Frequently Asked Questions

Overview of Competition

1. What is the purpose of this competition?

To bring housing and health organizations together to address the negative impact that a lack of stable, affordable housing has on children's health outcomes, ultimately to build the case to policymakers to dedicate resources to these types of programs and partnerships.

2. How much are the grant awards?

Planning grant awards will be up to $40,000. Up to four planning grants will be awarded. Implementation grants award amounts are to be determined.

3. Are grants restricted for certain uses?

These grants will be project support grants and applicants will be required to submit a budget.

4. What is the time period of the awards?

Planning grants are for 9 months: April 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015. Implementation grants are for 3 years: April 2016 – April 2019.

5. What is the application review process?

Planning Grant Phase	
December 12, 2014	Planning grant proposals due
February 16 – March 13, 2015	Planning grant finalists interviewed by TBF staff & external review committee
March 30, 2015	Announce award(s) of planning grants
Implementation Phase *(tentative dates)*	
February 1, 2016	Implementation grant proposals due
February - March 2016	Implementation grant finalists interviewed by TBF staff & external review committee
April 2016	Announce award(s) of implementation grants

Eligibility

6. **My organization has received (or is currently receiving) funding from the Boston Foundation, are we eligible?**
   Yes.

7. **My organization is already part of a collaboration working to improve health outcomes through housing stabilization, are we eligible?**
   Yes. However, TBF will only fund existing programs that are proposing to add a new component or partner, or are expanding the scale or geography of the program.

8. **Neither my organization nor my partner organization owns or manages affordable housing, are we eligible?**
   Yes.

9. **One of the partners in my collaboration is a for profit organization. Is this a problem?**
   No, as long as there is one 501(c) 3 in the collaboration this is fine. The 501(c)3 will be the recipient of the grant money, however will not be the "lead agency." All members of partnerships are expected to participate equally.

10. **Can one organization submit multiple applications with different partners?**
    Yes, we anticipate that some organizations that serve multiple communities may submit applications as a part of more than one partnership.

11. **If my partnership receives a planning grant, but wants to add an additional partner for implementation is that okay?**
    Yes.

12. **My program serves children who are currently within the 0 – 11 year age range, however many of these children will be over 11 years of age when the implementation phase of this initiative is complete. Are we still eligible?**
    Yes, as long as the children served by your program are within the 0 – 11 years of age range at the start of program intervention, your model is eligible.

13. **My program is for adults, is it eligible? My program serves a wider range of ages than included in HSAH's target population (i.e. 5 – 15 yrs.), is it eligible?**
    The goal of HSAH is to test the theory that improving housing stability for low-income, housing insecure children 0 – 11 years of age and their families will improve children's health outcomes. All models must serve children in the 0 – 11 years age range, however if your model additionally serves children and adults outside this age range you are eligible to apply, but should you receive a grant all HSAH funding would be directed toward work targeting the 0 – 11 age range.

14. **Does there need to be consistency in terms of where or with whom the child resides?**
    No, there does not need to be consistency regarding where or with whom the child resides. For instance, a program serving homeless families living in shelters is eligible.

15. **My idea is to work with low-income renters whose housing is currently stable but may not be stable in the future. They live in a HUD-subsidized property that may opt out of the program. Is that population eligible for this initiative?**
    There are many properties in Massachusetts that have received subsidies or mortgages from the state or federal governments that are eligible to exit those programs after a certain period of time. When properties "opt out," enormous financial stress can be placed on residents that result in housing instability. While this is an important issue, it is not one that this initiative seeks to address. Health Starts at Home is targeted to families that have already experienced housing instability over a period of time, not families who *may* experience housing instability.

16. **Would families who have received an eviction notice qualify as "housing unstable" for purposes of this initiative?**
    Receiving an eviction notice in and of itself would not qualify a family as housing unstable. They must also meet one of the criteria we lay out in the request for proposals for housing instability.

17. **Are homeless families living in hotels considered stable for the purposes of this initiative?**
    No, however if you are working with a homeless population living on the streets, in their car etc. shelter can be included in your model as a step towards stability. In this case the housing that the family will be living in must be identified and the shelter must be a part of the overall continuum to stability.

18. **How does being "behind on rent" fit into the competition's definition of housing instability?**
    We will allow applicants to propose programs that address the forms of housing instability already listed in the RFP as well as households with a history of being significantly behind on rent. This means that households would have to have been significantly behind on rent 2 or more times in the past year **and** are currently behind on rent. Applicants that wish to serve households that meet this definition will need to provide information in their application detailing the nature of their work with these families and the volume they imagine serving. If these families are paying less than 50% of their income towards rent, applicants should justify serving these families as opposed to families with more severe rent burdens.

19. **Is advocacy or policy work aimed at altering government policies eligible for funding under this initiative?**
    This initial phase of the initiative is aimed at identifying programmatic models that increase housing stability and in turn result in improved health outcomes for children. In later phases, we plan to take the lessons from this work to create an advocacy agenda.

20. **What kind of projects or organizations should NOT apply?**
    - Projects that do not serve the [Boston Foundation's catchment area](#).
    - Partnerships in which no organization is a registered 501(c) (3), or has a 501(c) (3) fiscal sponsor.
    - Projects that focus on remediating poor housing conditions (such as mold) that directly trigger poor health outcomes. However, if a partnership finds an alternative funding source to address housing quality issues, those funds could be paired with the Boston Foundation-funded program.

Project Inquiries

21. **What are some examples of possible projects?**

    We envision that there will be a great deal of diversity in the types of partnerships and programs proposed. This list is certainly not exhaustive and is intended to demonstrate the breadth of partnerships we anticipate emerging:
    - A legal services provider and a hospital collaborate on defending families facing eviction.
    - A public housing authority and local community clinic create an emergency fund to assist frequent users of the health care system pay their rent.
    - A housing counseling group partners with the local community health clinic and a local landlord to train tenants on their rights and obligations under their leases and trains property management staff in resources available to families behind on their rent.
    - A social service organization that tries to place families in housing could partner with a health center and a large affordable housing owner to place homeless or near-homeless families in housing with supports.
    - An organization that serves families that are high end users of the health system and have a history of evictions could partner with a supportive housing provider and hospital to house the families and provide services to help them maintain their tenancy.

22. **Is improved housing stability expected to be an outcome of this initiative?**

    Yes.

23. **What does persons-per-room mean?**

    Having more than one person per room in a dwelling unit has been used by academic researchers and by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban development to measure overcrowding. This measure utilizes rooms (excluding bathrooms) instead of bedrooms to measure overcrowding. For more information on measuring overcrowding please see:
    http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/measuring_overcrowding_in_hsg.pdf

Grant Awardees

24. What is expected from planning grant award winners?

Planning grantee partnerships will use funds to develop a detailed proposal for a scalable program or intervention. Additionally, partners will determine roles and responsibilities, the theory of change and program model, baseline indicators and the number of households that can be served, and the budget. During the 9-month planning period, grant recipients will be required to maintain ongoing communication with the Boston Foundation, including attending a kick-off meeting with other grantees. At the completion of the planning phase, grantee partnerships will submit a final detailed proposal for implementation.

25. How much access will planning grantees receive to the evaluation team?

Planning grantees will have access to Health Starts at Home's chosen evaluators, however to what extent cannot be determined until the evaluators have been brought on board. (This answer will be updated at that time)

26. Can implementation award winners conduct their own evaluation?

Yes. However, in addition to any other evaluation award winners may conduct, they are expected to work with the evaluation consultants chosen by the Boston Foundation during and after the implementation phase of the initiative.

27. Can applicants apply for the implementation grant ONLY (and not the planning grant)?

Yes, subject to the availability of resources. If you do not feel you need a planning grant you may apply for the implementation grant only. However, you may not reapply for an implementation grant if you applied for but did not receive a planning grant. Please note the competition for the implementation grants will not occur until 2016 and receipt of an implementation grant by a non-planning grant team will be subject to availability of resources.

28. Are planning grant winners guaranteed an implementation grant?

No.

29. How much are grantees expected to fundraise?

Planning grant awardees are not expected to fundraise (though they certainly can). With support from the Boston Foundation staff, implementation grant awardees will be expected to participate in a rigorous campaign to seek supplemental funds for their project. Fundraising goals will be based on organizational size and fundraising capacity of each partner i.e. larger organizations with greater capacity are expected to raise more funds than smaller organizations with less capacity.

30. Can outside funding be used?

Yes.

Other Questions

31. Should we submit an LOI in addition to the application?

No, please submit an application ONLY via this submission page.

32. I have a great idea, but want to find a partner organization.

Our Information Session and Networking Breakfast is a great place to meet a partner organization. This event will take place on November 3rd from 9AM-11AM at the Boston Foundation (75 Arlington St. 10th Floor). Register here.

33. I have a great idea, but I'm still not sure if it's a fit. I still have questions, who should I contact?

We are happy to answer questions about high level eligibility but cannot comment on specifics of a project prior to the application deadline. Please email hsah@tbf.org or call 617-338-1608 if you have any further questions.