



Improving the state of  
New York's health

September 2023

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# Request for Proposals

## *Healthy Food, Healthy Lives: Supporting a More Equitable Food System Request for Proposals (RFP)*

Applicants must first complete an online letter of inquiry form (LOI). Please visit the [Apply for Funding](#) section of the NYHealth website to find detailed LOI submission instructions, a link to our applicant portal, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The deadline for the LOI is **Monday, October 23, 2023**, at 1 p.m.

### ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The New York Health Foundation (NYHealth) has a broad mission to improve the health of all New Yorkers, especially people of color and others who have been historically marginalized. To achieve meaningful impact, the Foundation makes grants, informs health care policy and practice, and spreads effective programs that work to improve New York's health system and make it more equitable. The Foundation's grantmaking is focused on three priority areas: Healthy Food, Healthy Lives; Primary Care; and Veterans' Health. We also engage in responsive grantmaking through a Special Projects Fund.

### BACKGROUND

Access to and consumption of nutritious food is essential to maintaining good health. Nutritious food can help prevent disease and can act as medicine, supporting healthy growth and development. NYHealth's Healthy Food, Healthy Lives priority area aims to advance policies and programs that connect New Yorkers with the food they need to thrive.

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. However, stark racial and ethnic disparities are well-documented; there are disproportionately high rates of food insecurity and diet-related disease in communities of color.

And a food system characterized by systemic racism, racial and ethnic biases, and inequities contributes substantially to these disparities. Whether termed food apartheid, food swamps, or food deserts, neighborhood food environments, institutional practices, and resulting unequal access to healthy, affordable food undermine New Yorkers' health. As examples:

### Important Dates

**LOI Deadline:**

Monday, October 23, 2023, at 1 p.m.

**Full Proposal Invitation/ LOI  
Declination Notification:**

December 2023

**Full Proposal Deadline**

*(invited applicants only):*

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 1 p.m.

**Award/Declination Notification:**

March 2024



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- According to a recent U.S. Census survey, Asian, Black, and Hispanic New Yorkers were up to three times more likely than white New Yorkers to report "sometimes" or "often" not having enough food;
- [NYHealth's Food and Health Survey](#) found that Asian, Black, and Hispanic food-insecure New Yorkers are more likely than their white peers to face difficulty affording food and traveling to the grocery store;
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, African Americans are twice as likely to die from heart disease and 50% more likely to have high blood pressure than whites;
- Nationally, one out of every five Black households is located in a food desert. "Supermarket redlining" in Black communities means that residents in these communities have less access to full-service grocery stores;
- Producers and farmers of color face obstacles that make it harder for them to compete for contracts with institutions; and
- Communities of color are targeted with high levels of unhealthy food marketing.

The communities most affected by these disparities often have the best solutions to improving food equity. However, systemic barriers often exist, and historically, organizations led by people of color have not had equal access to or benefited from traditional philanthropy funds and resources.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

NYHealth is intentionally and explicitly increasing our efforts to improve racial health equity. We seek to support organizations led by and supporting communities of color to implement projects that are informed by and responsive to community needs.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), NYHealth aims to advance racial health equity through two of our [Healthy Food, Healthy Lives](#) strategies: **(1) promoting Food Is Medicine interventions** and **(2) supporting healthier, culturally responsive food purchasing.**

**1) Promoting Food Is Medicine interventions:** Interventions that involve a health care response to the need for better nutrition fall under the umbrella term Food Is Medicine. Interventions include programs such as medically tailored meals, medically tailored groceries, and produce prescription programs.



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Examples of these types of projects that NYHealth might support through this RFP include, but are not limited to, those that:

- Co-design Food Is Medicine programs with community-based organizations and/or health care providers so that programs center residents and reflect the needs and preferences of the communities served.
- Work with community health centers to solicit feedback from Food Is Medicine participants to improve services (e.g., cultural responsiveness, screening).
- Create partnerships between health care providers and local farmers/urban farms to support the expansion of specific Food Is Medicine interventions like produce prescription programs.
- Mobilize community members to advocate for access to or expansion of Food Is Medicine programs at a community-based organization and/or health care provider.

**2) Supporting healthier, culturally responsive food purchasing:** Given their massive scale, public institutions can use their purchasing power to promote health by buying more nutritious and culturally responsive food. There are opportunities for schools, senior centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, or other entities to purchase and serve healthier food and create opportunities for farmers and suppliers with smaller operations to compete for institutional contracts.

Examples of these types of projects that NYHealth might support through this RFP include, but are not limited to, those that:

- Host community workshops to engage and educate parents and students on how they can advocate for more local, healthy food in their school cafeterias.
- Create opportunities for farmers and suppliers with smaller operations to compete for institutional contracts at schools, senior centers, or health systems.
- Improve the capacity of grassroots coalitions to promote healthy food purchasing and strengthen resiliency in food systems.

Please refer to the [FAQs](#) for more information.



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## ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING

**Eligible Organizations:** All applicants are required to be New York State-based. Nonprofit organizations and tribal governments are eligible to apply. If relevant, organizations can partner on an application; however, there must be one lead applicant. Past NYHealth grantees as well as organizations that have not previously received NYHealth funding are welcome to apply. Applicants may use a fiscal sponsor if not incorporated into a 501(c)(3). Individuals are not eligible to apply.

**Funding Requests:** Individual project budgets may not exceed \$50,000. Funds requested must be commensurate with the work proposed.

**Grant Period:** Projects cannot exceed 24 months in duration.

**Ineligible Requests:** NYHealth does not provide grant funding for general operating support, capital expenses (e.g., construction/renovation, health care equipment), or lobbying.

### Selection Criteria and Priority Consideration:

Selection criteria have been developed in consultation with a panel of racial health equity experts. Priority will be given to organizations led by and directly supporting people of color. NYHealth defines organizations led by people of color as groups where the majority (greater than 50%) of senior leadership self-identifies as non-white (Black or African descent, Indigenous, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, or other non-white ethnicities). Senior leadership may include the governance body (e.g., board of directors, council of elders) and any staff or volunteers with significant decision-making powers.

Other criteria include, but are not limited to:

- **Clarity and impact:** The proposal details clear and measurable project objectives, including ways to engage the community and assess progress over the grant period.
- **Resources:** The budget is comprehensive and realistic, and there is a plan to mobilize resources to carry out the work. The organization details a plan to secure and sustain funding and programming, if applicable.
- **Representation, diversity, and inclusion:** The organization's governance body and senior leadership reflect the demographics and lived experience of the community it serves.
- **Community connection:** The organization understands its local food system, including cultural preferences, health needs, and root causes of food inequities. The community informs the organization's work and the organization builds local leadership.



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## APPLICATION PROCESS

NYHealth will use a **three-step process** to make funding decisions. It will provide an opportunity early in the process to assess fit for funding in an effort to reduce the workload on applicant organizations.

**Step 1 – Self Assessment:** The first step is to assess your organization's fit. We encourage you to review the information provided in the FAQs. To manage the anticipated volume of inquiries, we will host two information sessions on Wednesday, September 20th ([register here](#)) and Tuesday, October 10th ([register here](#)). Additionally, you can send questions via e-mail to [HFHLequityrfp2023@nyhealthfoundation.org](mailto:HFHLequityrfp2023@nyhealthfoundation.org).

**Step 2 – LOI Submission:** If your organization's project aligns with this funding opportunity, the second step is to submit an LOI through our online portal. The LOI form and submission instructions are available below and on NYHealth's website under the [Apply for Funding](#) section. The deadline for the LOI is **Monday, October 23, 2023**, at 1 p.m.

- For detailed guidelines, please review the [LOI submission instructions](#).
- [Complete and submit an LOI here](#).

The LOI will provide the NYHealth staff with a basic description of your work, the proposed project, the location, the population you serve, your partners, and the amount and purpose of your funding request. NYHealth staff will review LOIs based on the selection criteria above and notify all applicants by early December whether they are invited to submit a full proposal.

**Step 3 – Full Proposal Submission:** Selected applicants invited to submit a full proposal will receive an e-mail with specific submission instructions. The deadline for the full proposal is **Wednesday, January 17, 2024**, at 1 p.m.

NYHealth staff and a panel of racial health equity experts will review proposals and make funding decisions based on the selection criteria as well as considerations of geography, demographics, and sectoral diversity. Applicants will receive notifications of final grant decisions in **March 2024**.

If you have technical questions regarding the online application system, e-mail the NYHealth Grants Management Department at [gm@nyhealthfoundation.org](mailto:gm@nyhealthfoundation.org). Programmatic questions can be e-mailed to [HFHLequityrfp2023@nyhealthfoundation.org](mailto:HFHLequityrfp2023@nyhealthfoundation.org).