



# Rural Changemaker Request for Proposal (RFP)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Background

Interact for Health works to ensure that people in our region have a just opportunity to live their healthiest lives, regardless of who they are or where they live. We advance health justice through grantmaking, collaboration, learning, convening, and engagement. Interact for Health is an independent foundation in 20 Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana counties. In 2024, Interact for Health launched its Rural Investment Strategy, which included \$1M in investments in strategic grantmaking, community participation, and event sponsorship opportunities. Interact for Health is reaffirming its investment in its Rural Strategy in 2025, including through the Rural Changemaker Grant outlined below.

### RFP Goal

To promote health and well-being in the rural regions in Interact for Health's service area by providing funding to address grassroots work in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky related to the [vital conditions for health and well-being](#)—the resources we all need to thrive.

### RFP Overview

The communities served by Interact for Health have distinct strengths and attributes that make residents proud to call this area “home.” Yet, in many communities, there are also underlying problems that present significant barriers to health and well-being. As a result, many in our region do not have the vital conditions for good health in the places where they live, learn, work, and play.

For example, some rural areas have access to affordable, nutritious food—a vital condition for good health. Others seem to be cut off from the supply of affordable produce, which increases the risk for developing a condition like heart disease, the leading cause of death in our region. Place affects diet, which affects health.

Other aspects of the places where people live matter, too. The vital conditions for health and well-being are the building blocks all people and communities need to thrive and experience well-being. They include:

- Belonging and Civic Muscle (e.g., connections with neighbors, volunteering)



# INTERACT FOR HEALTH

- Thriving Natural World (e.g., public green spaces, clean water)
- Basic Needs for Health and Safety (e.g., preventative care, violence prevention)
- Humane Housing (e.g., affordable housing, resources to prevent housing crisis)
- Meaningful Work and Wealth (e.g., labor representation, equitable wages for workers)
- Lifelong Learning (e.g., outside classroom engagement, nontraditional learning models)
- Reliable Transportation (e.g., community rideshare, public transit)

Rural communities already demonstrate the vital conditions for health through innovative, community-driven efforts every day: Local farmers' markets improve access to healthy, affordable food while strengthening social connections; local housing coalitions mobilize neighbors to meet needs for safe and stable housing; after-school programs spark and sustain students' interests and learning. Yet despite these examples and others like them, there are also instances in which the Vital Conditions for Health are not fully, fairly, or consistently available.

Deficits in the vital conditions for health are not the fault of local communities or the people who live there. Rather, they are rooted in collective decisions, both public and private, that have historically denied rural communities access to resources and undermined rural residents' power to pursue solutions that are locally relevant and effective.

This funding effort aims to support grassroots, locally-led efforts to build — or amplify — community efforts to strengthen one or more of the vital conditions for health. Our population of focus with this grant is rural communities, but Interact for Health's other priority populations (Black, Hispanic, LGBTQ+, Children in Low-Income Families) must also be meaningfully engaged.

## Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be a public or private nonprofit or governmental organization.
- Provide services in at least one of Interact for Health's [rural counties](#) in Ohio, Indiana, or Kentucky (see "Definitions" below).

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.

## Funding Details

- Type of Grants: Grants may be awarded for project-based, or general operating support, depending on the proposed efforts.
- Size of Grants: Grant size and length will vary based on the scope of the project. We anticipate they will range from \$10,000 - \$70,000 for 12 - 18 months.
- Other Support: These grants are intended to allow us to learn alongside partners and continue to inform our Rural Investment Strategy. Opportunities for technical assistance and additional support to partners will be implemented on an as-needed basis by grantees and topics that arise during the learning sessions. Additional support may include but is not limited to hiring consultants, one-on-one grantee support, and group training sessions.

## PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals for the Rural Changemaker Grant should:

- Serve **at least one of Interact for Health's rural counties**.
- Address a challenge or underlying inequity identified by the community related to the Seven Vital Conditions for Health.
- Plan, develop, implement, and/or sustain a solution that engages community members in the project, including leadership and decision-making power.
- Meaningfully engage with Interact for Health's Priority Populations.

## Rural Community Councils

The rural region (Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky) has a dedicated advisory council composed of community members. Each member either lives or works locally in one of our rural counties and is interested in the long-term health of their community. This



council acts as a review and scoring body for Rural Changemaker grantmaking, advising on projects and their potential impact on rural communities.

## Timeline

Release RFP	<b>Tuesday, February 4, 2025</b>
Introductory webinar and community sessions*	<b>Wednesday, February 19, 2025, 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.</b>
Rural Community Office Hours	<b>Friday, February 14 – Thursday, March 6, 2025</b>
RFP 1 Due	<b>Monday, April 14, 2025, 5 p.m.</b>
Review with rural community council completed	<b>Friday, May 2, 2025</b>
Site visits	<b>Thursday, May 15 – Tuesday, May 27, 2025</b>
Award grants	<b>Thursday, June 12, 2025</b>
Rural Community Office Hours	<b>Thursday, August 21 – Thursday, September 4, 2025</b>
RFP 2 Due	<b>Monday, September 8, 2025, 5 p.m.</b>
Review with rural community council completed	<b>Friday, September 26, 2025</b>
Site visits	<b>Monday, October 6 – Friday, October 17, 2025</b>
Award grants	<b>Thursday, October 30, 2025</b>

## Proposal Webinar

A proposal webinar will be held to answer questions about the RFP concept and application process **from 3 to 4:30 p.m. on February 19th**. Attendance is optional and not required in order to submit a proposal. Please contact Caitlin Bentley-Thayer at [cbentley@interactforhealth.org](mailto:cbentley@interactforhealth.org) to receive access information for the live webinar or to receive the recording after date.

## Community Information Sessions



Program staff will be available during the times below to answer any questions about the RFP or your proposed project.

Brown County Public Library- Georgetown (200 W Grant Ave, Georgetown, OH 45121)	<b>Feb. 14, Aug. 21</b> <b>1:00 – 4:00 p.m.</b>
Grant County Public Library- Williamstown (201 Barnes Rd, Williamstown, KY 41097)	<b>Mar. 6, Sept. 4</b> <b>1:00 – 4:00 p.m.</b>
Tyson Library- Versailles (325 W Tyson St, Versailles, IN 47042)	<b>Feb. 20, Aug. 28</b> <b>1:00 – 4:00 p.m.</b>

## Proposal Submissions

Applications will be accepted twice annually. They must be submitted by April 14th, at 5 pm and September 8th at 5 pm via Interact for Health's online grants management system. 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](mailto: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 required 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 in May and October following the review and selection process. 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



- What “success” for this project will look like

## Questions

For any questions, please contact Senior Program Manager of Rural Community Engagement, Caitlin Bentley-Thayer, at [cbentley@interactforhealth.org](mailto:cbentley@interactforhealth.org) or 606-226-0025.

## Definitions

- **Community Power:** The ability of communities most impacted by inequity to act together to voice their needs and hopes for the future and to collectively drive structural change, hold decision-makers accountable and advance health equity.
- **Grassroots Organization:** Local, regional, national or international efforts and organizations led by everyday people who are closest to an issue. Grassroots Organizations take a “bottom-up” approach and begin with community-based initiatives that grow outwardly to include other strategic partners.
- **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.
- **Mental Health** is health. It shapes how we cope with stress, overcome challenges, build relationships and enables us to value and engage in life. Simply put by someone in our community, it means being good with yourself. At Interact for Health, we define mental health broadly to mean the promotion of mental health, resilience and wellbeing; the treatment of mental and substance use disorders; and the support of those who experience and/or are in recovery from these conditions, along with their families and communities.
- **Movement Building** is the process of mobilizing individuals, organizations, and communities to create a collective force aimed at addressing systemic health and social inequalities and promoting equitable outcomes for the benefit of all. It involves the coordination of education, policy, and community engagement to build support and initiate the necessary changes to generate the outcomes that will benefit the community.
- **Policy Change:** A policy change attempts to change public laws, regulations, rules, mandates (public policy) or budgets/funding.
- **Rural:** Interact for Health defines “rural communities” for our grantmaking purposes by utilizing intersectional criteria focused on population density and a historic deficit in resources.
  - Lower population density, compared to other areas.



- Historically under-resourced, compared to other areas.
  - Federal and state dollars lower.
  - Local city/ township investment and tax base are lower.
  - County tax base is lower compared to other areas.
- Fewer local resources than other areas.
  - Fewer local nonprofits.
  - Few medical facilities.
  - Fewer emergency responder resources.
  - Fewer public school systems and districts.
- **Rural Regions:** Interact for Health defines the following counties in these states as our rural regions:
  - Indiana Region
    - Dearborn County
    - Franklin County
    - Ripley County
    - Ohio County
    - Switzerland County
  - Kentucky Region
    - Bracken County
    - Gallatin County
    - Grant County
    - Pendleton County
  - Ohio Region
    - Adams County
    - Brown County
    - Clermont County
    - Clinton County
    - Highland County
- **Systems Change:** A system change attempts to shift the way 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.



# INTERACT FOR HEALTH

- 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/>*