

Mini-Grant Request for Proposals

Purpose

The BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, awarded Wholespire and the South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH) a grant to promote the health of South Carolina's economically challenged population. Our partnership with SCORH is a two-pronged approach to community health improvement through healthy eating and active living (HEAL) mini-grants (Wholespire) and local community health coalition capacity building (SCORH).

Wholespire is offering mini-grants of up to \$6,000 to help communities increase access to healthy choices annually through 2024. We support communities by offering them tools and resources to create equitable access to healthy food and safe places to be active because the choices we make are influenced by the choices that we have.

The HEAL mini-grants must be used to fund healthy eating and active living projects that support policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes. This sustainable approach focuses on modifying the environment to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members. By changing policies and shaping physical landscapes, a significant impact can be made with little time and resources.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

HEAL mini-grants can be used as seed money to start a project, move an existing project along or complete an existing project. Wholespire staff will support grantees and help them execute projects, troubleshoot issues and connect with other local community health initiatives.

Grant proposals should comply with the following criteria to be considered for funding:

- Applicant must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Any municipality, coalition or school is also eligible to apply. If the interested applicant is not a 501(c)(3), they can use a fiscal agent that does qualify.
- All grant proposals MUST be related to healthy eating and/or active living AND implement, promote or support a PSE change.
- The project ideas must be ready to be implemented and completed within 9 months of receiving funding.
- An application that clearly outlines how the project will address health equity in your community is recommended.



Examples of projects that may be funded through this initiative:

- Improvements for schools' outdoor activity spaces, such as water bottle refill stations, playground improvements
- Support active communities with bike racks and/or crosswalks
- Establishment or promotion of SNAP/Healthy Bucks at a farmers' market
- Support of a local [HYPE](#) team that will implement a PSE project.
- Support community trails by adding signage, benches, trash cans
- Add interest to existing trails by adding extra features like a Story Walk or Born Learning Trail
- Establish or expand a community garden

More examples of past mini-grant projects can be found [online](#).

Key Dates

May 19, 2023: Mini-grant application opens

July 10, 2023: Mini-grant application deadline

August 7, 2023: Awardees notified

September 1, 2023: Funds Released

May 30, 2024: Grant period ends

July 1, 2024: Final reports due

An application can be found online at [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

What Is Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) Change?

- Policy, systems and environmental change approaches seek to go beyond programming and into the systems that create the structures in which we live, learn, work, pray, and play. These approaches often work hand-in-hand where, for example, an environmental change may be furthered by a policy or system change. Similarly, a policy could be put in



place that results in additional environmental changes. The process is not linear. At the end of the day, an effective PSE approach should seek to reach populations and uncover strategies for impact that are sustainable. Efforts may accelerate the adoption or implementation of effective interventions by effectively integrating approaches into existing infrastructures. Such approaches often include advocates, decision and policy makers.

What is Health Equity?

- Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health and their consequences. The Wholespire definition is Thriving with conditions that support low-disease risk, education, employment, and a stable economy.

Who is eligible to apply for mini-grant funds?

- Any municipality, coalition, school, or community organization that has a 501(c)(3) designation in South Carolina is eligible to apply. All applications will be considered. Preference will be given to communities without current funding or limited resources.

When will mini-grants be available?

- The application opens **May 19, 2023**.

How often will mini-grants be available?

- Mini-grants will be awarded annually.

How do I apply for mini-grant funding?

- The application for a mini-grant should be submitted on the Wholespire website. If you are unable or limited in your ability to apply for a mini-grant on this site, you can request reasonable accommodations by contacting Kesley Sanders at kelsey@wholespire.org.

How much money is available for my project?

- Mini-grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$6,000.

What is the time frame to complete a project?

- The grant period for mini-grants is approximately 9 months.

What if we don't spend all of the funds or cannot complete the project on time?



- Funds that are not spent in the selected grant period will be returned. No extensions will be granted.

May I apply for mini-grants more than once over 4 years?

- Yes, you may apply for more than one mini-grant over the four-year period that mini-grants are available.

Can we submit more than one application per grant cycle?

- No. If applicants have more than one project that they are interested in they should prioritize which project is more urgent and submit a second application in a later grantcycle.

If I have had funding from a mini-grant before, do I qualify?

- Yes. If you were awarded a mini-grant in a previous grant period, you can apply for a new mini-grant.

Is there a required match?

- A match is not required; however, we acknowledge the importance of being able to leverage funds as a means to broaden impact and improve the sustainability of coalitions and community organizations. Applications that demonstrate matched funds will be rated higher than those that do not.

Can mini-grant funds be used for coalition capacity building?

- Mini-grant funds are intended to be used for project implementation. If your organization is interested in receiving training or capacity building, please contact staff so that you can be connected to a local coalition that is eligible to apply for a scalable technical assistance project through SCORH.

What will not be funded by this mini-grant?

- Funds will not be issued for:
 - Doctor, dentist, or pharmacist salaries
 - Capital campaigns including brick and mortar establishments
 - One time or annual events including sports tournaments, camps, or event incentives
 - Fundraising events including the purchase of tickets or tables, membership drives, raffles, or auctions
 - Individuals



- Political campaigns or activities that influence legislation
- Advertising, and
- Religious activities.

Can mini-grant funds be spent on food or incentives?

- Yes, however, this should be a small percentage of the total budget. If you plan to include food or incentives in your budget, it is recommended that you contact staff ahead of time to discuss the budget.

Questions? Need Assistance?

Please email Kelsey Sanders, MPH, Community Relations manager kelsey@wholespire.org if you are interested in speaking with a staff person about your project idea.

Wholespire is a statewide organization whose mission is to provide communities with proven and sustainable approaches that lead to increased access to healthy choices for all people. The organization's approach includes promoting healthy eating, active living as a key component of public health; informing, engaging and influencing decision-makers to include health in policy decisions; providing support at the local level, through a network of chapters, for communities to achieve healthy change; and championing equity.

South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH) is a non-profit organization with a mission to close the gap in health status and life expectancy between rural and urban communities in the Palmetto State. SCORH has been promoting investment, opportunity, and health within rural communities since 1991. With 27 percent of our state's residents living in rural areas, SCORH believes in preserving the unique character of rural communities without compromising their opportunities and access to critical services.

