



Advocacy Capacity Building

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. 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. 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.

This RFP is focused on supporting nonprofit organizations to strengthen their organizational culture, mindsets, and practices for local policy and advocacy efforts focused on 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 for generations to come.

RFP Goal

To provide funding and learning opportunities to nonprofit organizations to strengthen their organizational capacity for policy and advocacy efforts.

RFP Overview

Funding will support organizations in developing and building their capacity for local policy and advocacy work through participation in a year-long learning cohort. The cohort experience will help organizations and leaders move from programmatic solutions and stagnation to action and policy advocacy. By the end of the cohort, organizations will have created and initiated a multifaceted and sophisticated strategy that can help them



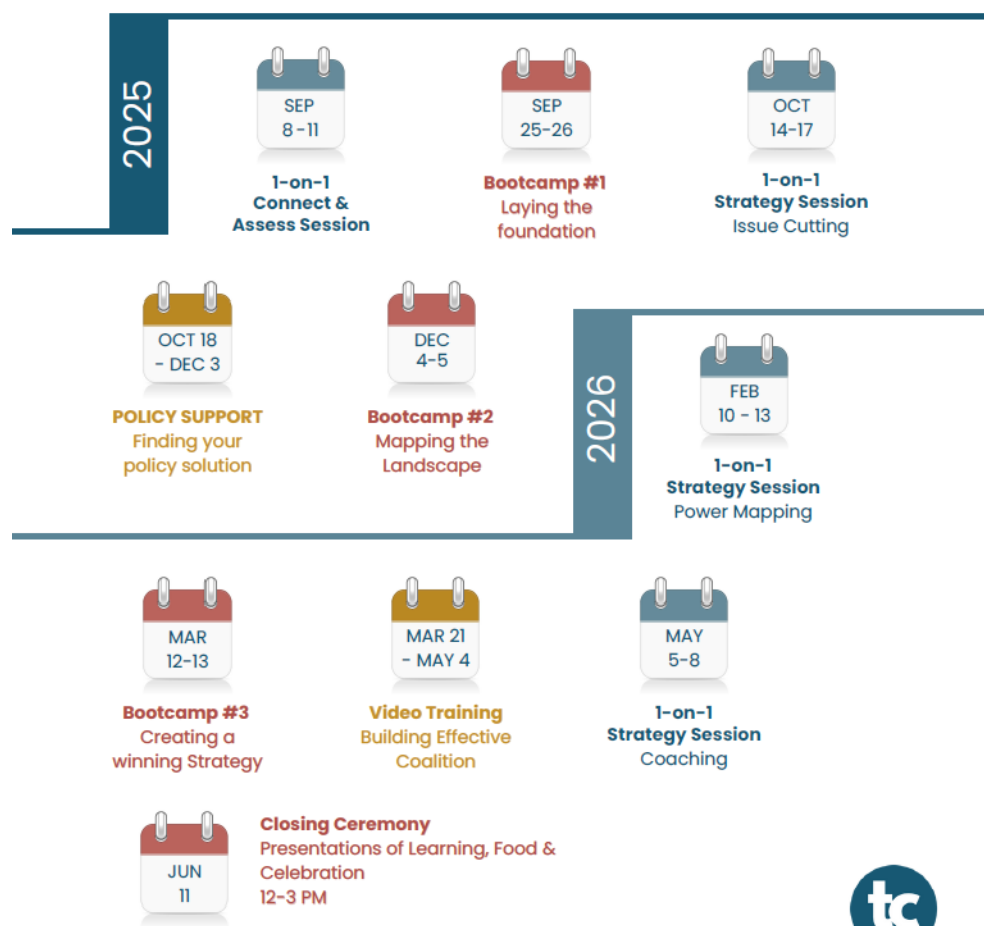
advance policy change. The cohort will be led by Transforming Change and will include both individual and group coaching, training, strategy development, and support.

Through the application process, organizations will share how this capacity building opportunity will support and expand the role of advocacy and policy to advance strategic goals within the organization. Organizations will also share the proposed local policy effort, focused on addressing the vital conditions for health and well-being, that will be the focus on their time in the cohort.

Interact for Health is investing \$200,000 in the Advocacy Capacity Building RFP in 2025. Five organizations will be awarded capacity building grants for **\$40,000 for 12 months** to support participation in the cohort learning experience.

Cohort Structure and Dates

Bootcamps will take place over two days from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Interact for Health offices. The 1-on-1 sessions will be 2-hour engagements with each grantee group during the time period listed below.





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

Awarded grantees are expected to:

- Participate in all individual and group sessions as part of the 12-month cohort.
- Have a stated organizational commitment and focus on advancing policy change.
- Commit to have at least 3 staff/board members attend the quarterly bootcamps and coaching/strategy sessions.
- Have at least one bootcamp participant that is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the organization as it pertains to their policy and advocacy work.
- Participate in [evaluation and learning activities](#) for the grant and part of the overall initiative.

Proposal Selection Criteria

The most competitive applications will demonstrate:

- An organizational commitment to learning and a desire to strengthen organizational culture, mindsets, and practices to advance policy and advocacy efforts.
- A defined issue area and changes they hope to achieve with future local policy and advocacy efforts focused on improving the vital conditions for health and well-being.
- How the organization authentically centers people and communities that are most impacted by the topic and policy efforts, including through leadership and decision-making power.
- A 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
- How the proposed work improves health outcomes by reducing disparities and advancing health justice.
- That the organization can achieve the goals outlined in the proposal with the budget, timeline, and staff capacity indicated.



Timeline

Proposal webinar	Tuesday, July 1, 2025, 2 – 3 p.m.
Proposal deadline	Friday, August 1, 2025, 5 p.m.
Application review and follow up calls (as needed)	Monday, August 4 – Tuesday, August 19, 2025
Notification of grant award	Monday, August 25, 2025

Proposal Webinar

A proposal webinar will be held to answer questions about the RFP concept and application process on **Tuesday, July 1, 2025, 2 – 3 p.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 time below to answer any questions about the RFP or your proposed project. For the virtual session, please register [here](#).

Interact for Health (8230 Montgomery Road., Suite 300, Cincinnati, Ohio 45236)	Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
Virtual	Monday, July 21, 2025, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

Proposal Submissions

Completed applications must be submitted by **Friday, August 1, 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 Niergarth at kniergarth@interactforhealth.org.

Questions

For any questions regarding the process, please contact Senior Director of Health Policy and Systems, 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 boards, school boards, 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.

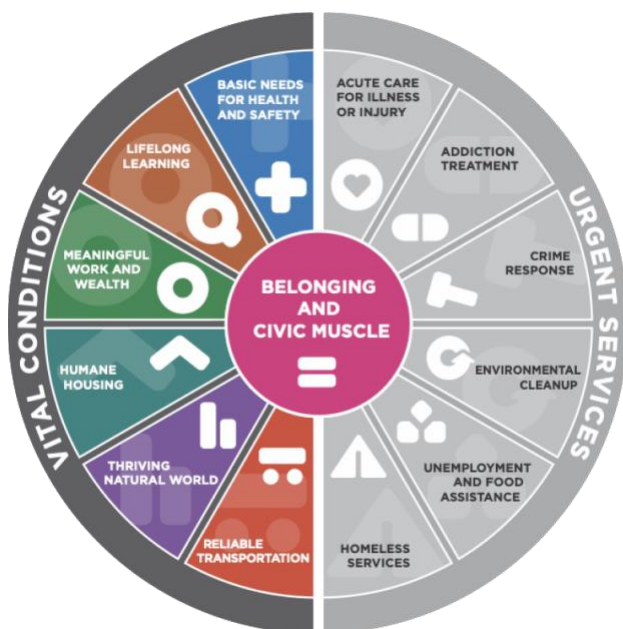
Urgent Services are the services that anyone under adversity would need to temporarily regain or restore their health and well-being. While they are necessary, historical ways of thinking about overall health and well-being have led to an over-investment in urgent services and an under-investment in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



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/>