



Cultivating Healthy Communities

2017 Grant Program



Aetna Foundation Request for Proposal

The Aetna Foundation is the independent charitable and philanthropic arm of Aetna Inc. Our mission is to promote wellness, health, and high-quality health care for everyone, while supporting the communities we serve. We work with organizations at the national and local levels whose programs can help us achieve this mission. **The Cultivating Healthy Communities (CHC) grant program is geared specifically to local nonprofit organizations that work with underserved, low-income, and minority populations in the continental United States. We are committed to building the evaluation capacity of CHC grantees, raising the visibility of their good work, and being a thought partner in sustainability planning.**

Overview and Purpose

Through this RFP, the Aetna Foundation seeks to support communities' efforts to become healthier places to live, work, learn, play and pray. Through this Request for Proposals, we invite proposals that address the [social determinants of health](#) and participants' physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. This lens for understanding community health shaped our selection of the five domains shown in Table 1.

We seek grantees committed to improving the health of their participants by focusing on activities that align to one or two of these domains. Applicants also

must 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.

We are especially interested in projects that advance resident- or youth-led initiatives and approaches that foster participants' social engagement and reduce isolation. You can find more information about the [types of projects](#) we seek in the Frequently Asked Questions section of this RFP.

Table 1: Cultivating Healthy Communities Domains and Indicators

DOMAIN	INDICATORS
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved walkability, bikeability, and public spaces in a community Increased access to healthy foods through development of new or enhanced retail spaces
COMMUNITY SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased incidences of bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation in schools
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased exposure to air and water contaminants Increased understanding, monitoring, and reporting of local environmental hazards by community residents
HEALTHY BEHAVIORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables Increased (at home) healthy meal preparation Increased physical activity and fitness Increased practice of stress reduction and self-care activities
SOCIAL/ECONOMIC FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased job readiness and entrepreneurship skills in the fields of urban agriculture and clean energy Increased skills in financial literacy and planning (this must be proposed in combination with at least one Healthy Behaviors indicator)

Funding Guidelines

We expect to award up to \$2 million in grants through this RFP. Applicants can request a total grant amount between **\$50,000 and \$100,000 for the entire project period**. Projects can last between 18 and 24 months, and must start between August 15, 2017 and October 15, 2017. We are unable to accept applications from organizations with active Aetna Foundation grants as of June 30, 2017.

Any nonprofit, including federally recognized Indian tribes, in the continental United States is eligible to apply. However, we will not consider applications from organizations with annual operating budgets below \$250,000. 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 budget will not be considered.) Indirect costs cannot exceed 15% of the total amount requested.

Application Process

This will be a highly competitive funding opportunity. Due to the anticipated interest in this RFP, review of proposals will be organized in two stages. Eligible organizations may submit a Stage 1 application, which will be screened for alignment with the programmatic priorities of this RFP. Applicants whose Stage 1 applications pass through 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 14, 2017 by 3 p.m. ET
Notification of Stage 1 decisions	May 19, 2017
Webinars for applicants invited to Stage 2	Week of May 22-26, 2017
Stage 2 applications due	June 16, 2017 by 3 p.m. ET
Notification of Stage 2 decisions	July 21, 2017
Allowable project start dates	August 15 through October 15, 2017

Requirements for Stage 1 Applications

Stage 1 applications must be submitted through the Aetna Foundation's [grant application portal](#) on or before **April 14, 2017 by 3 p.m. ET/12p.m. PT.** 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 date and time. If there are any updates on the day applications are due, they will be published on the Aetna Foundation website.

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

- Domain and Indicators:** 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 domain you select. In 2016, the Healthy Behaviors domain received the most applications, and hence, was the most competitive.
- Mission:** Your organization's stated purpose / mission statement (50 words)
- Statement of Need:** The specific need in your community that the project meets (100 words)
- Anticipated Audience:** The characteristics of the individuals to be served by the project (100 words)
- Project Activities:** The project's activities and how these activities will respond to the stated need (250 words)
- Capacity:** 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 and Review Criteria for Stage 2 Applications

Stage 2 applications must be submitted through the Aetna Foundation's [grant application portal](#) on or before **June 16, 2017 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 date and time.

When reading Stage 2 applications, reviewers will consider the thoroughness and clarity of each application's descriptions of the following:

- Project Goals:** The results that your project seeks to achieve (100 words)
- Project Activities:** The activities you will carry out to achieve your goals (250 words)
- Project Outcomes:** The specific effects that your project activities will have on your target audience. Outcomes should describe changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. (100 words)
- Evaluation Plan:** The methods you will use to measure your progress toward your outcomes (250 words)
- Staff Qualifications:** Brief descriptions of your proposed staffing plan and the qualifications of your staff members to carry out this project (100 words)
- Timeline:** A chronological description of key project activities (250 words)
- Sustainability:** A plan for continuing project activities beyond Aetna Foundation funding (100 words)
- Communication/Social Media:** The platforms that you use to communicate about your organization's work (100 words)

Stage 2 applicants must also submit the following attachments:

- Project budget
- List of Board of Directors' Names and Affiliations
- Board of Directors Disclaimer forms (if applicable)
- IRS Form W-9, signed and dated in the current year (2017)

Reporting Requirements



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

Notification



Organizations submitting a Stage 1 application will be notified by email of the Aetna Foundation's decision no later than May 19, 2017.

Organizations invited to submit a Stage 2 application will be notified by email of the Aetna Foundation's funding decision no later than July 21, 2017.

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

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.

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 the [website](#).

What are the key dates?

- April 14, 2017 by 3 p.m. EST - Stage 1 Applications Due
 - May 19, 2017 - Notification of Stage 1 Decisions
 - June 16, 2017 by 3 p.m. EST – Stage 2 Applications Due
 - July 21, 2017 – Notification of Stage 2 Decisions
 - August 15, 2017 – Earliest possible Project Start Date
 - October 15, 2017 - Latest possible Project Start Date
-

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 continental 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.

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. The fiscal sponsor can only submit one application in response to this RFP.

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

No, an organization may only submit one application.

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?

Yes, you may select up to two domains for your project. However, this will not affect your application's chances of being funded.

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 more than one organization 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, 2017, 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.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH APPLICATIONS YOU'LL FUND?

What are you looking for in a project?

We're interested in projects that support communities in their efforts to be healthier. Applicants should review Table 1 carefully to determine the domain that best describes their proposed project. While not exhaustive, the list below includes examples of some activities that align with each domain.

Built Environment:

- Inventory, display, and marketing improvements for fresh produce or healthy food at local corner stores
- Buyer's collectives or co-ops to purchase fresh or local produce
- Short-term, low-cost tactical urbanism projects, such as parklets, car-free days, or pop-up markets/retail
- Bicycle education, safety, sharing, or parking projects

Community Safety:

- School-based programs that teach strategies for reducing bullying/cyberbullying, or encourage acceptance and understanding of peers from different backgrounds
- Programs that address the socio-emotional health of students who have experienced threats, trauma or harassment rooted in hate or bias

Environmental Exposures:

- Education of parents or teachers of young children about sources and effects of contaminants
- Community training/mobilization to identify environmental hazards

Healthy Behaviors:

- Cooking or nutrition education classes
- Community- or school-based fitness classes
- Yoga, meditation, or mindfulness activities
- Community or home gardening activities

Social/Economic Factors:

- Training for workers going into fields relevant to our domains, such as urban farming
- Financial literacy as it supports other indicators in Table 1, such as budgeting for healthier food options or reducing anxiety/stress

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 the each stage of the application. 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 measure your progress. 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 most cases, your plan should include methods that will demonstrate changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors.

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 am on the right track?

Due to the large volume of applications we receive, we are unable to review applications in progress. We can only review completed applications submitted by April 14, 2017, at 3 p.m. EST. We reserve the right to reject incomplete applications.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING GUIDELINES AND BUDGET REQUIREMENTS?**What is the dollar range of grant awards?**

We expect to award grants either at \$50,000 or \$100,000 for projects lasting between 18 and 24 months. For a 24-month grant, the maximum award will be \$50,000 per year.

Will a grant always be for the full amount I request?

No. We may award partial funding. This is dependent on the scope of the proposed project, goals, activities, outcomes, and evaluation plan.

How many grants will you award?

We expect to award up to \$2 million in grants through this RFP.

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, 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.

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.

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 14, 2017. 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 a confirmation email that we received your application. Please allow several hours for your confirmation email to arrive. It is typical for us to receive over 1,000 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 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.

HOW WILL I LEARN OF THE STATUS OF MY APPLICATION(S)?**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 until submission or before April 14, 2017 by 3 p.m. EST. You will receive an email from mail@grantapplication.com with our decision no later than May 19, 2017. 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 until submission or before June 16, 2017 by 3 p.m. EST. You will receive an email from mail@grantapplication.com with our decision no later than July 21, 2017. 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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Click [here](#) to apply