



Improving the state of
New York's health.

May 2021

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Request for Proposals

Advancing Healthy Food, Healthy Lives

Applicants must first complete an online letter of inquiry form. The online letter of inquiry form and instructions are available in the [Apply for Funding](#) section of the NYSHHealth website. The deadline for the online letter of inquiry form is **Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 1 p.m.** Following a review of submitted online inquiry forms, selected applicants will be invited to submit full proposals, with a deadline of **Wednesday, August 25, 2021, at 1 p.m.** Applicants not invited to submit a full proposal will be notified by the end of July 2021.

I. About the Foundation

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHHealth) has a broad mission to improve the health of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable. To achieve meaningful impact, the Foundation makes grants, informs health care policy and practice, and spreads effective programs that work to improve New York's health system. The Foundation's grantmaking is focused on two priority areas: Healthy Food, Healthy Lives and Empowering Health Care Consumers. We also engage in responsive grantmaking through a Special Projects Fund and maintain a special interest in Veterans' Health.

II. Background and Vision

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The link between food and health is clear. Nutritious food can act as medicine, helping to prevent and manage disease. But too much food, too little food, food that is not nutritious, or food that is not culturally appropriate can have serious health consequences.

NYSHHealth's [Healthy Food, Healthy Lives](#) priority area, launched in 2021, seeks to advance policies and programs that connect New Yorkers with the food they need to thrive through two strategies:

- 1) Enabling policies that promote healthy and affordable food; and
- 2) Testing and scaling programs that connect people to healthy and affordable food.

Deadlines

Online Inquiry Form:
June 9, 2021, at 1 p.m.

Full Proposal (*invited applicants only*): August 25, 2021, at 1 p.m.

NYSHHealth Request for Proposals—Advancing Healthy Food, Healthy Lives

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 2.3 million New Yorkers, including more than 700,000 children, were food insecure. Food insecurity exists in every part of New York State, with sharp concentrations in some regions and stark racial and ethnic disparities. During the pandemic, rates of food insecurity have increased by 30% or more, and existing disparities and inequities have been exacerbated. [In December 2020](#), nearly 1 in 3 Hispanic New Yorkers and more than 1 in 5 Black New Yorkers reported household food scarcity in the last 7 days. These percentages were 2 to 3.5 times higher than among white New Yorkers.

Healthy Food, Healthy Lives works at the intersection of health and food to improve access to healthy and affordable foods, reduce food insecurity, and promote equity. NYSHealth aims to leverage existing and new opportunities in the food systems arena to foster the adoption of promising policies and to scale local and regional best practices.

Although Healthy Food, Healthy Lives is a new priority area for NYSHealth, we have funded projects in this space for many years as part of our other program areas. View [related projects](#) previously funded by NYSHealth.

III. The Funding Opportunity

New York State is a national leader in developing initiatives to reduce food insecurity and in enacting and implementing new policies and programs to make healthy, affordable food available to more New Yorkers. And while the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity issues, it has also prompted innovations and policy changes for restoring food security. Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), NYSHealth seeks to seize the momentum that has been created and support a more robust, diverse food system that promotes health and equity.

Our key goals include: improving food and nutrition quality; increasing access to healthy and affordable food; and growing participation in food benefit and nutrition incentive programs.

The RFP invites project proposals that will be highly impactful. Many New York State-based organizations are implementing innovative approaches to address access to healthy, affordable food and health inequities. Projects should draw upon established best practices and on the latest and emerging evidence. We seek to identify and engage a broad set of partners and foster collaboration on shared goals. Examples of projects could include:

Enabling Policies:

- Supporting the sound implementation of federal food policy at the State and local levels;
- Leading planning and implementation of local and regional food plans;
- Making nutrition incentive programs (e.g., Health Bucks, Double Up Food Bucks) more widely available;
- Reducing barriers to and streamlining enrollment and participation in SNAP and WIC;
- Improving procurement policies for large institutions to support the purchasing of high-quality, culturally appropriate, and nutritious foods; and
- Producing actionable data analyses that support policy changes to spur program expansion and replication, such as online SNAP purchasing.

Testing and Scaling Programs:

- Improving the purchasing power of food banks and pantries and the quality of food distributed;
- Replicating partnerships between health care systems and healthy food initiatives, such as produce prescription programs;
- Scaling programs that help empower communities to grow their own food;
- Building capacity of small or newly formed consortiums that address racial disparities in the food system; and
- Supporting counter-marketing programs that reduce the demand for unhealthy products.

Please see the FAQs document for specific details on which topics are not eligible for funding. In general, Advancing Healthy Food, Healthy Lives will not provide grant funding for general operating support, capital expenses (e.g., construction/renovation, building materials), or lobbying. NYSHealth recognizes that there are many facets to the food system and related interventions. Given our focus on the intersection of health and food and limited funding availability, projects related to the following activities are not eligible: climate change/ecology; labor issues related to farmers/food chain workers; and land use/farm preservation.

IV. Eligibility and Funding

To build the capacity of New York State-based organizations to advance the field, all applicants are required to be New York State-based. Nonprofits, government agencies, for-profit organizations, and academic organizations are eligible to apply. Applicants may partner or subcontract with a non-New York-based organization if it offers resources and expertise beneficial to the project. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Individual project budgets will be capped at \$300,000. Priority for larger grants will be given to projects that are statewide or regional in scope, have system-wide implications, and build collaboration among organizations. NYSHealth will also award smaller grants to organizations or consortiums working at a more local level to implement projects that have the potential to be scaled or replicated.

Funds requested must be commensurate with the work proposed. Budget will be a very important factor in selecting the most competitive proposals. Projects will range from 12–24 months. Some competitive projects can be completed more quickly and result in impact sooner than others. Larger, more ambitious projects may take longer to complete.

V. Selection Criteria

Both past NYSHealth grantees and new organizations are welcome to apply. The most competitive proposals will align with the Advancing Healthy Food, Healthy Lives goals and strategies, with a focus on improving racial and health equity in New York's food system. All online inquiry forms are reviewed internally by Foundation staff, who will invite selected applicants to submit a full proposal. A panel of external experts and Foundation staff will then review full proposals. Selection criteria will include, but not be limited to:

- The project will have a regional or statewide impact, or have the potential for replication beyond the local level;
- The project leverages federal, State, or local priorities and resources; and
- The project addresses racial and health inequities in the food system and among food-insecure New Yorkers.

VI. Application Process

Step 1: All applicants are required to complete an online inquiry form. The deadline for the online inquiry



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form is June 9, 2021, at 1 p.m.

Step 2: After reviewing all inquiry forms, NYSHealth staff members will advise applicants on whether to submit a full proposal. Applicants not invited to submit a full proposal will be notified by July 31st. The deadline for the full proposal is August 25, 2021, at 1 p.m..

Programmatic questions regarding project ideas should be addressed to HFHLRFP@nyshealth.org.

Technical questions regarding the online application system should be e-mailed to grantsmanagement@nyshealth.org.

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