

Opportunity for Health Impact Assessment: Frequently Asked Questions

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ELIGIBILITY

1. Who is eligible to receive a grant under this call for proposals (CFP)?

- Applicants must be a tax-exempt organization, including educational institutions, as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or a state, tribal, or local agency. Private foundations or non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations are not eligible for this funding opportunity.
- Applicant organizations must be physically located in one of the eligible states at the time of application and be performing work in one or more of the *Places of Interest*. Eligibility of organizations registered as a nonprofit in another state will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- Proposals from less populated or rural jurisdictions are encouraged as there is no minimum population size that must be served by the proposal.

2. If my organization does not have 501(c)(3) status, is my organization still eligible to apply?

Yes, if it is a state, tribal or local government, or a governmental agency (such as a health department, planning department, or department of environmental quality). Also, it is acceptable for a non-501(c)(3) or 509(a) organization (including for-profit organizations) to be a partner, subcontractor, or supporting organization for an eligible applicant's proposal.

3. How were the *Places of Interest* for this CFP selected?

The Health Impact Project identified states where more than six counties had poor performance on social and economic health factors—as defined by County Health Rankings and Roadmaps using measures related to education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety—compared with the national average.

In addition to County Health Rankings and Roadmaps data, the Project made strategic decisions given other investments and additional data and maps related to [persistent poverty](#), [upward economic mobility](#), and [distribution of private grant funding](#) in the U.S.

4. My organization is located in one of the eligible states but is not in one of the counties listed in the *Places of Interest*. Is my organization still eligible to apply?

Yes, but your proposal should articulate how an HIA could address health in one or more of the *Places of Interest*. Applicants located outside of one of the *Places of Interest* should carefully

consider the selection criteria, which emphasize meaningful community engagement, investment in the community affected by the issues the project will address, and responsiveness to community priorities and concerns.

5. If my organization has not completed a health impact assessment (HIA) before applying, are we eligible for funding?

Yes. Prior HIA experience is not required to be eligible for a grant, and is not part of the selection criteria. Through partnerships with HIA experts, the Health Impact Project will provide tailored training and technical assistance to all grantees.

6. If we already have a grant from RWJF or Pew, can we apply for this funding?

Yes, provided that the project for which you are applying under this initiative is distinct from your other RWJF- or Pew-funded projects.

7. Is there a limit on the number of proposals submitted by a single organization?

Organizations should only submit one proposal for this funding opportunity. The Health Impact Project will fund no more than one full proposal per organization. Applicants are encouraged to coordinate with local partners in advance of application submission.

8. Can multiple organizations submit a joint proposal?

Collaborative proposals, involving organizations in addition to the applicant, are encouraged. Applicants must identify the lead organization to receive the grant and act as the fiscal agent, describe the relationship between the lead organization and other partners, and outline the contributions that each partner organization will make to the project. Also, note that the budget salaries line item should *only* include staff salaries for the organization that would receive the grant.

9. Are there restrictions on collaborations with for-profit firms?

A grantee may choose to subcontract part of the HIA work to a for-profit firm. Using a consultant as a contributor/author to the HIA is acceptable, but a substantial commitment of time from the applicant organization or other partner is also expected to address selection criteria. HIA training and technical assistance will be provided through a separate agreement funded by the Health Impact Project and therefore do not need to be included in the grant proposal or budget.

10. Can individuals apply for funding?

No. This grant will support organizations that seek to complete an HIA. The Health Impact Project will not directly fund individuals under this solicitation.

11. If my organization or agency is not primarily focused on public health, may we apply for this funding?

Yes. However, per the selection criteria, a successful project team will include at least one person with an understanding of public health and preferably with experience working in social determinants of health or at the intersection of health and another sector. Note that we intentionally defined an “understanding of public health” broadly and did not require specific educational background, position, or title at a particular organization type.

12. What if I am building on an existing grant or seeking support from additional funders?

Under this award, grant funds must be used to develop and implement a new HIA. Grant funds

may not be used to complete an HIA that is already underway or supplement grant funds for another ongoing project unrelated to the HIA.

13. Can large institutions such as universities submit more than one proposal for distinct projects?

Yes, but we encourage collaboration among existing local partners with shared goals. However, within a large organization, we realize there may be separate offices (and grants systems) and avoiding two applications may not be practical. We ask that organizations do their best to coordinate and avoid unintentionally submitting multiple applications on similar topics or with similar partners.

14. Are federal agencies eligible to apply? Are regional planning organizations eligible to apply?

Federal agencies are not eligible to apply. While there may be some nuances to eligibility for regional planning organizations, these entities are generally eligible under this CFP.

15. My organization has conducted an HIA previously. Am I eligible to apply?

One of the goals of this funding opportunity is to build HIA capacity for organizations in the *Places of Interest* (as defined in *Appendix A* in the CFP). Applicants with previous HIA experience should articulate in the proposal how they will achieve this goal through answers to the proposal narrative questions.

16. Does this CFP favor one organization type over another?

As stated in the CFP, community based organizations are encouraged to apply. All applicants should refer to the selection criteria. When considering the type of organization or collaboration on a project, also bear in mind the range of skills that may be required for a successful HIA, such as expertise in public health, community engagement, and policy experience in the issue that the HIA will address.

17. The webinar mentioned that capital improvement projects are not eligible projects for this funding opportunity. What is a capital improvement project?

Capital improvement projects are generally short-term priority projects and purchases. For example, a community association may be interested in building a playground, constructing sidewalks, or adding street lights to improve a neighborhood. Grant funds may not be used for construction, but may be used to conduct an HIA to inform related decisions. For example, grantees might conduct an HIA on proposed land use changes or transportation projects that result in new developments, sidewalks, etc. However, the grant funds would not be used directly for construction of the sidewalks.

HOW TO APPLY

18. Do I have to submit a proposal online?

Yes. Proposals will only be accepted through the online application system, which opens in July 2017. Refer to our "[Funding Opportunities](#)" page for updates.

19. What is the deadline to submit a proposal?

Proposals must be submitted via the online application system by 8 p.m. ET, September 15, 2017 to be eligible for an award.

20. Can I fax or e-mail a proposal? Can I send a brief proposal via standard mail?

No. Faxed, e-mailed, or mailed proposals will not be accepted. The proposal, including budget and required documents, must be submitted through the online application system. Please see the “Online Application System” section for more details. Please contact the Health Impact Project (202-540-6012, healthimpactproject@pewtrusts.org) if there is a unique situation that prohibits your organization from submitting an application online.

21. What is the page limit for the proposal?

There is no page limit for the proposal, but the narrative should be no longer than 1,500 words. Additional instructions for the budget and other required documents are included in the CFP and online system.

22. If we are not selected under this CFP, will we still be eligible for other Health Impact Project grants?

Yes, interested applicants may apply for other Health Impact Project grants.

23. Will I receive specific comments on my proposal after a decision is made?

Due to the large volume of proposals we receive, we cannot commit to providing individual critiques of, or comments on, all proposals. We may, however, be able to offer limited feedback on a case-by-case basis, dependent on the volume of proposals received.

24. What happens after I submit my proposal?

The advisory selection committee will review proposals, and Pew will notify applicants of a funding decision in December 2017. The Health Impact Project will contact applicants regarding the status of their proposal and any additional information that may be required on an ad hoc basis.

Additionally, as part of the final selection process, the Health Impact Project may conduct site visits based on the recommendation of the advisory selection committee. During these visits, applicants would be asked to provide a meeting space and gather key staff and partners to discuss the proposal. Site visits may occur in October or November 2017.

25. I missed the webinar. Are the slides or recordings publicly available?

Yes, presentation slides and recordings will be available on [our website](#).

ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM

26. How do I reset my password/how do I locate my username?

Select the, “Can’t access your account?” link from the login page and follow the prompts to re-set your password. Usernames are generated automatically based on the email address used to create the account (e.g., “janesmith” for “janesmith@email.com”). If you have trouble accessing your account, email Healthimpactproject@pewtrusts.org with the email address and name of the organization associated with your account. You will receive an email containing instructions on how to proceed within 24 hours.

27. I created a profile but can’t get back into the system and can’t find the application website link.

The application link can be found on our [Funding Opportunities](#) webpage or at the link below. Log in to the system with the username and password used when you created your account. If you cannot remember your username, email Healthimpactproject@pewtrusts.org for support.

Online application system:

https://pewtrusts.force.com/FGM_Portal_CommunitySignin?utm_campaign=2017-07-14+HIP&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Pew

28. There is no character counter in the proposal narrative section. How will I know when I've reached the 1,500 word limit for the proposal narrative?

We recommend keeping track of word counts in a separate Word document, then copy and paste responses into the application system.

29. What file formats are supported as attachments by the application system?

Microsoft Word and Excel files as well as Adobe PDFs are supported by the system.

30. I can't upload documents in the system –what could be wrong?

The system upload function is not compatible with Internet Explorer. However, other browsers such as Google Chrome, Safari, or Mozilla Firefox are compatible with the system. If you are using a supported browser, ensure plug-ins are enabled and that the file you wish to upload is saved on your computer. If you continue having issues, send an email to Healthimpactproject@pewtrusts.org and, if possible, include screenshots of the error you are receiving.

31. Can applications be saved and completed at a later time?

Yes, however you should click the “Save” button at the bottom of the screen before closing out of the system. Also note the system will not allow you to save a page if you have not completed required questions.

32. I am having other technical issues with the system, who do I contact?

Send a detailed message describing your issue to Healthimpactproject.org and someone will be in contact with you as soon as possible.

BUDGET

33. How much can I request for my project? What is the grant period?

The Health Impact Project will award grants of up to \$100,000 for HIAs to be completed within 24 months.

34. If I am awarded funding through the Health Impact Project, am I prohibited from seeking other sources of funding for the same project?

No. We encourage grantees to leverage our funding and seek additional sources of support for the project. Grantees should notify the Health Impact Project when additional funds from other sources are awarded for a project that the Health Impact Project is funding.

35. It says in the CFP that funds should be included for grantees to participate in an annual grantee meeting or regional training. What does this mean?

The Health Impact Project will convene a grantee meeting in early 2018. Attendance at the grantee meeting will be mandatory, and grantees should budget travel for up to two

participants for three nights. The meeting will provide an opportunity for grantees to learn from each other and other HIA practitioners' experiences, successes, and challenges.

36. How do we define indirect costs? What percentage is allowable?

Indirect costs funded by Pew are limited to 10 percent of salaries and benefits for staff at the grantee organization allocated in the grant. Indirect costs are grant expenses that are not specifically attributable to the Pew-funded project, but represent overhead operation costs that the grantee is attempting to recoup by allocating the overhead and charging its projects. If, for example, you typically charge a general rate for office supplies, this would likely be covered in the indirect line item. However, if you will need specific supplies for the HIA project or stakeholder meetings, these should be included in the supplies line item instead. Salaries and benefits of partner organizations should be listed under the consultants line item and do not count towards indirect costs.

37. Can grant funds be used for incentives for residents and stakeholders?

Yes, grant funds can be used for honoraria or other incentives for community residents and stakeholders, as well as other meeting costs such as meeting space, food, beverages, and limited supplies.

38. My organization is a new nonprofit that was created less than three years ago. Does the requirement of audited financial statements for the three most recent years apply?

No, the requirement for three years of audited financial statements will be waived for new organizations. However, applicants should provide the most recent year(s) of audited financial statements available.

ABOUT HIA AND RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

39. What technical assistance will the Health Impact Project provide to grantees?

Awardees will receive tailored training and technical assistance throughout the grant period. This will most likely include an on-site HIA training for the grantee and its partners and stakeholders, followed by ongoing support through phone calls, e-mails, and feedback on draft or interim work products. Typically this means that the grantee shares draft documents at each stage of the HIA process (e.g. a write-up of the HIA screening process or assessment plan) to receive guidance on HIA practice step-by-step. Additionally, grantees will participate in quarterly peer-learning phone calls with other projects and meet in-person at a grantee meeting.

40. What is the relationship between HIA and environmental impact assessment (EIA)?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) mandates an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement (EIS—a form of EIA) for any federal decision that may have significant impacts on the environment. Several states and territories have similar laws. NEPA and some state environmental policy acts (SEPAs) have strong requirements to address health. HIA can be a tool for an agency seeking to enhance its treatment of human health in an EIA. Furthermore, provisions in NEPA and some SEPAs allow local or state agencies to cooperate in the preparation of an EIA, and this has proven to be a powerful venue for HIA. For more information on integrating HIA into state and federal EIA, please see the following resources:

- A. [National Research Council "Improving Health in the United States," appendix F.](#)

- B. [Bhatia, R and Wernham, A, "Integrating Human Health into Environmental Impact Assessment: An Unrealized Opportunity for Environmental Health and Justice." Environmental Health Perspectives 116: 991-1000.](#)
- C. [The Network for Public Health Law, "Integration of Health and Health Impact Assessments Via Environmental Policy Acts," December 2016.](#)
- D. [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, "Using Health Impact Assessment to Enhance the Environmental and Regulatory Process: Case Studies and Key Messages," March 2017.](#)

41. The CFP discusses "dissemination" of HIA findings and recommendations. What does this mean?

The Health Impact Project expects that HIA reports funded through this CFP will be publicly available and included on our [HIA map](#). HIA is a powerful tool to translate community perspectives and public health data into policy change. The process of putting recommendations into practice or getting them formally adopted, however, is complex and varies depending on the setting. In practice, an effective dissemination strategy often requires activities at each step of the HIA process. For some HIAs, dissemination may require working within an existing legal structure such as a zoning ordinance or NEPA to institute new legal standards or requirements; in others, it may involve collaborating with stakeholders to develop and implement voluntary actions or negotiate compromise solutions; and in some situations, it may involve public advocacy to gain visibility and traction for the issues raised in the HIA.

42. Who typically identifies or proposes an HIA and how is the HIA topic determined?

Different types of groups may identify the potential for an HIA to inform a decision-making process. In some cases, a decision-making body may request more information about how a policy or project change would affect health. In other cases, community groups may want to bring findings and recommendations to policymakers. Other times, HIAs may be mandated. Applicants are not required to identify a particular decision, but should be able to think ahead to the stakeholders they would engage in the HIA screening step and how they will ultimately select a decision.

43. How should we structure our proposal if we have already identified an HIA topic area or specific decision?

All grantees must complete the six steps of the HIA process, including screening. If you have already identified a topic for an HIA, you may have a shorter screening phase. Based on past HIA grants, it is possible that the decision-making timeline or context may change between the time that you submit an application and the start of the HIA project. Revisiting screening in the first month(s) of your grant will allow time for stakeholders to be engaged in the process, and to receive training and technical assistance before moving ahead with the project. We encourage you to compare the decision-making timeline with the grant timeline. We expect that grants will be awarded in January 2018, and HIA reports will be completed in 18 months, by June 2019.

44. How should we identify partners if we do not know the HIA topic at the time of application?

HIAs engage a broad range of partners with expertise in various sectors. While you are not required to complete screening and select a specific decision as part of the application process, the proposal narrative asks organizations to identify social and economic factors and potential decisions that could be affected by an HIA. Based on the more general areas of community interest or concern, you will likely have an idea of the sector in which you would be working. In the application you may also list partners that you would likely engage in the screening process.

45. What resources are available to learn more about HIA?

- [The Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment \(SOPHIA\)](#) has produced many HIA resource documents and maintains links to other partner materials.
- The Health Impact Project has [a map of completed and in-progress HIAs in the U.S.](#)
- Human Impact Partners provides [general HIA guides and toolkits for each step of the process.](#)
- Kansas Health Institute recently released an [HIA handbook.](#)

OTHER

46. Will the Health Impact Project fund a project that would involve shorter “rapid” HIAs?

In some instances, HIA teams identify (or screen) an HIA topic with a short decision-making timeline. In other words, the decision the HIA will inform will be made in several months or less. While it is possible that we would fund applications that result in a rapid HIA, we expect that the majority of grantees will require the anticipated 12-month time period to receive HIA training, screen an appropriate HIA topic, and complete the HIA process. However, “desktop” HIAs – projects that may occur on condensed timelines and limit or lack stakeholder input – will not be competitive under this CFP due to the selection criteria and grant deliverables related to stakeholder engagement.

47. When will we know if we are selected to participate in the national study of HIAs being conducted by a Pew contractor?

The Health Impact Project intends to notify grantees selected to participate in the study between January and March 2018. Selection will be based on a number of considerations, such as which specific health determinants your HIA seeks to address, the decision-making level your HIA seeks to inform, and geographic diversity among HIAs participating in the study.

48. If we are selected to participate in the national study of HIAs, when will we know what activities we will undertake?

The contractor will work closely with selected sites to develop a commitment letter that outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of each participating site. Most sites will be asked to help connect the contractor to decision-makers who can share their perspectives on the HIA through phone interviews and to provide relevant HIA documents with the contractor to support the study. A subset of sites in the study will serve as in-depth case studies. These sites may be asked to assist in distributing questionnaires to community members involved with or identified as the target population in each HIA and/or host a site visit. Depending on the level of activities your site is participating in, you may receive modest financial compensation and technical assistance from the contractor to thank you for your time.

49. If we are selected to participate in the national study of HIAs, do we still need to complete the monitoring and evaluation step of the HIA process?

Yes. All grantees are expected to determine the effectiveness of the HIA process, track impacts of the HIA on the decision-making process and final decisions, and develop a plan to monitor the effects of the implemented decision on health and health determinants. If you are selected for the national study, you will be expected to coordinate with the contractor as you implement your monitoring and evaluation plan.

50. If we are selected to participate in the national study of HIAs, will the findings affect our funding status or eligibility?

No. The national study of HIAs aims to examine the impact of HIAs across the U.S. for the purpose of filling knowledge gaps of HIA practitioners, policymakers, and funders of HIAs. The findings will be used broadly to document whether HIAs are associated with improvements in health determinants and promotion of health equity and to identify ways to strengthen HIA practice. The findings of the contractor will have no impact on grantees' funding status or eligibility for future grants.