVID-19 vaccination.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this RFA is to solicit information and ideas for consideration by Office of Health Equity and Immunization Branch. DPH seeks to explore information from service providers specific to Evidence Based Practices (EBPs) and services to address the widening disparities in underserved communities. DPH will engage diverse partners that will stand up various health equity initiatives in conjunction with areas of immunization, chronic disease, behavioral health, and several others. To continue to advance these equity initiatives, the Commonwealth of Kentucky will need to enhance stakeholder engagement and increase funding for the organizations that are working to operationalize equity and increase vaccine uptake and vaccine confidence.

An additional purpose of this RFA is to solicit information and ideas for consideration to develop, cultivate, and/or strengthen community-based partnerships to reach populations disproportionately affected by COVID. This funding is to be used to ensure greater equity and access to COVID-19 vaccines and improve overall access to health resources.

**Note: Proposals may be submitted to address either Health Equity or Immunization or both. However, addressing both is not required.**

### **Activity and Approach**

The Office of Health Equity and Immunization Branch will create a formal collaboration between critical community partners on the ground by providing direct funding to existing and new organizations that serve high-risk and underserved populations addressing health

inequities. A majority of the awarded funding is to be used to ensure greater equity and access to COVID-19 vaccine by those disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

**Examples of potential community partner organizations (but not limited to these) are:**

- Organizations, and/or academic institutions that have focused on health equity promotion and education.
- Organizations enabling resilient individuals and communities in the Commonwealth to make informed decisions about the health and wellness of themselves and their community.
- Organizations that increase vaccine confidence and uptake in high-risk minority and marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- Organizations that address the intersectionality of behavioral/mental health and Equity.
- Organizations that address social injustices that historically impact the health (COVID-19) of communities of color such as access, transportation, mistrust, etc.

**Supported Activities and Services** may include but are not limited to:

- COVID-19 vaccine administration, information and support
- COVID-19 Testing
- Increasing vaccine confidence through community engagement and dissemination of factual information
- Implementation of evidence-based policies, systems, and environmental strategies to address COVID-19
- Addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) where they live, work, learn, and play and their impact of health and health outcomes

**Populations of Focus**

- Underrepresented ethnic and racial minority groups
- People living in rural areas
- People with Substance Use Disorders (SUD)
- People identifying as LGBTQ+
- People Age 65+
- People living in congregate settings
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who are incarcerated or are in transitional housing as a result of prior incarceration
- People who have been displaced or are in transitional housing due to other mitigating circumstances
- People with disabilities
- Non-U.S. born persons
- People of a religious minority

- Communities that have experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infection and severe COVID-19 disease or death
- Communities that have high rates of underlying health conditions that place them at greater risk for severe COVID-19 disease (e.g., heart disease, lung disease, obesity. See CDC website for a detailed list)
- Communities likely to experience barriers to accessing COVID-19 vaccination services (e.g., geographical barriers, health system barriers, transportation barriers)
- Communities likely to have low acceptance of or confidence in COVID-19 vaccines
- Communities with historically low adult vaccination rates
- Communities with a history of mistrust in health authorities or the medical establishment
- Communities that are not well-known to health authorities or have not traditionally been the focus of immunization programs

#### **Racial and Ethnic Populations of Focus**

- Alaska Native
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino or Latinx
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders

#### **Geographic Area**

- Applicants may find that their efforts encompass both urban and rural areas of the Commonwealth and are encouraged to apply.

#### **Funding Allocation**

Eligible entities are 501(c)3 non-profit, non-traditional partners, community-based and faith-based organizations, quasi-governmental organizations, and government entities. Funding amounts will vary depending on the number and quality of applications received. Funding to support Health Equity efforts may request funding of a base of \$100,000. Exceptional proposals may be considered for additional funding on a case-by-case basis. Funding to support Immunization efforts will be based on reasonable proposals for which a \$6,000,000 allocation of funds is set aside to support multiple awards. Proposals will be reviewed, and the level of the award will be based on their activities and approach to addressing COVID-19 response efforts and other disparities impacting vulnerable and minority populations. Additionally, funds will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis and will continue to be awarded until all funds are expended. Once the funding for this initiative is exhausted no other applications will be considered as a result of this RFA.

#### **Allowable Activities and Expenses**

Funds may be used to:

- Provide or supplement salaries, expand efforts that exist or support completely new Equity efforts
- Travel related to the scope of the contract
- Purchase supplies related to trainings and/or meetings, such as paper, pens/pencils, etc.
- Conduct marketing and recruitment activities and creative methods to reach disparate and/or remote groups

**Unallowable Activities and Expenses**

Funds may not be used for any of the following:

- Capital construction projects
- Computers, iPads, televisions, etc.
- Food or refreshments

**Award**

Upon evaluation of submissions, organizations that meet the requirements and whose submissions are approved will be notified of the Commonwealth's intent to contract with them for the distribution of funds.

As standard procedure awarded contracts will include CHFS and Finance Cabinet boilerplate language.

## **Application Proposal Submission Instructions**

### **Formatting**

- Proposal should be double-spaced using Arial, Calibri, or similar 12-point font.
- Proposal should not exceed 10 pages, excluding the cover letter and budget template.
- Each component should be clearly labeled and numbered accordingly.
- Failure to include any of the components below may deem your application non-responsive.

### **Items to Prepare for Submission [A, B, C below]**

#### **A. Cover Letter**

Cover Letter on organization letterhead, to include:

- Cover letter
- Name of the organization
- Physical Address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Contact person
- Signed by organization representative authorized to enter into a contract with the Commonwealth

#### **B. Responses to the following:**

1. Provide a brief history of the organization. Include if your organization is 501c3 non-profit or quasi-governmental.
2. Is your workforce representative the populations you are serving?
3. Does your mission statement address the environmental, social, economic, education, and/or physical and mental impact on health inequities and health disparities? What other partnerships does your organization have?
4. Is your Community Based Organization (CBO) or institution currently working in communities to address health inequities/disparities (i.e. - access, transportation, policy, economics, etc.)?
5. What infrastructure do you already have in place that enable you to provide services/outreach?
6. How does your organization demonstrate a healthy framework or a Health Equity lens to reach marginalized, vulnerable and minority populations?

7. Identify the geographic area(s) in which your organization plans to deliver the expanded Health Equity and Vaccination services and the sites at which these services will be provided. If the applicant proposes to provide expanded services in multiple distinct geographic areas, provide this information for each area.
8. What methods do you have in place to ensure timely submission of deliverables?
9. What recruiting methods or service delivery do you utilize to ensure that your services are equitable versus equal?
10. Does your organization have a method or process to capture client engagement and feedback to evaluate and address the unmet needs of your population?
11. To ensure accountability at all levels of service provision, the articulation and achievement of measurable outcomes is critical to help ensure that we are carrying out the most effective programming possible. Please explain your performance data collection and reporting.
12. What data source is used to identify the populations you intend to serve in your proposal?
13. What other services or relevant experience does your agency have that would support or be relevant to health equity and COVID-19 mitigation?
14. What other support, including financial, does your organization receive? (federal, state, or private)
15. Provide evidence of readiness to implement and provide feasible sustainability plan.
16. Any additional information you wish to add. [this item not scored]
17. Complete all tabs on Attachment 2, Budget Template - COVID-19 Health Equity. [this item not scored but may be negotiated if considered for award]

**C. Budget Template (must use the attached Excel template)**

[The remainder of this page intentionally left blank.]



### **Submitting the Application Proposal**

Submission of application proposal and required attachment must be received in the CHFS email inbox by 4:00 pm ET, June 30, 2022. Applications received after this time and date stamp, or when funds are exhausted, will not be reviewed or considered for award.

1. Scan the completed and signed Cover Letter ([A. above](#)) as C19 HE Cover Letter [your organization name]
  - Example: *C19 HE Cover Letter Acme Association*
2. Save the Responses ([B. above](#)) in document or PDF form as C19 HE Responses [your organization name]
  - Example: *C19 HE Responses Acme Association*
3. Save the Budget Template ([C. above](#)) in spreadsheet form as C19 HE Budget [your organization name]
  - Example: *C19 HE Budget Acme Association*
4. Email all 3 items in a \*single email message to the CHFS Buyer, [leslie.proctor@ky.gov](mailto:leslie.proctor@ky.gov).
  - \*If your submission has a combined file size of greater than 3MB, please send in separate emails.
  - Although questions are directed to the OHE contact, please do not send application proposals or attachments to OHE; these must be sent to the CHFS Buyer.

Applicant may contact the CHFS Buyer, [leslie.proctor@ky.gov](mailto:leslie.proctor@ky.gov), to confirm receipt of application proposal.

### **Evaluation of Application**

Qualified DPH personnel will evaluate applications using the criteria established in the RFA.

**COVID-19 HEALTH EQUITY GRANT**

<b>EVALUATION CRITERIA</b>	<b>POINTS AVAILABLE</b>
<b>PART 1: ORGANIZATION QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<b>10</b>
Applicant provides a description of the organization's experience and qualifications generally, and specifically to the provision of Health Equity and Immunization Vaccination services.	
<b>PART 2: POPULATION OF FOCUS AND STATEMENT OF NEED</b>	<b>15</b>
Applicant identifies the geographic area(s) in which the organization plans to deliver the expanded Health Equity and Vaccination services and the sites at which these services will be provided. If the applicant proposes to provide expanded services in multiple distinct geographic areas, the applicant provides this information for each area.	
<b>PART 3: DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM SERVICES</b>	<b>35</b>
Applicant provides information regarding the proposed Health Equity and Vaccination services that will be delivered in the identified geographic service area(s).	
<b>PART 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>10</b>
Applicant provides evidence of readiness to implement and provide feasible sustainability plan.	
<b>PART 5: PERFORMANCE DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING</b>	<b>15</b>
To ensure accountability at all levels of service provision, the articulation and achievement of measurable outcomes is critical to help ensure that we are carrying out the most effective programming possible.	
<b>PART 6: HEALTH EQUITY FOCUS</b>	<b>15</b>
Applicants demonstrate how they are using a healthy framework or a Health Equity lens to reach marginalized, vulnerable and minority populations.	
<b>PART 7: BUDGET</b> [Reviewed but not scored]	<b>0</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates clear connection between activities to develop plan and expenses.</li> <li>• Reasonably reflects the costs associated with implementing program services.</li> <li>• Includes a detailed budget that itemizes specific uses of funds.</li> </ul>	

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**End of Promoting Office of Health Equity & COVID  
 Immunizations RFA**