

HEALTH EQUITY COLLABORATIVES: STRATEGIC INITIATIVE EVALUATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

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INTRODUCTION

Health Foundation of South Florida (“the Foundation”, “HFSF”, “Health Foundation”) seeks to engage a contractor to serve as an evaluator for a multi-year, multi-million-dollar strategic investment in the Health Foundation of South Florida’s Health Equity Collaboratives (“HECs”). HFSF has launched four (4) Health Equity Collaboratives aimed at addressing and reducing health disparities in underserved communities throughout South Florida. These collaboratives involve 24 stakeholders, including community organizations and healthcare providers working together to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities among target populations.

The selected evaluator will be responsible for guiding the Foundation in designing and implementing an evaluation plan that will assess (1) the impact and effectiveness of the HECs; and (2) the sustainability and the return on investment (“ROI”) of the collaboratives.

On behalf of the members of the HECs, HFSF seeks proposals from qualified consulting firms to conduct the evaluation described in these terms of reference. The contract will be issued in early 2025 with an expectation that the evaluation will be finalized by June 01, 2027.

BACKGROUND

The mission of HFSF is to invest in and be a catalyst for collaborations, policy, and systems change that improve the health of South Florida communities, with a focus on vulnerable low-to moderate-income populations. As South Florida’s largest philanthropic organization, the Foundation is focused on addressing the social determinants of health, reducing health disparities and achieving health equity in the region’s underserved, vulnerable communities. Through funding, expertise, and advocacy, HFSF focuses on three key strategic goals:

1. Increasing access to health insurance and health care;
2. Integrating the social needs people have – like access to a safe and stable home, or healthy food – into clinical settings; and
3. Improving the community-level social and economic conditions that promote overall physical, mental and emotional well-being, with a special focus on economic prosperity and affordable housing issues.

HFSF makes long-term funding commitments for targeted strategic objectives reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors for projects that benefit those who live in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties.

HEALTH EQUITY COLLABORATIVES

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence demonstrating that having access to stable and affordable housing, healthy food, and steady income can have a great impact over people’s ability to live healthy lives—even more so than access to healthcare itself. Indeed, having unmet social needs is the principal driver of health inequity and is directly associated with a higher prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes and elevated cholesterol; emergency department visits and doctor appointment no-shows;

premature births, low birth weights and delivery complications for mothers; and depression, anxiety and worsened mental health.

As a result, policy makers, insurance payers, health plans and healthcare providers have begun to recognize the importance of broadening medically focused care programs to include elements that address social needs. In fact, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Health Equity Framework is compelling healthcare organizations to make health equity a priority, and accrediting bodies are supporting this with new health equity-focused standards.

However, in South Florida, efforts to address unmet social needs—whether in or out of health care settings — are largely uncoordinated, with organizations often working in silos. Operational, technological, financial and systemic barriers prevent payers, providers, and community-based organizations from coordinating the care of patients in a scalable and/or sustainable manner.

In 2022, HFSF invited proposals to establish Health Equity Collaboratives that would build programs to advance health equity in South Florida. The strategic investment had three overarching project goals:

- Build infrastructure that will support improving health outcomes for South Floridians who have low incomes and are racial and ethnic minorities by integrating social needs and clinical care;
- Generate data on the return on investment from integrating social needs and clinical care; and
- Build sustainable and scalable models of integrated social needs and clinical care that have stable, ongoing funding sources.

The Foundation ultimately provided technical assistance and funding support to four (4) newly established HECs in 2023, which are composed of more than 24 leaders from health systems, health plans, and community-based organizations (“CBO”) working together to pilot new sustainable systems of care. Three out of the four HECs are focused on improving maternal and infant health outcomes for both Black and other vulnerable mothers in South Florida; the fourth collaborative is designed to improve health outcomes for high-risk diabetic patients, by effectively addressing the social drivers of health and treating health-related social needs as part of effective clinical care. This new way of delivering care is the focus of the HECs as they test innovative partnerships and identify opportunities for supporting new models of care delivery.

Each HEC is comprised of leaders from across the healthcare and social services sectors and is led by a designated lead organization. Their approach is guided by their predetermined workplan, objectives, and benchmarks specific to each collaborative and overall grant purpose. The next page details a brief overview of each HEC that will be evaluated as part of this RFP.

HEALTH FOUNDATION OF SOUTH FLORIDA – HEALTH EQUITY COLLABORATIVES

Broward Black Maternal Health Collaborative

Goal: Address the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), including access to quality health care, through a variety of evidence-based approaches in two targeted zip codes in Broward County to improve the health of Black birthing people as well as obstetrical and infant health outcomes.
Amount Invested: \$850,000
Project Start Date: September 01, 2023

- Partners:**
- **Community Care Plan**
 - Broward Health
 - Broward Healthy Start Coalition
 - Urban League of Broward

Florida Keys Maternal Child Health Equity Collaborative

Goal: An equitable and sustainable perinatal system of care that bridges the social drivers of health with direct medical care addressing immediate short-term needs while establishing a longer-term solution to improve birth outcomes and support low-income families in the Keys more holistically.
Amount Invested: \$635,000
Project Start Date: August 01, 2023

- Partners:**
- **Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition**
 - Florida Department of Health, Monroe County
 - The Gabriel Project
 - Lower Keys Medical Center
 - Rural Health Network
 - Womankind

Miami-Dade Black Maternal Health and Infant Health Equity Collaborative

Goal: Reduce Black maternal and infant mortality and morbidity by incorporating doulas into the prenatal, birthing, and postpartum care process, breaking existing silos to address the ecosystem that impacts social determinants of health for Black birthing people.
Amount Invested: \$931,150
Project Start Date: August 01, 2023

- Partners:**
- **Jackson Health System**
 - Magnolia Birth House
 - Metro Mommy Agency
 - Southern Birth Justice Network
 - YWCA South Florida, Inc.

Community Health Outcomes Improved with Collaboration and Equity Collaborative (CHOICE)

Goal: Pilot a novel approach to providing healthcare where providers and community organizations work together to address both the health and social needs of high-risk diabetic patients. This project will serve 1,139 patients with HBA1C >9 and address 4 key social needs: food security, transportation, health literacy, and access to resources.
Amount Invested: \$1,219,929
Project Start Date: November 01, 2023

- Partners:**
- **Health Choice Network**
 - American Heart Association
 - Banyan Community Health Center
 - Borinquen Health Care Center
 - Broward Community and Family Health Centers
 - Community Health of South Florida
 - Feeding South Florida
 - Jessie Trice Community Health System
 - Legal Services of Greater Miami
 - Miami Beach Community Health Center
 - YMCA of South Florida

PURPOSE

The purpose of this program evaluation is to inform decision-making and provide evidence-based inputs for the deliberations of the HECs on how to strengthen and sustain the initiatives' goal to improve health outcomes and enhance access to care for vulnerable populations. The evaluation will also generate evidence on HECs performance in implanting approved workplans and highlight the benefits as well as missed and potential opportunities of inter-agency work and collaboration. Based on such evidence, it is expected that the evaluation will contribute to strengthening the work of the HECs in the region and provide a valid base for scaled approaches in the region and beyond.

OBJECTIVE

The principal objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Ascertain the effectiveness of the interventions being implemented and whether targeted outcomes were accomplished, in particular, health and clinical related measures;
- Assess ROI of the HECs;
- Highlight lessons learned including challenges and opportunities; and
- Provide conclusions and actionable recommendations that can shape the future of the work.

SCOPE

The Health Foundation of South Florida is seeking proposals for an external evaluator to conduct two comprehensive program evaluations for its Health Equity Collaboratives. These collaboratives focus on improving maternal and infant health outcomes, as well as health outcomes for diabetic patients in South Florida. Each evaluation will consist of a program evaluation and a return on investment (“ROI”) assessment. The selected evaluator will be expected to maintain regular communication with HFSF staff and participate in key committee meetings. Additionally, the evaluator must present findings in a format suitable for the Foundation's diverse stakeholders.

Evaluation 1: Maternal and Infant Health Collaboratives

The first program evaluation will focus on the three HECs designed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in South Florida – the *Broward Black Maternal Health Collaborative*, the *Florida Keys Maternal Child Health Equity Collaborative*, and the *Miami-Dade Black Maternal Health and Infant Health Equity Collaborative*. HFSF will be responsible for providing a dashboard in advance that aligns data points and outcomes between all three maternal health collaboratives and includes baseline and target metrics.

Program Evaluation Components:

- Review and analyze collected data across the three maternal health HECs;
- Conduct both process and outcome evaluations to assess:
 - Program implementation effectiveness;
 - Patient satisfaction with services provided;
 - Lessons learned; and

- Short-term and long-term changes resulting from the collaboratives.
- Key quantitative metrics to be reviewed include:
 - Improvements in targeted maternal and infant health outcomes (e.g. hospital readmissions for postpartum complications, preterm birth rates, doula-assisted hospital births).

ROI Evaluation Components:

- Assess the financial return on investment (ROI) for these three maternal health HECs; and
- Collaborate with HFSF and health care partners to design a suitable ROI metric and calculation that reflects the value of the investment in these collaboratives.

Evaluation 2: Diabetic Health Outcomes Collaborative

The second program evaluation will be targeted to the sole HEC designed to improve health outcomes in high-risk diabetic patients – the Community Health Outcomes Improved with Collaboration and Equity (CHOICE) Collaborative. As with the maternal health HEC evaluation, HFSF will provide a dashboard in advance based on approved objectives and benchmarks in CHOICE’s workplan that includes baseline and target metrics.

Program Evaluation Components:

- Review and analyze collected data from the CHOICE Collaborative;
- Conduct a process and outcome evaluation to assess:
 - Program implementation effectiveness;
 - Patient satisfaction with the CHOICE program;
 - Lessons learned; and
 - Short-term and long-term impacts of the collaborative.
- Key quantitative metrics include, but are not limited to:
 - Improvements in targeted health related outcomes (e.g. A1C levels, ED utilization).

ROI Evaluation Components:

- Assess the financial return on investment (ROI) for the CHOICE Collaborative; and
- Collaborate with HFSF and HCN to design an appropriate ROI calculation for this program.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluator is expected to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. These may include:

- Document review and analysis of program records;
- Observations of program implementation activities;
- Interviews with key stakeholders (HEC staff, healthcare providers, community members); and

- Data analysis of key program metrics, including those provided by HFSF’s dashboard.

Applicants are encouraged to propose additional methods or tools to capture program impacts effectively.

Findings from the evaluation are expected to inform justification for new models of care delivery between CBOs and health centers that allow for CBOs to be reimbursed based on the social services they provide to patients to meet their health-related social needs.

The Foundation recognizes there are unique conceptual challenges to evaluating these types of projects. Generating population level change (e.g., improved health outcomes) in a relatively small amount of time is difficult, and the nature of community work is complex, uncontrollable and involves many moving parts and stakeholders and thus traditional evaluation processes often do not apply. It is understood that the design plan is dynamic and may be subject to change.

DELIVERABLES

The selected evaluator will be responsible for delivering the following:

- Evaluation Plan: A comprehensive evaluation design and work plan, developed in collaboration with HFSF.
- Progress Reports: Regular updates on evaluation activities, key milestones, and any emerging findings.
- Interim Reports: Interim reports for each of the two evaluations, inclusive of both program evaluation and ROI assessment, due within a mutually agreed upon timeframe from evaluation start date.
- Final Program Evaluation Reports: Comprehensive reports for each of the two evaluations, inclusive of both program evaluation and ROI assessment.
- Presentation of Findings: Present findings to HFSF leadership and key stakeholders in a format that allows for actionable insights and future program planning.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must demonstrate the qualifications, experience and ability to successfully carry out the program and ROI evaluations from planning to preparation of deliverables, to project management. Applicants must have the capacity to work throughout Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties and to travel to the four selected HEC lead-organization sites and to HFSF offices as needed. Ideally, the final contracted evaluation team will be familiar with process and outcome evaluations as well as ROI evaluations, will have experience in evaluating community initiatives and assisting organizations in how to use findings for strategic and programmatic changes, and have the experience and ability to communicate the initiative’s theory of change and significant findings. Demonstrated commitment to health equity and related initiatives, and an understanding of care delivery models and the managed care landscape in Florida is a plus.

SELECTION CRITERIA: A contractor will be chosen based on the following selection criteria:

- Understanding of the scope of work;

- Experience conducting ROI evaluations;
- Experience collecting and analyzing data in different contexts;
- Ability to communicate complex concepts, stimulate creative thinking and negotiate differences within a diverse stakeholder group;
- Experience working with culturally, linguistically and geographically diverse populations;
- Organizational capacity to conduct this work; and
- Prior experience with community change initiatives.

CONTRACT PERIOD AND BUDGET

The selected entity will conduct a multi-year evaluation that will last from 2025-2027. HFSF expects the contract to begin in January 2025 and continue through June 2027 with the option of contract renewal each year; exact end date will be determined by the official end of the last HEC. The selected contractor will be required to submit a proposed scope of work, work plan, budget and payment plan for the following year. HFSF has allocated up to \$250,000 total for evaluation activities over the 2.5-year period.

USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, activities related to research and evaluation, project-related travel, and other direct project expenses as applicable. Indirect costs are allowable. Grant funds may not be used for direct service.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins, and must include the following:

- **Cover Letter:** Introducing the organization/contractor(s) and clearly showing contact name, address, telephone number and email address for the primary point of contact;
- **Proposal Narrative (10 pages max):**
 - Organizational Overview: Description of organization, organizational history and major areas of expertise
 - Expertise of the Principal Investigator and other key personnel: Please highlight training and experience that specifically relates to the HEC evaluation. Provide experience of the team's ability to complete high-quality evaluation at the community level, including experience similar in nature to this assignment (approaches employed, findings, lessons learned, impact on the client)
 - Initial thoughts on methodologies to be employed
 - Clear and concise report of the organization's capacity to perform the tasks and responsibilities of this RFP
 - Experience and expertise working effectively with diverse community-based organizations and health centers;
- **Resumes:** Submit one resume or CV for each key member of the team;
- **References:** Provide contact information for **three (3)** former clients; and
- **Budget proposal:** Submit a budget proposal and accompanying justification that details line items not to exceed \$100,000 per year for the first two years and \$50,000 for the last six months.

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

RFP Released	October 23, 2024
Deadline for Proposal Submission	November 22, 2024 at 5:00pm EST

FAQS

What is the funding level for this request?

The total funding available for this request is \$250,000, inclusive of indirect costs. This RFP supports funding requests of up to \$100,00 per year for the first two years and up to \$50,000 for the last 6-month period of the request, expected to be January – June 2027. A budget proposal and justification must be submitted as part of the application.

What is the anticipated timeline for this request?

The anticipated timeline for this RFP is two and a half years, with an expected start date in January 2025. The last HEC is expected to end in March 2027, and the final evaluation reports would be expected by June 2027.

What is the Foundation’s indirect cost policy?

The Health Foundation can provide support for indirect costs, calculated on a percentage basis (10%) according to your organization’s operating budget. Indirect costs are inclusive of the total funding available for this request. Indirect costs do not need to be itemized.

What types of organizations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible to apply for this RFP, applicants must demonstrate the qualifications, experience and ability to successfully carry out the program and ROI evaluations from planning to preparation of deliverables, to project management. Individual contractors who meet these qualifications are eligible to apply.

Are applicants eligible if they have been awarded a previous RFP/RFQ from the Health Foundation of South Florida?

Yes, organizations or individuals who may have been awarded a previous RFP/RFQ from the Health Foundation of South Florida are encouraged to apply for this opportunity.

Is the selected evaluator expected to have a physical office in South Florida?

HFSF will not require that the selected evaluator have a physical office location in South Florida. However, applicants must have the capacity to work throughout Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties and to travel to the four selected HEC lead-organization sites and to HFSF offices (located in downtown Miami) as needed.

HOW TO APPLY

Organizations and individuals interested in being considered for the Health Equity Collaboratives Strategic Initiative opportunity must respond to this RFP no later than **Friday, November 22, 2024 at 5:00pm EST**. Proposal documents may be submitted electronically as a single PDF to Eliane Morales, emorales@hfsf.org, with subject title, "Health Equity Collaboratives: RFP".

For additional information or questions about the RFP, please contact Dr. Janisse Rosario Schoepp, Chief Strategy Officer at the Health Foundation of South Florida, at jschoepp@hfsf.org.