

# DATA FOR EQUITY



## **Building Capacity for Equitable Data and Evaluation**

Request for Proposals

**Aug. 2023**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Background

In 2021, three local health funders – [bi3](#), [HealthPath](#) and [Interact for Health](#) – came together to explore how we might best support the organizational capacity building needs of our non-profit partners. Not assuming we had the answer, we started by asking and [surveyed](#) our current and former grantees. The main areas of interest for organizational capacity building are

1. evaluation, impact, data and learning, and
2. equity-focused leadership and practices.

The types of support that the majority of non-profit respondents requested are

1. grant funding, and
2. technical assistance and consultant support.

This led to the formation of the Data for Equity Funding Collaborative. With funding commitments from bi3, a philanthropic initiative to transform health, Interact for Health and the HealthPath Foundation, the collaborative seeks to respond directly to grantee partner input by providing grant funds and technical assistance to develop organizational capacity around data and evaluation in service of health equity in [Greater Cincinnati](#). The Data for Equity Funding Collaborative is hosted by Interact for Change, a 501(c)(3) subsidiary of Interact for Health.

The inaugural Data for Equity cohort launched in 2022. [Ten organizations](#) each received \$25,000 over 12 months and have engaged in additional training, technical assistance, and shared learning opportunities focused on topics such as community engagement and culturally responsive evaluation.

Cohort 1 Grantee, Ashley Glass of Black Women Cultivating Change stated "The Data for Equity grant has helped our organization strengthen our strategic focus and truly meet the needs of our community. It has also given us a chance to learn more about data and how important it is to enhance every aspect of our organization and how we interact with our target audience."

Data and evaluation efforts are not inherently objective and unbiased. How data is collected or interpreted can be influenced by an individual's values, biases and worldviews —often unintentionally. Purposefully taking an equitable approach strengthens transparency and rigor and helps to advance health equity. Health equity exists when there are no unnecessary, avoidable, unfair, unjust or systemically-caused differences in health status.

### RFP Goal

To provide funding and learning opportunities to non-profit organizations to develop their organizational capacity around data and evaluation in service of health equity.

## RFP Overview

The Data for Equity Funding Collaborative plans to award a second cohort of grants to support up to 10 non-profit organizations in developing their capacity to build equitable approaches to data and evaluation. Capacity building grants will be for up to \$25,000 for 12 months. We are open to an array of projects and encourage applicants to include their own perspective on what equitable evaluation might look like in practice at their organization.

For example, grants could be used to build an organization's capacity to:

- Align a new or existing practice or program with equitable evaluation [principles](#).
- Engage the voices of those with lived experience in programming and evaluation efforts.
- Analyze data and findings to better understand various populations and the effectiveness of services.
- Build the knowledge and capacity of organizational staff to understand data with an equity lens.
- Engage in continuous quality improvement to ensure equitable practices.
- Execute improvement plans to create better experiences and outcomes for customers and staff.

Grants can also be used to support the organization's participation in convening and learning activities (reimbursement for staff time, travel, etc.).

In addition to grant funding, ongoing opportunities for technical assistance, training and shared learning will be offered as needs are identified by the grantee learning cohort.

### Optional self-assessment

Building organizational capacity around data and evaluation to advance health equity is an ongoing journey. Potential applicants are encouraged to complete [this short self-assessment](#) to reflect on their interest, readiness and capacity to carry out a project and engage in the learning cohort. The self-assessment is not required with application but is meant to help guide potential applicants before committing time to submitting an application. If selected, grantees will be required to complete the self-assessment at the first grantee cohort meeting.

In partnership with the grantees, the funding collaborative will document the process and impact of the grant initiative and learning cohort. The evaluation will take the form of post-event surveys, an end-year focus group and conversations with grantees. The funders commit to creating as little burden as possible for grantee partners and encourage organizations to provide feedback on the evaluation process.

### Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be a public or private non-profit or governmental organization.
- Provide services in at least one county of the 20 counties below.

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

### The Data for Equity Funding Collaborative's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

The Data for Equity Funding Collaborative strives to promote health equity in all that we do. For us, health equity means that everyone throughout our diverse region has a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. This requires that we intentionally work to reduce health disparities, as well as tackle the underlying root causes, such as inequality, poverty and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, age, education, immigration status, geography, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation. We are on a journey to learn and work toward equity, diversity and inclusion within our own operations and practices, and we encourage our grantee partners to join with us.

## Grantee Requirements

Awarded grantees will be convened at least three times over the year to share their projects and learning and provide feedback on the process in partnership with the Data for Equity Funding Collaborative. Grantee feedback will be used to identify additional training and technical assistance to be supported by the funders. Grantees will be asked to participate in evaluation activities to capture learning and information for potential replication to a new cohort of grantees.

## PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA

The most competitive applications will demonstrate:

- A strong rationale for how the proposed activities/project will advance health equity.
- Activities/projects that are grounded in one or more equitable evaluation principles.
- That equity is core to the organization's mission and is central to the thinking and processes of the organization including and beyond evaluation.
- Clear goals for the grant period that are feasible and aligned with the goal of the RFP.
- That the organization can achieve the goals outlined in the proposal with the budget, timeline and staff capacity indicated.

The funding collaborative is interested in supporting a cohort of grantee organizations with diverse leadership, including board members. We strongly encourage organizations whose leaders identify as Black, Hispanic or represent other historically marginalized populations to apply.

## Timeline

"Data for Equity" RFP webinar	1:30-2:30 p.m. Sept. 6
Proposal deadline	5 p.m. Sept. 29
Virtual visits	Oct. 18-25
Notification of grant award	Nov. 1
Grantee meeting/workshop	Week of Jan. 23, 2023 (more details to follow)

## Proposal Webinar

A proposal webinar will be held to answer questions about the RFP concept and application process from **1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 6**. Attendance is optional and not required in order to submit a proposal. [Registration is required](#). Please contact [mlydenberg@interactforhealth.org](mailto:mlydenberg@interactforhealth.org) to receive the recording after Sept. 7th.

## Proposal Submissions

Completed applications must be submitted no later than **5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 29** via the funding collaborative's online grants management system. To begin the application process or to access a PDF of the required application questions, please visit <https://www.interactforhealth.org/open-funding/>. 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 contact Director of Grants Management Kristine Schultz at [kschultz@interactforhealth.org](mailto:kschultz@interactforhealth.org).

## Virtual Visits

Before selecting projects for funding, staff from the funding collaborative will conduct a virtual visit with the potential grantee. This meeting allows funding partners to hear more about the proposed project and ask any clarifying questions. Virtual visits will be conducted Oct. 18-25. Applicants will indicate their preferred timeslot during the application process. Virtual visit topics will include:

- General discussion of your proposed project and budget.
- Community/participant engagement approach
- The organization's commitment to equitable data and evaluation practices.

## Questions

For any questions regarding the process, please contact Michelle Lydenberg, Senior Manager of Data and Learning, at [mlydenberg@interactforhealth.org](mailto:mlydenberg@interactforhealth.org) or 513-458-6626.