

## Requests for Letters of Interest (RLI)

### The Pew Charitable Trusts' Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Initiative Community Opioid Response and Evaluation (CORE) Project

RLI No.:	SUPTI-RWJF-2019-01 (Phase I)
Project Topic:	The CORE project will advance adoption of best practices in addressing opioid use disorder through the evaluation of existing community innovations. The CORE project will provide support for up to six community research collaboratives to conduct robust evaluations of a local initiative through granted funds and technical assistance.
Issuance Date:	July 24, 2019
Deadline for Questions:	11:59PM ET on August 7, 2019
Deadline for Letters:	11:59PM ET on August 30, 2019
Point of Contact:	Leslie Paulson, Officer, Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Initiative, <a href="mailto:COREproject@pewtrusts.org">COREproject@pewtrusts.org</a> .

#### Purpose

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[The Pew Charitable Trusts \("Pew"\)](#) is supporting the Community Opioid Response and Evaluation ("CORE") project to:

- Identify a wide array of diverse communities implementing innovative, multi-sectoral, equity-focused programs to address the opioid epidemic;
- Support evaluation of community-based projects to understand the impact of programs across public health, social services, health care, behavioral health, justice, and other community-based settings that work to prevent and treat opioid misuse and opioid use disorder ("OUD") within affected communities; and
- Develop and curate evidence-based resources for communities across the nation seeking to respond to the opioid epidemic.

#### Introduction

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Pew is a global charitable and educational organization that applies a nonpartisan, rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life. Pew partners with a diverse range of donors, public and private organizations, and concerned citizens who share its commitment to practical, fact-based solutions and goal-driven investments to improve society. Pew is a nonprofit organization and section 501(c)(3) public charity, with offices located in Philadelphia, Washington DC, Brussels, and London, and staff that span other regions of the United States, the European Union, and Australia. Through its [Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Initiative](#) ("SUPTI"), Pew works to advance state and federal policies that address the toll of substance misuse, including expanded access to evidence-based treatment.

#### Overview

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The opioid epidemic is a public health crisis that is part of a larger, historical problem of untreated substance use disorders in both rural and urban areas in the United States. According to the [Centers for](#)

[Disease Control and Prevention](#), from 1999 to 2017 more than 700,000 people died as a result of drug overdose, with nearly 400,000 involving a prescription or illicit opioid, often in combination with other substances (e.g. psychostimulants, alcohol, benzodiazepines). In 2017 alone 47,600 overdose deaths were linked to an opioid. The drug overdose epidemic continues to worsen and evolve, underlining the need for greater imagination and a wide range of strategies to address the spectrum of substance misuse challenges.

Communities of all types are dealing with the repercussions of this epidemic, including [rising rates](#) of incarceration, foster care, homelessness, and use of emergency services. This is causing a strain on local resources across a myriad of systems, including criminal justice, law enforcement, emergency response, health care, and public health. This strain is exacerbated for low-income or otherwise marginalized communities, including communities of color and rural communities, who have historically faced deep inequities resulting from unfair systems, policies, and practices such as residential segregation and inadequate access to quality health care and mental health services.

This is a crucial moment to identify and promote community-based solutions. We must take a broader, systems-level look at the foundational issues driving the opioid epidemic. Communities have implemented a wide range of innovative programs that could serve as models for others to address the opioid epidemic if they had a richer evidence base demonstrating their effectiveness. Through evaluation and widespread dissemination of promising or successful community-led approaches we can start addressing the underlying causes and community conditions that impact well-being.

## The Project

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The CORE project, with support from and in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is an effort to help communities on the front lines of the opioid crisis conduct evaluations of existing programs. CORE will enable communities to learn with and from one another as they work to address the opioid epidemic and the inequities facing diverse populations across this nation.

Accordingly, CORE seeks to support community-research collaboratives in evaluating innovative community programs that address OUD. Successful applicants must demonstrate: 1) preliminary information indicating the potential of their program; 2) robust partnerships across government and/or other stakeholders; and 3) a model that can be scaled in other communities.

The project will fund a diverse range of communities. The full spectrum of programs will be considered, with specific attention to the understudied areas of prevention, recovery, and harm reduction.

The CORE award will provide direct financial support for community-based initiatives to conduct evaluations of established programs. In addition, the communities selected will receive assistance from Pew, the CORE Advisory Committee, and an external evaluation advisor (external advisor) on the evaluations; collaborative learning opportunities across peer communities; and support for identifying strategic communications opportunities and conducting targeted media outreach to amplify results.

Each selected community-research collaborative must include both a lead organization and a local evaluation partner to conduct a thorough evaluation of the existing program. While the awardees are expected to develop and conduct the project's evaluation activities, the CORE project provides an external advisor to provide guidance and assistance for the duration of the project to the grantee and the grantee's local evaluation partner. The external advisor and Pew will assist grantees to ensure program evaluations are robust, scientifically sound, and designed to produce results to inform the work of other

stakeholders, including additional communities seeking to implement models as well as state and community-based policymakers.

Each evaluation will include both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative evaluation plans should incorporate process measures (e.g., number of participants, services provided, etc.) and outcome measures (e.g., changes in health conditions, behaviors, quality of life, knowledge, etc.). Qualitative evaluation may include information such as a discussion of challenges overcome, and an assessment of planned versus achieved attainment of objectives, or more formal reports such as focus groups and other structured processes. Participant feedback should be a component of all program evaluation plans.

Pew staff and the external advisor will visit the selected communities and collaboratively aid in the development of evaluation plans. Throughout the project the external advisor will offer direct assistance and feedback on grantee deliverables, including final reporting. The external advisor will also develop a final report summarizing the process and findings of the CORE project.

Selected communities will be expected to meet project deliverables including:

- Work collaboratively with a local evaluation partner to conduct program activities as specified in the proposal.
- Work collaboratively with an external advisor to the program and Pew for the duration of the project.
- Develop and submit a detailed evaluation plan with selected evaluation partner and the external advisor for review and approval by Pew and Advisory Committee.
- Submit annual financial and narrative updates on evaluation activities to Pew.
- Develop in consultation with the external advisor a comprehensive final report detailing the evaluation process, results, and how efforts will be sustained after the grant period.
- Attend annual CORE meetings and present evaluation updates.
- Participate in monthly conference calls of CORE grantees (exact frequency may vary depending on the phase of the project).
- Program staff and evaluation partner will facilitate local community onsite meetings with Pew and external advisor over the course of the project.
- Participate in a CORE conference to share project findings with other community organizations.

## **Applicant Criteria**

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- Awards will be granted to organizations, not to individuals.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.
- Proposals must discuss approaches focused in one geographically-defined community.

- Organizations that focus on individuals with, or at-risk for OUD, and represent diverse geographic areas are encouraged to respond.
- Eligible applicant organizations include public and private nonprofit organizations, local government agencies and non-governmental organizations, federally or state-recognized Indian tribal governments, and indigenous organizations.
- Preference will be given to applicants that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or Type III supporting organizations.
- Only one proposal may be submitted per applicant organization, however; evaluation partners may serve in an evaluation capacity on more than one proposal.

## Selection Criteria

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In addition to the list below, awardees will be selected with the intention of funding a diverse set of community programs based on several criteria, such as location (e.g., region of the country, urban or rural) and whether social determinants of health are addressed. All proposals will be screened for eligibility and then reviewed using the following criteria:

- Preliminary data or information that demonstrates the potential of the program.
- Robust partnerships across government, and/or with other community stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability and capacity to successfully conduct the proposed program activities.
- Evidence of commitment to addressing issues of health equity.
- A model that could be scaled in other communities.
- A commitment to share evaluation findings and lessons learned with a broad array of stakeholders.

## Awards

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- Up to six awards will be made through this funding opportunity.
- Programs may request a budget of up to and including \$500,000, for a project duration of 24 months.
- Grant funds will only support research and evaluation activities of the applicant organization and evaluation partner; funds may not be used to support program work or to implement a new program.
- Applicants should budget for two (2) in-person meetings in Washington DC with other project grantees (two participants can be budgeted to attend each in-person meeting).

## Applying

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Letters of Interest for this solicitation must be submitted via the Pew online system. Visit [www.pewtrusts.org/CORE](http://www.pewtrusts.org/CORE) to register and receive an email invitation with a link to the online system and additional instructions. Once you register and login to the system you will be prompted to include

additional program information and upload your final letter. This system will be used for each phase of the project.

There are two phases in the competitive proposal process:

**Phase I - Letter of Interest:**

All applicant organizations must submit a brief letter, no more than four (4) pages, to be considered for this funding opportunity. The letter will describe the program, its goals, and health equity considerations; either identify the program's evaluation partner or plans for establishing one if selected; and discuss the program elements that would benefit from a more thorough evaluation. *(Applicants are welcome to submit a letter of interest without a confirmed evaluation partner; however, if selected to submit a full proposal, an evaluation partner will be required.)* Please see the exact narrative requirements on the last page of this document.

**Phase II - Full Proposals (if invited):**

A select number of applicants from Phase On will be invited to submit a full proposal of no more than ten (10) pages, including information on a confirmed evaluation partner. Templates for a detailed budget, budget narrative, CVs/resumes, and timeline will be provided. Those applicants invited to submit a full proposal will receive additional information to guide development of full proposal.

## Timeline and Process

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- Questions or requests for clarification regarding this RLI must be submitted via email to [COREproject@pewtrusts.org](mailto:COREproject@pewtrusts.org) no later than Wednesday August 7, 2019.
- Pew will aggregate and anonymize the questions and upload a revised FAQ document to the application site containing answers to all questions submitted by potential respondents by August 16, 2019.
- If your organization is interested in responding to this RLI, please submit a response in accordance with the instructions by **11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on August 30, 2019**.
- In fairness to all applicants, the project will not accept late submissions.
- Pew does not provide individual critiques of letters submitted.

Following review of the RLI responses, Pew will invite selected organizations to submit a full, follow-on Request for Proposals (RFP) to collect more detailed proposals and budgets. Further details regarding the contracting process and Pew's standard terms and conditions would be included in the RFP at that time.

This is a request for letters only. Issuance of this RLI does not in any way obligate Pew to issue any award or follow-on RFP. Pew is not financially or otherwise liable for any costs associated with

the preparation, submission, or presentation of any information in response to this RLI. Pew also retains the right to modify or cancel this RLI at any time at its sole discretion.

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The Pew Charitable Trusts  
901 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Phone: (202) 552-2000  
Email: [info@pewtrusts.org](mailto:info@pewtrusts.org)  
Website: [www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org)

Community Opioid Response and Evaluation Project  
**Letter of Interest Narrative**

Describe your program following the letter of interest narrative sections below (maximum of four (4) pages), single spaced. **Your description must address the following:**

1. Briefly describe your organization
2. Describe the community and population(s) your program serves.
3. Describe the intervention and/or program, including key partners, and how long it has been operating.
4. List the main goals of the program.
5. Outline innovative elements of the program.
6. Describe how the program addresses health equity.
7. Explain how you know the program is achieving its goals, including any preliminary data or other information.
8. Outline what questions about program effectiveness you would seek to answer through an evaluation.
9. Explain what new data you would need to answer the questions.
10. Describe your evaluation partner OR plans for establishing a partnership.

- Your narrative should be typed in 11-point Arial font and black type.
- The entire narrative including section headings, should be no more than four (4) pages with single spacing and one-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides of the page.
- The narrative should **include section headings** for the ten (10) requested items above.
- No additional documents are required or allowed to be submitted.
- Final submission should be uploaded as a PDF attachment.