



Local Health Policy

Background

Interact for Health believes every person should have a full, fair and just opportunity for good health. Yet in our region – the Greater Cincinnati area and surrounding counties – underlying problems present significant barriers to health and well-being. We know that social, economic, and environmental factors drive health outcomes. Inequities, such as economic injustice, systemic racism, and other forms of marginalization shape the experiences of some groups, leading to wide disparities between different places and the health of the people who live in them.

To address these inequities, we must focus on changing the environments where people live by addressing root causes of issues through policy and system change efforts. This RFP is focused on supporting local public policy and advocacy efforts to advance health justice in Greater Cincinnati. We strive to center people affected by these policies to ensure that communities can build their own power through advocacy work and that efforts will be sustained so that communities can experience long-lasting change.

We know that social, economic and environmental factors drive health outcomes. This funding is intended to support policy and advocacy efforts focused on addressing the vital conditions for health and well-being — the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces and systems that shape our daily lives. These conditions are required for people and communities to reach their full potential and to create an equitable, thriving future now and generations to come. While policy efforts are intended to have an impact at the population level, efforts should prioritize those who experience the greatest injustices in health outcomes and strive to center them in the policy work—Black communities, Hispanic communities, children and families with low incomes, people who identify as LGBTQ+, and rural communities. We intend to support organizations that authentically center the communities where they work, including in leadership and decision-making.

RFP Goal

To advance local policy and advocacy efforts focused on addressing the social, economic, and environmental factors that shape health.

RFP Overview

Through the application process, organizations will share their plans and strategies for local level policy and advocacy efforts that address the vital conditions for health and well-being. Applications may focus on policy changes at the local jurisdiction level or through governing/administrative boards such as school boards and zoning boards.

While a ‘policy win’ is often what comes to mind when thinking about policy and advocacy efforts, passing a policy is a very narrow part of the complex, multi-faceted



nature of public policy efforts. All phases of policy and advocacy efforts are important to ensure that best practice, equitable policies are developed, adopted, implemented, enforced and their long-term impact is realized. This funding is intended to support advocacy efforts that move beyond coalition building and community education and should build on already-identified policy change opportunities.



Sources: Gardner, A., Brindis, C. (2017). *Advocacy and Policy Change Evaluation: Theory and Practice*. Stanford Business Books; 1st Edition, 4/11/2017. ORS Impact and Atlas Learning Project. (2016). *Beyond the Win: Pathways for Policy Implementation*.

Proposals should be working towards a specific policy change effort but may include activities across the policy and advocacy continuum, including:

- Grassroots mobilization
- Conduct advocacy to increase awareness or build political will to act
- Legislative education around key policy areas
- Coalition building among advocates
- Direct policy advocacy which includes providing testimony or sharing model policies
- Conduct public education media campaigns to support positions or educate the public

Policy Examples: The list below are examples, funding is not limited to these.

- *Affordable Housing Trusts*
- *Legal Support for Renters*
- *Paid Sick Leave*
- *Childcare Access and Affordability*
- *Violence Reduction Policies*
- *Healthy Rental Housing*
- *Smoke-free Indoor Air*
- *Menthol and Flavored Tobacco Restrictions*



Interact for Health is investing \$700,000 for the Local Health Policy RFP in 2024. Grants will be **general operating support** and grant size and length will vary based on the scope of the project. We anticipate grants **ranging from \$75,000 - \$250,000 for 18-36 months**.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be a public or private nonprofit or governmental organization.
- Provide services in at least one county of Interact for Health's 20-county service area (see [map](#)).

Organizations that are not nonprofits or governmental entities may still seek funding through fiscal sponsorship. A fiscal sponsorship is a relationship between a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (the sponsor organization) and a charitable project that does not have a tax-exempt status (the sponsored organization).

Grantee Requirements

Depending on the project, awarded grantees may be expected to:

- Participate in grantee meetings up to three times yearly to share their work and learning with other grantees and Interact for Health.
- Participate in [evaluation and learning activities](#) for the grant and part of the overall initiative.

Proposal Selection Criteria

The most competitive applications will:

- Focus on people and communities who are:
 - Black
 - Hispanic
 - Children in families with low incomes (200% or less of federal poverty level)
 - Identify as LGBTQ+
 - Rural
- Authentically center people and communities that are most impacted by the topic and policy efforts, including through leadership and decision-making power.
- Work to improve health outcomes by reducing disparities and advancing health justice.
- Have goals for the grant period that are clear, feasible and aligned with the goal of the RFP.
- Demonstrate that the organization can achieve the goals outlined in the proposal with the budget, timeline and staff capacity indicated.
- Focus on specific and already identified local level policy and advocacy efforts identified by the community to improve the vital conditions for health and well-being.



Timeline

Proposal Webinar	Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 10 – 11 a.m.
Proposal deadline	Friday, April 4, 2025, 5 p.m.
Site visits	Monday, April 21- Friday, May 2, 2025
Notification of grant award	Friday, May 9, 2025

Proposal Webinar

A proposal webinar will be held to answer questions about the RFP concept and application process on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 10 – 11 a.m.** Attendance is optional and not required to submit a proposal. Please register for the webinar [here](#). If you cannot participate in the webinar, the recording will be posted to the [Open Funding page of our website](#) afterward.

Community Information Sessions

Program staff will be available during the times below to answer any questions about the RFP or your proposed project. For the in-person sessions, please join us for coffee and conversation at the location listed below. For the virtual session, please register [here](#).

Interact for Health (8230 Montgomery Road., Suite 300, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236)	Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 1 – 3 p.m.
Virtual	Monday, March 17, 2025, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Proposal Submissions

Completed applications must be submitted by **Friday, April 4, 2025, at 5 p.m.** via Interact for Health's online [grants portal](#). To begin the application process or to access a PDF of the required application questions, please visit the [Open Funding page of our website](#). If you have an open grant or have received a grant from Interact for Health in the past two years, your email address may already be registered in the system. For assistance with the application process, please get in touch with our Director of Grants Management Kristine Schultz at kschultz@interactforhealth.org.

Site Visits

Before selecting projects for funding, Interact for Health staff will conduct a site visit, either virtual or in person, with the potential grantee. Representatives from collaborating organizations are encouraged to attend the site visit. This meeting allows Interact for Health staff to hear more about the proposed project and ask any clarifying questions.



Site visits will be conducted **Monday, April 21 - Friday, May 2, 2025**. Applicants will indicate their preferred timeslot during the application process. Site visit topics will include:

- General discussion of your proposed project and budget
- The population of focus for the project
- Any disparities that exist and how this project plans to address them
- Community engagement tactics
- Collaborating partners and organizations or those you intend to engage
- Your organization's journey around diversity, equity, and inclusion

Questions

For any questions regarding the process, please contact Senior Director Megan Folkerth at mfolkerth@interactforhealth.org or 513-458-6631.

Definitions

Advocacy is the act of promoting a cause, idea, or policy to influence people's opinions or actions on matters of policy concern. Advocacy tactics can be used to advance or protect public policies at each level (local, state, and federal) and branch (legislative, executive, and judicial) of government.

Advocacy and Policy Phases: Agenda setting, policy development, policy adoption, policy implementation and enforcement, policy evaluation, and ongoing monitoring, adapting and learning.

Advocacy Wins: A signal of positive progress- that we directly or indirectly influence- within the advocacy and policy phases that happens before or after a policy adoption (i.e. legislation introduced, committee hearing, increased public will and support, new political champions).

Community is a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific and shared locality and often have common characteristics, interests and/or cultural and historical heritage.

Health justice means that everyone has a full and fair opportunity for good health, community conditions and institutions promote good health, and no group is exposed to environments that undermine health and well-being.

Local policy refers to rules, regulations, and guidelines established by local governments or governing/administrative boards (i.e. city councils, county governments, zoning board, school board, etc.) to address community-specific issues.

Policy Change: A policy change attempts to change public laws, regulations, rules, mandates (public policy) or budgets/funding.



Policy Wins: The formal passing or adoption of a law, ordinance, resolution, mandate, or regulation at the legislative or administrative level.

Systems Change: A system change attempts to shift how broader systems (e.g., health, public safety, local government) make decisions about policies, programs and the allocation or use of resources.

Urgent Services are the services that anyone under adversity would need to temporarily regain or restore their health and well-being. While they are necessary, historical ways of thinking about overall health and well-being have led to an over-investment in urgent services and an under-investment in vital conditions.

Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces and systems that shape our daily lives. The seven vital conditions, listed below, are required for people and communities to reach their full potential and to create an equitable, thriving future for ourselves and generations to come.

- Belonging and Civic Muscle
- Thriving Natural World
- Basic Needs for Health and Safety
- Humane Housing
- Meaningful Work and Wealth
- Lifelong Learning
- Reliable Transportation



Vital Conditions vs. Urgent Services – additional information and context can be found here:
<https://rippel.org/vital-conditions/>