

EXPANDING INSURANCE COVERAGE IN NEW YORK STATE**I. About the Foundation**

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) is a private foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers. NYSHealth has a three-part mission:

- **Expanding health insurance coverage** to state residents who cannot afford to purchase their own coverage or whose coverage is inadequate.
- **Increasing access to high-quality health care services** for underserved people.
- **Improving public and community health** by educating New Yorkers about health issues and empowering communities to address them.

II. Background

About 1.2 million people in New York State who are eligible for public health insurance coverage are not enrolled despite multiple public options available to them. Many of these individuals, who include the working poor, are not enrolled in public coverage for many reasons such as: (1) they do not know about it; (2) they do not think they are eligible or are reluctant to accept public benefits; or (3) they have difficulty completing the complicated paperwork and verification steps associated with enrollment. Changes in family income, social services, immigration status and frequent modifications to public health coverage program requirements are additional barriers. Many people lose their coverage at renewal because they have to actively re-enroll. Another 1.6 million New Yorkers are uninsured and do not currently qualify for public insurance programs. Many factors contribute to the difficulties these individuals face in finding affordable coverage options.

Expanding health insurance coverage is emerging as a top priority in many states across the nation. The New York State government is considering systemic changes needed to facilitate enrollment of the 1.2 million people who are eligible but not covered by public health plans. This grant initiative intends to identify partners across the state that will develop interventions to improve the state's enrollment and reenrollment processes resulting in an increase of health care coverage for vulnerable populations. This grant initiative also aims to expand private insurance coverage for the 1.6 million uninsured New Yorkers who are not now eligible for public coverage.

DATES:**Intent to Apply**

April 11, 2007

Application Deadline

May 2, 2007

Outcome Notification

June 26, 2007

Finalists Full Proposal

August 8, 2007

EXPANDING INSURANCE COVERAGE IN NEW YORK STATE**III. The Program**

The objectives of this RFP are to encourage a diverse range of applicants to apply their expertise to: (a) address the persistent problem of enrolling uninsured New Yorkers and keeping them enrolled in public coverage and (b) expand enrollment for individuals who are not eligible for public insurance.

The Foundation will allocate up to \$2 million to support these projects. NYSHealth plans to fund grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 over a one-year period to support implementation of interventions that lead to increased insurance coverage among New Yorkers. NYSHealth is most interested in enrollment strategies led by community-based organizations or grassroots organizations that could be replicable in other areas of New York State.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) represents one aspect of a range of grantmaking activities NYSHealth plans to support related to the problem of increasing insurance coverage in New York State. Plans for these related activities will be communicated over the coming months on our Web site (www.NYSHealth.org). A description of the emerging priorities of the Foundation also appears on our Web site.

IV. Type of Activities that May Be Funded

NYSHealth invites applicants to think creatively and explore innovative ideas that will lead to increasing coverage for the uninsured. Grants funded under this solicitation are intended to support the implementation of the project, including the up-front costs of an initiative such as necessary planning staff and/or consulting time.

A list of the kinds of projects that might be funded under this RFP is provided below but is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. Examples of potentially successful projects include:

- Formation of community-based partnerships to develop and implement enrollment and re-enrollment strategies and simplification efforts.
- Education and public awareness efforts to inform the public and leaders about problems related to uninsurance and approaches to expanding coverage.
- Developing new approaches for encouraging expansion of employer-based coverage.
- Targeting enrollment of “hard to reach” populations throughout New York State.
- Exploring or demonstrating practical approaches for simplifying application, enrollment and re-enrollment processes, including the use of automated systems.
- Exploring approaches to making facilitated enrollment initiatives more efficient and cost-effective.
- Addressing cultural and linguistic barriers to enrollment.
- Expanding acceptance of oral health benefits covered by Medicaid and Child Health Plus by more local providers.
- Improving the quality of health insurance offerings.
- Enhancing partnerships with employers, providers and the education system for enrolling uninsured individuals in public insurance options.
- Encouraging use of Healthy NY and other public/private programs available to small business owners and their employees.

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- Leveraging financial counseling resources within provider institutions to facilitate enrollment of eligible individuals in public insurance options.

Proposed initiatives can include both projects that attempt to embed new enrollment ideas into daily practice and projects with more of a planning focus (e.g., that provide state policymakers with a roadmap for improving enrollment practices beyond the analyses and reports that already exist). All proposals must specify how they will track and assess programmatic outcomes.

In addition, grantees must agree to participate in any Foundation assessment or evaluation of this overall initiative.

V. Types of Activities We Will Not Fund

NYSHealth grant funding will not support:

- Staff persons hired with the sole purpose of conducting facilitated enrollment or outreach.
- Research projects.
- Large equipment purchases such as mobile health care vans.

VI. Who May Apply

We encourage local agencies, community coalitions, advocacy groups and other grassroots organizations to apply for this grant funding. We anticipate that applicants and projects will be New York-based, although out-of-state applications will be considered if there is potential to design an intervention and test its impact in New York State.

VII. Application Timeline and Process

The Foundation is inviting letters of intent at this time. Guidelines for submission are below. Finalists will be asked to submit full proposals later in this process.

Timeline

1. To help us assess the volume of potential submissions, we ask that you email us your intent to apply to this RFP by **April 11, 2007** to CoverageRFP@NYSHealth.org. Please include your name, organization and website.
2. Letters of intent must be received no later than **5:00 PM on May 2, 2007**.
3. All applicants will be notified on **June 26, 2007** about the outcome of their letter of intent. Finalists will be furnished with application guidelines for full proposals at this time.
4. Finalists' full proposals will be due **August 8, 2007**.

Selection Criteria

Letters of intent will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **Feasibility** of the project and timeline;
- **Potential for success and the scale** of enrollment increases: can an idea be implemented broadly and replicated in other communities in New York State?

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- **Experience and qualifications** of the applicant;
- **Clarity** in articulating the type(s) of enrollment strategy used to increase efficiency in the system and how this will translate to increased coverage for the uninsured;
- **Collaboration:** working with a number of actors in the system is not required but is considered a positive attribute of a proposed project.

Foundation staff will collaborate with a group of external reviewers to evaluate all letters of intent and full proposals. The NYSHealth Board of Directors will make final award decisions based on the recommendations of the review team.

Letter of Intent Guidelines and Submission Process

Letters of intent are to be submitted using NYSHealth's online application system located on our Web site (www.NYSHealth.org), on the Call for Proposals page, which will request that applicants supply the following information:

1. **Organizational information** including a description of the organization's purpose and activities. If the applicant is working in a unit or department of a much larger organization, please describe your unit or department only (including information about the larger organization only if it is relevant to the project).
2. **Letter of Intent** which allows the applicant to describe the types of activities the project will undertake, the key people and institutions whose involvement would be required, and the setting(s) in which enrollment increases would be sought. Applicants should also include a brief description of what can be accomplished by the project (expected outcomes in terms of how enrollment can increase both in terms of approaches and number of people). (750 word maximum)
3. **Summary Budget Information:** All proposals must include a budget summary, which can be uploaded through the Foundation's online application system. Applicants may use their own style for developing this attachment but the file format should be Microsoft Word or Excel.

Inquiries

Inquiries about this Request for Proposals can be addressed to CoverageRFP@NYSHealth.org.

Project Management

Kelly Hunt, senior program director, provides oversight, direction and assistance for this project. Jamalia Brashears, program associate, Mark Barreiro, grants and operations manager and George Suttles, National Urban Fellow, also contribute to the direction of this project.