



REQUEST FOR LETTER OF INTEREST

Learning and Evaluation Partner: Community Power Building | July 2024

About Interact for Health

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 that works in 20 counties in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana.

Core to our mission is the belief that it shouldn't matter where you live, how much money you make, or what your race or ethnicity is—everyone should have the ability to shape their communities and access the resources they need for good health.

More information about Interact for Health is available at www.interactforhealth.org.

Background: Community Power Building Strategy

In 2023, Interact for Health launched a new strategic plan that evolved who we are, what we focus on, and how we do our work. By restructuring and redefining our [mission](#), [vision](#), [values](#), [priority populations](#), and [strategic areas of focus](#), we aim to authentically and transparently advance health justice in all that we do. We acknowledge that fully addressing this complex work will require examination of root causes and reckoning with our own power and privilege as a funder.

One way we aim to advance health justice is through [community power building](#). Given the unique and varied conditions, capacities, and resources in our communities, building community power requires a flexible approach to meet the needs of communities and adapt strategy in real-time. Recognizing that those most affected by health inequities are best positioned to identify solutions, and that we, as a funder, play a major role in [the power ecosystem](#)¹, we acknowledge the need to consider our own relationship with power in order to achieve lasting change in our community.

Interact for Health is focused on forming deep, trusted, long-term relationships and mobilizing communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas of our region. Our current

¹ The California Endowment. (2020). An ecosystem to build power and advance health and racial equity. Retrieved from https://www.calendow.org/app/uploads/2021/09/An-Ecosystem-to-Build-Power-Final-Report_2021.pdf



hypothesis is that these strategies will lead to the following interim and long-term outcomes:

- *Interim Outcomes (through 2027)*
 - Increase the number of community-led policy, system, and physical changes in local communities.
 - Increase the voice, agency, and resources devoted to community-led plans.
- *Long-term Outcomes (beyond 2027)*
 - Improve community health and reduce disparities in key areas identified by community.
 - Increase social capital and civic engagement, expanding and sustaining community-led mobilization and organizing efforts.

Community power building is a promising approach with examples across the country and an emerging body of evidence.² Through this approach, we hope to learn more and contribute to the body of evidence around what power building looks like in different communities, the conditions that facilitate or hinder its effectiveness, how we measure and understand success, and what roles funders play in supporting it.

Request Summary & Scope of Services

Interact for Health seeks letters of interest (LOI) from experienced learning and evaluation partners to co-design and implement—with grantee partners and other key stakeholders—a multi-year learning and evaluation strategy.

Learning & Evaluation Goals

- To conduct a developmental evaluation that encourages real-time learning and reflection, guides strategic decision-making, and helps illuminate the process and impact on health equity of the *community power building* strategy.
- To center co-design—with Interact for Health, grantee partners, and other key stakeholders—in the learning and evaluation process.
- To share lessons learned in real time to strengthen practice and disseminate findings that contribute to the emerging community power building field.

Learning & Evaluation Questions

The following is a list of potential learning and evaluation questions generated by Interact for Health staff to give potential consultants a sense of our thinking. The selected consultant will work collaboratively with Interact for Health, grantee partners,

² Han, H. (2020). Reflections on measuring community power. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ee2c6c3c085f746bd33f80e/t/5f8f0e14736c6833fda80f7a/1603210772405/20201020.MeasuringPower.pdf>



and other stakeholders to co-design the final questions at the beginning of the evaluation process.

- *How do we understand the power building ecosystem of funded communities?*
 - In what ways have historical and structural decisions contributed to the issue being addressed?
- *What are facilitators and barriers to building power in communities?*
 - In what ways and to what extent do grantee partners and the communities in which they work increase their power? What similarities and differences do we see across communities?
 - In what ways are the communities or residents who are most impacted by inequities participating in and leading decision-making processes that amplify community needs and solutions?
- *What is the impact on healthy equity of increasing power in communities?*
 - How do grantee partners define success, and what progress do they make to that end?
 - In what ways is building power a mechanism for enabling policy, system, and physical changes in communities? For increasing the voice, agency, and resources to community-led plans?
- *In what ways does Interact for Health best support and strengthen the power building ecosystem? In what ways does it hinder it?*

Initial Considerations & Expectations

Interact for Health anticipates that the selected contractor will:

- Seek to minimize the burden on grantees, finding existing pathways and innovative mechanisms to gather evaluation information.
- Attend some in-person meetings (in [Interact for Health's service area](#)).
- Aim to co-design as much as is feasible, weighing the benefits and burdens of co-design in each step of the process.
- Reimburse participants for their time and lived experience.
- Help all involved navigate the tension and trade-offs of foundation-defined and grantee-defined learning and evaluation questions.
- Produce written summaries and, at minimum, a final report summarizing all evaluation findings.
- Collaborate with Interact for Health to disseminate evaluation results and lessons learned with community partners, the broader field, and other key stakeholders.

Who We Seek

Desired experience, expertise, and qualities that the contractor—or collaboration of contractors—may have include:

- Deep mixed methods learning and evaluation experience in community, systems, and advocacy contexts.



- Experience incorporating considerations about equity and justice in learning and evaluation; committed to the practices and values of [Equitable Evaluation](#).
- Ability to facilitate co-design in the learning and evaluation process, actively and equitably engaging people from diverse backgrounds (e.g., in developing learning questions, data collection, and sensemaking).
- Experience working with community-based organizations, nonprofits, and foundations.
- Experience developing theories of change and helping funders or other stakeholders develop strategies to amplify their impact and better support grantees.
- Ability to facilitate learning conversations that help people to think, learn, and adapt together to inform the overall strategy and the next best step (e.g., [emergent learning](#)).
- Ability to synthesize and communicate (verbal and written) complex information and stories in understandable and actionable ways.
- Located in or have a deep knowledge/understanding of the Midwest is a plus.

Anticipated Project Budget & Timeframe

Depending on availability of contractor(s), the goal is to begin the project in October 2024. The initial contract will be awarded for the remainder of 2024 through the end of 2025. It is anticipated that the project will continue through 2027/2028 pending any shifts in Interact for Health's strategic plan.

The budget for this project in 2024-2025 is \$120,000, inclusive of all expenses. Subsequent years will be awarded on an annual basis.

Ultimately, we seek the best contractor(s) for this project and have some flexibility, which we are open to discussing.

Submission Process

How to Apply

Interested parties should submit a **2–3-page** (maximum, excluding resume and sample material request below) **Letter of Interest** (LOI) to Colleen Desmond at cdesmond@interactforhealth.org. The LOI should include the following:

- A brief summary description of your organization/firm. If submitting as a collaboration of consultants, please briefly note which organization/firm will be the lead consultant and any relevant history of working together.
- Initial thoughts on or questions about how you might approach the Request Summary and Scope of Services (above). The purpose of this is not to provide a detailed project plan, but to help us understand how you might think about approaching this project and what you might take into consideration.



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- A brief description of your experience and expertise conducting similar or relevant projects to this one.
- Any relevant information about your availability to implement this project in the proposed timeframe and budget.

In addition to the 2–3-page LOI, please provide:

- A resume or brief summary of the lead contractor’s experience and expertise.
- One sample material (e.g., report, brief, presentation) that showcases your work and exemplifies your experience and expertise conducting a similar project.

Timeline

Completed LOIs must be submitted no later than **Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 5 p.m. EST** to Colleen Desmond at cdesmond@interactforhealth.org.

Interact for Health will review LOIs and identify semi-finalists for further conversation and additional information. We anticipate conducting virtual interviews with semi-finalists mid-September with a contractor selected by the end of September 2024. Representatives from any collaborating organizations are required to attend the interview.

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| Letter of interest submission deadline | Tuesday, August 13, 5 p.m. |
| Semi-finalists invited to submit brief proposals | Monday, August 19 |
| Proposal submission deadline | Monday, September 9, 5 p.m. |
| Interviews | September 16-24 |
| Learning and evaluation partner selected | End of September |

Questions

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this request further, please contact Colleen Desmond, Senior Manager of Data and Learning at cdesmond@interactforhealth.org.

Our Commitment to Equity

Interact for Health is working to ensure people in our region have a just opportunity to live their healthiest lives, regardless of who they are or where they live. We are [committed to conversations](#) about equity that build connections and move us forward with enhanced insights and shared purpose.