

Convergence Innovations Fund Teleconference
12PM – 1PM PST, May 21, 2009
Conference Call Minutes

Welcome & Brief Introductions

- Shireen Malekafzali, Senior Associate at PolicyLink. PolicyLink is a non-profit research and action institute dedicated to social and economic equity. PolicyLink serves as Program Directors to the Convergence Partnership.
- Brian Raymond, Senior Policy Consultant at Kaiser Permanente. Kaiser is a member of the Convergence Partnership.

Review agenda for the call

- Introduction to the Convergence Partnership
- Overview of the RFP goals, eligibility requirements and submission logistics
- Q & A for the last half of the call
- A brief note:
 - This is an informational call. All decisions will be made based on the applications received and the parameters laid out in the RFP.

Brief Introduction to the Convergence Partnership (Brian Raymond)

- The steering committee members include The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Kresge Foundation, Nemours, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, WK Kellogg Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention serves as important technical advisors.
- The overarching vision of the Partnership is healthy people in healthy places. The Convergence Partnership promotes collaboration across fields, environmental and policy change and a focus on equity.
- The website includes more information about the Partnership:
www.convergencepartnership.org.
- The website also includes a publication titled "*Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy Eating and Active Living Environments*," which includes good examples of the policy and environmental change strategies.

Overview of the RFP (Shireen)

- Review the Innovation Fund goals listed in the RFP
- Awards will be made in late October 2009. Approximately half the grants will be made in October 2009, and the remaining half of the funds will be granted in January. The applications that seem to have projects which are furthest developed will be funded in the earlier cycle.
- The partnership will likely be able to fund 10 - 15 foundations.
- Review applicant and project eligibility are detailed in sections 1D and 1E of the RFP.

- To clarify:
 - Foundations can start entire new initiatives, which would be excellent, or support new projects within existing initiatives to work on policy, environmental change strategies focused on built environment/land use and/or food access. There must be a clear focus on equity.
 - Partnerships are encouraged. All applications must be submitted by a foundation, but foundations can specify partners. Non-profit organizations and public institutions should reach out to local, regional and family foundations to partner on this RFP.

Further explanation of eligibility

- Scenarios were provided to give a sense of the types of applicants and projects that would be eligible. Many more eligible scenarios exist. Below we provide a few examples.
 - Scenario 1: A foundation has been invested in a community for years. This foundation recognizes the need for food access in various low-income neighborhoods they serve and would like to launch an initiative to support policy and environmental changes in order to expand health food access. The foundation can then launch its own RFP process using the criteria listed in the Innovation Fund RFP.
 - Scenario 2: A foundation has had many requests to work on policy and environmental change efforts related to an upcoming rezoning in their community and the foundation would like to use this Innovation Fund as an opportunity to launch an initiative which supports community organizing and involvement in the process.
 - Scenario 3: A foundation that has been involved in nutrition efforts and has wanted to expand their portfolio to include projects which are focused on healthy food access.
 - Scenario 4: A foundation that is interested in partnering with a local public agency, such as the planning department, parks and recreation department or health department, to support collaborative community efforts that will inform local planning processes in low-income communities to better meet the needs of residents.
 - Scenario 5: A regional foundation that has been funding multi-field collaboratives to work on getting physical activity reinstated in a number of disadvantaged school districts. The foundation sees value in expanding their overall efforts beyond the school system to help increase safe walking/biking/play in their community. The foundation can apply to start new projects with these collaboratives to engage in new land use/built environment policy opportunities so children have access to physical activity throughout their day as well as in schools. The projects the collaboratives may choose could include: a) organizing for more public transportation and walking/biking in a new area plan being developed by the city planning department; b) pushing for a new park in a park-poor neighborhood; c) organizing their efforts around creating safe routes to schools or converting liquor stores to healthy food outlets in their neighborhood which are on the beaten path to schools. These are only a few examples.
 - Scenario 6: A family foundation that has been investing in several low-income communities through community development corporations for a number of years. They have been

hearing about the lack of fresh food in the community and high rates of obesity. They would like to support the community economic development agencies to partner with local health departments and community clinics, schools and others to start new projects to establish a grocery store or a farmers market, or getting EBT at the nearby farmers market, or getting bus routes to connect to grocery stores in other neighborhoods.

Examples of Ineligible People

- Community based organizations without foundation partners
- Public institutions without foundation partners
- Foundations with robust existing portfolios in built environment/land use and/or healthy food access

Examples of Ineligible Projects

- Curriculum development
- Research studies
- Clinical interventions
- Educational programs
- Capital construction costs
- General operating support
- In-kind support from foundation staff

Logistics (Shireen)

- The proposal deadline is Monday June, 22nd at 5pm PST. Late applications will not be considered.
- Send your applications to the Gmail account listed on the RFP. Please include your organization's name in the subject line.
- Do not forget to fill out and attached the cover sheet, which is available on the Convergence Partnership website.
- Only complete applications will be considered.
- Visit the Convergence website to access the RFP and Cover Letter:
www.convergencepartnership.org
- Email your questions to Shireen at Shireen@policylink.org

Question & Answer Period (30 minutes)

1) Can foundations come together and apply as a collaborative of foundations?

Yes, foundation partnerships are encouraged with one foundation lead. In particular the partnership is interested in multi-field partnerships whenever possible.

2) How can foundations working at the state level target the communities of need detailed in the RFP?

Foundations can use statewide data for the indicators listed in the RFP. The state foundations can then target projects in communities with highest needs, which meet the RFP project criteria. Funds must be used to support projects in communities of need.

3) What are your expectations for tangible outcomes?

The Partnership recognizes that individual health outcomes are not easy to achieve within one year. Interim outcomes such as policy and environmental changes, or critical process outcomes can be used—for example, the introduction of a bill. Outcomes are not prescriptive. The Partnership would like to see outcomes achieved after the two years.

4) Can applications include a planning phase?

Yes, as long as the planning phase is not a bulk of the time frame. The Partnership wants to see outcomes achieved within the first two years.

5) Can research be a component of the project supported by the Fund?

Yes, the Partnership recognizes that research is appropriate to support planning. Planning and development would be a crucial part of getting collaboratives off the ground. But the planning phase must be short given the timeframe for the grant.

6) Would a foundation be eligible to apply if a specific community has not yet been identified at the time the RFP is due?

It would be helpful to have an idea of possible communities given the criteria listed in the RFP. If the work ends up being in an affluent location with ample amenities it will not be eligible. Therefore applying to this Fund would mean a commitment to focus funding in communities of need, as identified in the RFP.

7) A clarification regarding the matching dollars. If the foundation was contributing \$80K towards the built environment/land use or food access effort would the Innovations match it at \$40K?

Yes, 50% matching up to \$100K.

8) Do you require applicants to use any specific data sources for the data which will be presented in the proposal?

Applicants can choose the data sources which make the most sense for their geography.

9) How does the Partnership define “robust” or “limited” when describing the applicants existing portfolios?

There is some subjectivity in the definitions obviously. The Partnership does not want to specify a specific dollar amount. The intention of the Partnership is to make sure that the matching dollars would not just add a small amount of money into a foundation’s already large pot focused on built

environment/land use or food access. The goal is to use the money as a launching pad to create a sustainable effort.

10) Can universities apply?

No, the Fund is specifically for grantmaking foundations. Public entities are encouraged to partner with foundations to apply.

11) Can a foundation in Canada apply?

The grant is designed for use in the United States only.

12) Can foundations send a preview of the application or project to see if it's applicable?

Because of the fast turnaround time for the proposals the Partnership is not accepting letters of intent. If you have a specific question about eligibility you can email Shireen.

13) Is there a criterion for the number of people served by the Funds?

There is no criterion for population requirement. The Partnership is interested in serving rural and urban areas.

14) Are there any specific criteria for measuring how to maintain sustainability beyond the grant period?

The Partnership would like to see specific ideas and plans for how the foundation plans to work towards sustaining efforts. The Partnership is interested that to see that the effort will be maintained.

15) Does the foundation have to have all the money raised by the application date?

Submitting an application where the funds are available at the time of submission is a competitive factor. For those who would like additional time to secure funds, conditional grants will be made. Funds must be secured by January 2010. Those applicants who do not have funds to commit at the time of application must specify what steps they have taken thus far to fundraise and what steps they plan to take to secure funding.

17) Is there any additional guidance or criteria for showing a commitment to equity?

Indicate if you have a history of working on issues of equity, funding in low-income communities and communities of color, or if this is a new area that the foundation would like to focus on.

18) Are the matching dollars for the total project budget or for the foundation's contribution to the project?

The Convergence Innovation Fund will match up to 50% of the contribution of the applying foundation or foundations. The Fund will not match the total project budget where funding is aggregated from sources outside of grantmaking foundations. The Fund will match the portion of dollars the applying foundation(s) contributes. For example: An applying foundation is interested in creating a collaborative in support of a project which meets the RFP criteria. The estimated project budget is \$200K. The foundation is contributing \$50K, a university is contributing \$100K and a non-profit organization is contributing the remaining \$50K. The Convergence Innovation Fund would consider a 50% match on only the contribution made by the foundation, for a total of \$25K in matching dollars.

19) When does that project have to start?

The Partnership recognizes that the project may take a couple of months to get off the ground as initiatives are launched and new projects begin. In the workplan applicants should create a timeframe which is realistic and shows adequate outcomes within the first two years.

20) At what point does a foundation get classified as having a small portfolio in land use/built environment or healthy food access. Even though we are committed to new funding, is it worth applying as we are already far down this road with a million dollar initiative in place?

There is not a specific dollar amount attached. The Partnership would like to use this fund to take existing small initiatives/projects and launch them into something bigger and more sustainable. The Partnership would also like to support foundations that have an interest in this area get started.

21) Can foundations partner together to apply?

Yes, partnership is encouraged. In particular, partnerships from differing fields of interest would make the proposal even more appealing.

22) Since this is a new area for our foundation, we do not have projects that are ready to go. Can a foundation apply for projects without having them planned?

Yes. Because the Fund is for new projects the Partnership recognizes that the projects may not already be planned.

Final Note

Please review the RFP carefully. Remember that the Partnership will be looking for the following things:

- Targeting funds to communities of need, with high obesity, poverty, asthma rates and/or lack of food retail outlets and/or abundance of vacant land.
- A clear dedication to equity

- Strategies and approaches which are innovative
- Health and equity are key outcomes of the initiative or project
- A clear policy and environmental change target
- Multi-field collaborations
- In-depth community involvement in decision-making from representative communities
- A workplan and strategies that are realistic and demonstrate an ability to meet the RFP project criteria