

Request for Proposals

2009 Special Projects Fund

Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis with three deadlines in 2009: January 29, March 5, and June 4. Applications must be received on or before each deadline. If submitting on the deadline date, the application must be submitted by 4 p.m. Earlier applicants have a higher probability of receiving funding than those who apply later in the calendar year.

Application Deadlines:

January 29

March 5

June 4

I. About the Foundation

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) has a broad mission to improve the health of New York State residents. In order to have a tangible impact, most of the Foundation's grantmaking is focused on three priority areas: expanding health insurance coverage, improving the management and prevention of diabetes, and encouraging the integration of substance use and mental health services.

II. Background

NYSHealth also recognizes that it can be an important resource if it is responsive to opportunities that fit our mission, but are outside of our three priority areas. For this purpose, NYSHealth expects to award grants as part of the 2009 Special Projects Fund. The Special Projects Fund replaces what were previously known as Special Opportunities grants. Special Projects Fund awards should be considered one-time, non-renewable funding opportunities. Only in exceptional circumstances would NYSHealth consider making an additional grant for a project that has been previously funded.

Organizations can apply for a 2009 Special Projects Fund grant at any time from the release of this request for proposals (RFP) through June 4, 2009. Grant applications are considered on a rolling basis with three deadlines. Earlier applicants have a higher probability of receiving funding than those who apply later in the calendar year. Special Projects Fund grants are highly competitive. In past years, our resources have allowed us to support just one in 20 proposals that we receive.

III. Projects Eligible for Funding

Projects are coordinated interventions over a specified period of time to achieve measurable results. NYSHealth places emphasis on projects that:

- help low-income and elderly consumers understand and navigate the health care system;
- improve access to health care in service areas that have acute shortages;
- improve quality of care in measurable ways;
- support and strengthen safety net providers of health care;
- scale up successful programs or services to reach more people; and
- provide culturally appropriate programs for underserved populations.

Given the challenging economic environment that we face in 2009, NYSHealth also is interested in projects that:

- represent an innovative response to helping health organizations respond to and cope with the economic crisis; and
- implement viable options for saving or consolidating organizations that may be threatened by the economic climate.

Competitive applications will also:

- Be immediate or time-sensitive opportunities for Foundation funds to make a difference.
- Demonstrate the sustainability of the project after the one-time grant support from NYSHealth. It is important to explain the business plan for sustaining the project.
- Include clearly stated evidence of need or opportunity, goals, timelines, objectives and measurable outcomes.
- Have an effective plan for evaluating the measurable impact of the project and the funding received.
- Have strong potential for replication elsewhere in New York State.

For detailed guidelines on responding to the RFP, see the separate “2009 Special Projects Fund Request for Proposals and Application Instructions.”

IV. Projects Not Eligible for Funding

Requests not eligible for funding include:

- Projects that are related to our priority areas of insurance coverage expansion, diabetes, or the integration of mental health and substance use treatment.
- Projects that involve funding of ongoing services or activities similar to the normal activities under-

taken by an organization.

- Core support/organizational infrastructure. Core support includes baseline operating and administrative costs, board development, staff development unrelated to the project, and fundraising activities.
- Projects that have been turned down by NYSHealth within the preceding 12 months, unless they have been substantially revised.
- Projects that involve the purchase, installation, or upgrade of health information technology systems, including electronic medical records.
- Projects that are primarily research-oriented.
- Projects that focus on lobbying or political activities.
- Capital expenses.

V. Eligible Applicants

NYSHealth will consider proposals from existing nonprofit (501[c][3]) and for-profit organizations with a significant presence in New York State. Applicant organizations must show that proposed projects further the charitable mission of the New York State Health Foundation.

VI. Review Criteria

Project applications are assessed by a panel comprising reviewers from across the State who possess a diverse set of expertise. NYSHealth's review panel will consider the following factors:

1. Clear articulation of need and a focus on vulnerable populations.
2. Likelihood that a project will accomplish its goals and have a measurable impact.
3. The experience, potential and readiness of the applicant organization to complete the project successfully.
4. Sustainability of the project activities after NYSHealth funds expire, and ability of the applicant to use a grant to leverage other potential funds.
5. Potential for replication.
6. Degree of creativity or innovation exhibited by the project.
7. Clarity of the proposal in making the case that the initiative represents a special opportunity for NYSHealth funding.

VII. Budget

Projects will be assessed for the appropriateness of budget to the proposed scope of work and timeline.

Funding requests can range from \$50,000 to \$1,000,000, but most grants will not exceed \$200,000. Only under unusual circumstances will NYSHealth make awards larger than \$500,000. Applicants should bear in mind that funds requested must be commensurate to the work proposed.

VIII. Application Process

Initial Inquiry: Special Projects Fund applicants are encouraged to contact NYSHealth to determine whether their projects fit the funding criteria prior to completing and submitting a full application. Such inquiries should be one page in length and must use the outline available in the “Funding Opportunities” section of the NYSHealth Web site at www.NYSHealth.org. Initial inquiries should be e-mailed to special-projectsfund@nyshealth.org. NYSHealth staff will review the one-page inquiries on an ongoing basis and respond to potential applicants.

For detailed instructions on the RFP application process, please consult the “2009 Special Projects Fund Request for Proposals and Application Instructions,” and for more information about the Special Projects Fund, consult our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in the “Funding Opportunities” section of the NYSHealth Web site at www.NYSHealth.org.