

Frequently Asked Questions

2020 Special Projects Fund

1. What does NYSHealth hope to accomplish with the Special Projects Fund grant initiative?

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) has a broad mission to improve the health of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable. NYSHealth's efforts are concentrated on specific priority and focus areas, but to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to other important health issues, the Special Projects Fund supports projects that are outside of those areas. Projects pertaining to the following priority and focus areas will be INELIGIBLE for funding through the Special Projects Fund: [Building Healthy Communities](#), [Empowering Health Care Consumers](#), and [Addressing Veterans' Health Needs](#).

All Special Projects Fund projects must have an impact on New Yorkers either at a local, regional, or statewide level. Special Projects Fund awards should be considered one-time, nonrenewable funding opportunities

See a list of our [2019 Special Projects Fund Recipients](#).

2. What is different about the Special Projects Fund?

The Special Projects Fund explicitly supports projects outside our two strategic priority areas and one focus area. NYSHealth allocates significant resources to our two priority areas (Building Healthy Communities and Empowering Health Care Consumers), which comprise approximately 70% of our grantmaking. The other 30% is allocated to our Special Projects Fund and Veterans' Health focus areas.

The [Special Projects Fund RFP](#) provides greater clarity about the types of projects we seek. Projects eligible for Special Projects Fund support are coordinated interventions that take place over a specified period of time to achieve quantifiable results. Projects that address or are determined to be closely aligned strategies within our priority and focus areas are ineligible for funding under this RFP.

Deadlines

[Funding Cycle One](#)

Online Inquiry Form:
October 3, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

Full Proposal (*invited applicants only*):
December 2, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

[Funding Cycle Two](#)

Online Inquiry Form:
March 4, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

Full Proposal (*invited applicants only*):
May 11, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

3. Are projects that overlap with the Foundation's priority or focus areas (Building Healthy Communities, Empowering Health Care Consumers, or Veterans' Health) eligible for funding through the Special Projects Fund?

No.

4. How does NYSHealth review full grant applications and make funding decisions?

Applications are assessed by a panel comprising reviewers from across the State who possess a diverse set of expertise. External reviewers evaluate proposals using the criteria specified in the RFP. Based on our reviewers' evaluation, the highest-ranked proposals are forwarded to our Board of Directors, which makes the final funding decision. Both our reviewers and the Board of Directors consider geographic balance when selecting grantees.

5. Can I receive advice from NYSHealth staff members about my proposal idea before I submit a proposal?

Yes. Please e-mail specialprojectsfund@nyshealth.org with any programmatic questions prior to the online inquiry form due date. Please note that because of the large number of applicants, questions asked very close to the due date may not be answered in time.

6. What are the deadlines for submitting an online inquiry form and a full proposal?

Funding Cycle One

Online Inquiry Form: October 3, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

Full Proposal Due Date (*invited applicants only*): December 2, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

Funding Cycle Two

Online Inquiry Form: March 4, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

Full Proposal Due Date (*invited applicants only*): May 11, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

7. Should I apply early?

Inquiries will not be reviewed on a rolling basis, so early submission does not provide an advantage. However, we do encourage reaching out to Foundation staff at specialprojectsfund@nyshealth.org early in the process should you have programmatic questions.

8. I've just submitted my online inquiry form. When can I expect to hear back from the Foundation?

Funding Cycle One: Late October 2019

Funding Cycle Two: Early April 2020

9. What is the difference between Funding Cycle One and Funding Cycle Two?

There is no difference between the cycles. Please choose to apply to the funding cycle that fits best with your organization's internal timelines or calendars.

10. Where can I find the application for the full proposal?

Only applicants invited to submit a full proposal will gain access to the full proposal application via e-mail.

11. Could you provide some examples of projects funded under Special Projects?

View [2019 Special Projects Fund Recipients](#) and all [past Special Projects Fund grantees](#).

12. How many projects are awarded annually through the Special Projects Fund?

Approximately 5 to 15 organizations are funded annually through our \$3 million Special Projects Fund. The number of grants funded varies each round, as budget request amounts are different for each grant.

13. If I previously received a Special Projects Fund grant, can I receive additional support for the same project through the Special Projects Fund at a later date?

No. These grants are generally one-time, nonrenewable funding opportunities.

14. If I previously applied to the Special Projects Fund, was invited and submitted an application, and was turned down, can I resubmit the same project proposal?

No. Please be in touch with Foundation staff to get feedback on proposals that were not awarded funding.

15. If I previously applied to the Special Projects Fund through an online inquiry form and was not invited to submit a full proposal, can I resubmit the same proposal?

Yes; however, please note that if you submit the same exact project there is a high likelihood that it will be declined again.

16. How important is sustainability of my project?

Very important. Many proposals are turned down because no apparent means exist to continue the project after NYHealth grant dollars run out. Stating that you would seek additional grants from other funders is not an adequate sustainability plan. It is critical to explain the business plan (a thoughtful and viable strategy) for keeping the project going after the grant period concludes. Please refer to this NYHealth-supported [sustainability toolkit](#) for helpful resources and tools.

17. Are letters of support suggested to demonstrate the strength of sustainability plans?

Letters of support are optional and may be submitted only if you have been invited to submit a full proposal.

18. Can I add attachments to my online inquiry form?

No. All information must be included in the online inquiry form fields.

19. What makes for an effective evaluation plan and what should I include in my evaluation?

Most successful grant proposals to the Foundation include an evaluation plan to assess whether the project has achieved its stated goals and to measure its impact. There is no one exact blueprint for a program evaluation; different applicants will have various ways of measuring the success and outcomes of their proposed project. Please refer to [these guidelines](#) for helpful resources and tools for designing and implementing a program evaluation.

20. What does “scale up” mean? What determines scale-up eligibility?

Scale up is relative to the population you are serving. We understand that it depends on the size of your patient/client population, as well as the scope of the work being done (e.g., citywide, countywide, statewide). A project that proposes to have a citywide, countywide, or statewide impact will be more competitive than a project that is projected to serve 100–200 people.

21. What do you mean by “project management” in the online inquiry form? What should I include there?

The project management section of the online inquiry form should include: a description of who will manage the project, who the team members are, and a brief summary of their experiences or expertise in this topic. This section of the inquiry form is intended as an opportunity to showcase the organization's capacity to manage and implement work. Competitive inquiry forms will include a sense of sustainability measures and an overview of how the allocated budget would be used.

22. If my project involves multiple Project Investigators (PIs), should I include contact information for each of them?

No. Please only provide contact information for one person, who can then communicate with the rest of the project team.

23. Should I add references or bibliographic information? If so, where?

You are not required to include references in the online inquiry form or your full proposal; however, applicants will be expected to provide references if asked by Foundation staff. If you would like to include references, please include them in the body of the online inquiry form or proposal.

24. Does NYSHealth fund core support or general operating services?

No. NYSHealth seeks to fund opportunities where a modest investment of our funds can have a long-lasting, leveraged impact on the health system or on health care and public health providers. If we opened our funding initiatives to core support or ongoing service support, our grant dollars would have a much smaller impact.

25. Are equipment purchases or capital expenses eligible for funding?

No. Special Projects Fund grants do not fund equipment purchases or capital expenses (e.g., building materials, rent, vehicles).

26. Does NYSHealth consider a health education campaign to be a Special Project?

No. Many health awareness campaigns are supported by a wide range of funding sources, and we do not consider these kinds of campaigns eligible for a Special Projects Fund grant.

27. Does NYHealth consider a research project to be a Special Project?

Typically, no. New York State research organizations conduct research projects on topics related to health improvement, and many sources of support for such research projects exist. For this reason, research projects generally do not meet the criteria to be considered eligible for a Special Projects Fund grant. However, proposals to demonstrate or pilot test evidence-based interventions in New York are welcome candidates for the Special Projects Fund. In addition, there are rare cases when an analytical topic that is particularly timely, focused on a New York-specific issue, and could lead to action in the short run may be eligible for a Special Projects Fund grant. Applicants are encouraged to e-mail specialprojectsfund@nyshealth.org with specific questions.

28. Does the Special Projects Fund support outreach programs?

Outreach programs are eligible but have traditionally been noncompetitive, owing to the difficulty in evaluating such projects and a lack of cohesive sustainability plans.

29. Are you especially looking for projects focused on elderly populations?

No. Project emphasis is not exclusive to the elderly. Projects serving any vulnerable or underserved population are eligible.

30. Are projects to train health care providers eligible?

Yes. However, the proposal must specifically state how the program will be evaluated and how it will benefit the population served.

31. How much money should I apply for?

Projects will be assessed for the appropriateness of budget to the proposed scope of work and timeline. The amount of funds requested must be commensurate with the work proposed. Special Projects Fund grants are typically in the \$250,000 range. Funding requests can range from \$50,000 to a maximum of \$400,000.

32. What is the expected timeframe for projects?

Project durations vary, but typically are 12 to 36 months. Please note that the duration must be commensurate with project activities.

33. What is the timeline for award notification if the project is approved?

Funding Cycle One: Late March 2020

Funding Cycle Two: Late September 2020

34. If I have technical difficulties while submitting the online inquiry form at the deadline, may I have an extension?

No. Because of the large number of applicants, we cannot give extensions to any applicants. We recommend you submit the application at least several hours before the 1:00 p.m. deadline so that you can reach out to our Grants Assistant Elena Pereira at pereira@nyshealth.org with any technical questions if you are having difficulties.

35. What is the timeline for fund disbursement if the project is approved and awarded?

Fund disbursement is specific to each grant. Grantees will receive a formal disbursement timeline after notification that the grant has been approved by our Board of Directors.

36. Does NYSHealth fund administrative overhead?

Yes, NYSHealth allows a 15% maximum administrative overhead.