

# EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION: HEALTH EQUITY IN ACTION

Applications due: April 10, 2018, 4 p.m. Central Time

## INTRODUCTION

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation’s mission is to make a healthy difference in communities by advancing health equity and improving conditions where people live, learn, work and play.

Social determinants of health influence a full 40 percent of health outcomes. Focusing on the social determinants of health can reduce barriers and positively impact future health. This funding opportunity is focused on [early childhood care and education](#) — a key social determinant of health.

Extensive research shows that early childhood care and education helps put [young children](#) 0–5 years old on the path to a lifetime of good health. Children who have access to [quality](#) early childhood care and education are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Children entering kindergarten ready to learn are more likely to be proficient readers by third grade — and reading well by third grade is a strong predictor of high school graduation and long-term health gains. We also know that across Minnesota, children face inequities in access to quality early childhood care and education based on race, ethnicity, geography and income.\*

The goal of this funding opportunity is to make a healthy difference in communities by advancing health equity in early childhood care and education.

To achieve this goal, we will fund work that will increase [access](#) to and quality of early childhood care and education for children 0–5 years old.

Successful applicants will focus on creating or contributing to systems change in early childhood care and education settings to decrease inequities. Work could include, but is not limited to, increasing the access and quality of early childhood child care and education and/or supporting the early childhood workforce to meet the needs of Minnesotans.

Applications must focus on:

- 1. Health equity**, which is defined as a state where all people can reach their highest level of health.
- 2. Early childhood care and education.**
- 3. Systems change**, which refers to intentionally changing parts of systems, structures, policies, or processes, as well as shifting resources, values, power, mindsets, and infrastructures to advance health equity. Applications must create or contribute to systems change rather than provide direct services.

The Foundation welcomes applications that implement, continue, or expand proven approaches as well as those that develop and implement new models. Both new and existing efforts are eligible. Each organization may only submit one application for this funding opportunity. Fiscal sponsors may apply on behalf of other projects, as well as on behalf of their own project.

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\* Susan Egarter, Paula Braveman, Tabashir Sadegh-Nobari, Rebecca Grossman-Kahn and Mercedes Dekker, “[Education Matters for Health](#),” *Issue Brief* 6 (Princeton: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Commission to Build a Healthier America, 2009), 2.

## ELIGIBILITY

The Foundation believes health equity is best achieved when the people experiencing inequities are meaningfully involved in setting priorities, generating solutions and implementing approaches. As a result, this grant opportunity seeks to fund organizations that can demonstrate how the populations affected by health inequities are meaningfully engaged in all aspects of the proposed work.

### Eligible organizations

- To be eligible, an organization must be classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, nonprofit 501(c)(3) community-based organization located in or serving Minnesota communities. The use of fiscal sponsors is permitted.
- Native American communities and Tribal governments.

### Ineligible organizations

- Individuals.
- For-profit organizations.
- Private foundations.
- With the exception of Tribal entities, government agencies and units of government are not eligible to apply. Public schools, cities, counties and state agencies are considered units of government and are therefore not eligible to apply.
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.
- Organizations that require membership in certain religions or advance a particular religious faith. (Faith-based organizations are eligible if they welcome and serve all members of the community regardless of religious belief and have 501(c)(3) status.)

## APPLICATION PROCESS AND PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

The application process has three steps:

- 1. Eligibility questionnaire.** All applicants must complete the eligibility questionnaire in the Foundation's [online grant-management system](#). Upon completing the eligibility questionnaire, you will either be (1) allowed to proceed with the full application, or (2) you will receive a message that your organization is not eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.
- 2. Full application.** Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. Central Time, Tuesday, April 10, 2018. Applications must be completed through the Foundation's [online grant-management system](#). No other form or method of submission may be used.
- 3. Site visit.** Site visits will be scheduled for finalist applicants only.

### Application questions

You must answer each question in the online application. The chart below lists the application questions and highlights specific information you should include in your answers, in addition to responding to the core question. Your application will be evaluated on the responses you provide. The Foundation will also consider information provided on budget documents, the Leadership Demographic worksheet and the geographic distribution of grants.

Application question and word limits	Be sure to include
Please provide a two- to three-sentence summary of your application. [100-word limit]	
Describe the opportunities and challenges your application addresses and your proposed solution. [1,000-word limit]	<p>Describe how your effort will contribute to systems change that will increase access to and/or quality of early childhood care and education.</p> <p>Describe the population your proposed work is intended to benefit.</p>
How was the focus of this application determined, and who was involved with that decision-making process? [500-word limit]	Describe how the people most impacted by the proposed effort were 1) included in determining the focus of the application and 2) will be involved in decision-making throughout the lifecycle of the grant.
Describe your organization’s capacity and relevant experience. [500-word limit]	Include the organization’s cultural competencies and experience working with the population you anticipate will benefit from the proposed work.
Describe your goals and objectives for this project. [1,000-word limit]	Describe how the proposed goals and objectives will increase access to and/or quality of early childhood care and education.
Describe the specific activities for which you seek funding and who will carry out the activities. [500-word limit]	Describe how the proposed activities will achieve your goals and objectives.
How will this project advance health equity? [500-word limit]	Describe how the proposed effort will address inequities in early childhood care and education.
Describe your evaluation plan. What impact will you have? How will you measure your impact? Who will be involved in evaluating your efforts? [500-word limit]	<p>Describe the anticipated one- to two-year outcomes and how you will measure progress toward these outcomes.</p> <p>Describe what will have changed as a result of the grant by the end of the grant period.</p> <p>Describe those who will participate in and lead the evaluation.</p>
Describe your strategies for sustaining this effort. [500-word limit]	Because this grant seeks to change systems, describe how the effort will be sustained beyond the grant. What strategies and tactics will you use to sustain aspects of the work?
We invite you to provide any additional information here that will help us review your request. (Optional) [1,000-word limit]	
Upload any additional attachment(s) that will help us as review your request. (Optional)	

## PROGRAM TIMELINE

Grant-funded activities are expected to begin on July 1, 2018. Grants awarded for a one-year grant period will conclude on June 30, 2019. Grants awarded for a two-year period will conclude on June 30, 2020.

## ASSISTANCE BEYOND THE GRANT

The Foundation is committed to our grantees' success. Grantees will be paired with a Foundation program officer who will work with you during the grant on evaluation, communications and technical assistance. Grantees will work with their program officer to identify additional ways the Foundation can support your organization, which may include additional funds for capacity-building activities during your grant period. Additional support may include, but is not limited to, strategic planning, development planning and board development. If awarded a grant, your program officer will work with you to identify opportunities and support. Grantees may be asked to participate in convenings and/or other forms of additional support. When grantees attend Foundation activities or convenings, mileage and lodging expenses can be reimbursed directly for those traveling more than 100 miles round trip, and these expenses do not need to be included in the grant project budget.

## BUDGET INFORMATION

The Foundation expects to grant a total of up to \$500,000 in year one. Applicants may apply for grants of up to \$100,000 per year and may apply for one- or two-year grants. Organizations applying for two-year grants may request different amounts each year. Approval for the second year of funding is dependent on demonstrated progress toward goals in the first year. The Foundation does not have a preference related to one- or two-year grants.

Foundation grants cannot exceed 25 percent of the applicant organization's annual budget.

Each applicant must submit a detailed project budget and narrative and provide an organizational budget. You may submit your own budget form, or use the Foundation's [project budget](#) or [organizational budget](#) templates. Applicants invited for a site visit (the finalists) must provide their most recent audit (if audited) or most recent board-approved financials and the most recent IRS Form 990 in advance of the site visit.

### *Eligible use of funds*

- Project staff salaries and benefits
- Project costs, including but not limited to planning, activity costs, project-related equipment and supplies, and other project-related direct costs
- Indirect administrative costs for the grant budget cannot exceed 20 percent, including but not limited to general and organizational costs, payroll processing or auditing costs, liability insurance, rent, utilities, equipment maintenance and indirect department salaries, such as salaries of personnel in human resources or accounting departments

### *Ineligible use of funds*

- Assistance for individuals, including scholarships
- Activities for specific religious purposes
- Clinical quality-improvement activities
- Biomedical research
- Back payroll taxes

- Building purchase, remodeling or furnishing of facilities, or other capital expenditures
- Director and officers' insurance
- Equipment or travel, except as related to project activities
- Endowments, fundraising events or development campaigns
- Legal fees, including the cost of litigation or settlements, incurred by grantees
- Retiring debt or covering deficits
- Payment of services or benefits reimbursable from other sources
- Vehicle purchase

### *Lobbying restrictions*

As required by the Internal Revenue Code, the Foundation will not fund attempts to influence specific pending or proposed legislation, including referenda, local ordinances and resolutions. This prohibition generally includes direct lobbying of legislators and other government officials with respect to specific legislation and mass media advertising campaigns aimed at influencing specific legislation.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Blue Cross' [Center for Prevention](#) focuses on tobacco use, physical activity and healthy eating; therefore, applications focused primarily on those issues are **not eligible** for funding under this funding opportunity. Learn more about the Center for Prevention at [centerforpreventionmn.com/our-approach/how-we-work/funding-initiatives](http://centerforpreventionmn.com/our-approach/how-we-work/funding-initiatives).

## TIMELINE

February 1, 2018	Funding opportunity guidelines released; application process opens
Early February	Informational webinar posted on website
February 1–April 10, 2018	Foundation program staff available for phone inquiries and questions about funding opportunity
April 10, 2018	Application deadline, <b>4 p.m. Central Time</b>
May 7–8, 2018	Staff schedule site visits with finalist applicants; applicants not receiving a site-visit invitation will not continue in the process
Mid-May	Applicants not selected for a site visit are notified by email
May 7–25, 2018	Site visits completed
Late June 2018	Announcement of grant awards
July 1, 2018	Expected start date for grantees

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

We encourage all applicants to carefully review this document and watch the informational webinar. Applicants are also welcome to call or email any of the following:

- Senior Program Officer Allison Corrado at [Allison.Corrado@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:Allison.Corrado@bluecrossmn.com) or (651) 662-4613
- Senior Program Officer Claire Chang at [Claire.Chang@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:Claire.Chang@bluecrossmn.com) or (651) 662-7416

For questions about the application process, please contact Grants Manager Janet Jablonske at [Janet.Jablonske@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:Janet.Jablonske@bluecrossmn.com) or (651) 662-7417.

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Access** — Supports that result in families' ability to enroll their children in early childhood care and education programs, including availability of quality early childhood care and education across the state.

**Early childhood care and education** — Programs that provide care for young children.

**Quality** — Including but not limited to cultural context, parent engagement and promoting kindergarten readiness practices, such as programs like Parent Aware ratings or accreditation.

**Young children or children** — 0–5 years old.

## RESOURCES

[Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation website](#)

[Center for Rural Policy and Development: Child Care Report](#)

[Minnesota Compass: Early Childhood Overview](#)

[Parent Aware Fast Facts](#)

[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Early Childhood Experiences and Health Issue Brief](#)

[bcbsmnfoundation.org](http://bcbsmnfoundation.org)



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