



2016 Strengthening Systems Concept Paper Guidelines

The Community Foundation invites concept papers for initial consideration under its new Strengthening Systems grants program. Our goal is to develop and support programs that strengthen the capability of systems to deliver services and activities and/or improve access to systems by individuals or community groups. While funding provided will vary according to program requirements, we anticipate awarding grants in the range of \$25,000-\$100,000, annually, for 2-3 years.

What is a program?

A program is a defined course of action that involves a series of inputs, outputs and strategies and is designed to achieve a specified goal. Programming is working toward the achievement of goals, using grant funding or other revenue sources. A program differs from a grant in that a grant is a financial award given to an organization to be used toward a specific purpose, while a program focuses on the achievement of goals. Programs receiving Strengthening Systems grant funding will be co-designed by the Foundation team and implementing partners. Similarly, regular program reviews involving the team and partners will be held to monitor and guide implementation.

What is a system?

A system encompasses the environment affecting the provision of services and activities. It may include a range of practitioners, service providers, beneficiaries, funders, processes, and policies. Systems occur in every sector and in various forms. Examples include a food delivery system, health care system, education system, homeless services system. Multiple formal and informal systems can also converge in a place, such as a city neighborhood or a rural area, or around a segment of the population, such as youth. In some cases, formal or informal systems may not reach a place and services or activities are unavailable in those areas.

An underlying principle of this grants program is that the community is stronger when the systems in which services and activities occur are functioning well and community members can readily access them. It is focused solely on systems delivery for the community, and not on strengthening internal systems within a single organization.

Guidelines to Submit a Concept Paper

The Community Foundation welcomes prospective partners to submit 2-page concept papers that provide an initial overview of Systems Strengthening program opportunity. The concept papers do not need to be a perfect or thorough analysis of a system or the opportunities to strengthen it. These papers are meant to serve as a way for us to identify potential opportunities, so that we can follow up with you to further develop the initial thinking and ideas together.



Please share the following in your concept paper:

- What issue or challenge are you seeing in the community and over a 2-3 year period, what do you want to change?
- To the extent that you can, describe the system that touches this issue. Think about any stakeholders, processes and policies that affect the environment in which the services or activities occur.
- If possible, share the area(s) in which you think the system could be strengthened and your best understanding of what might be a good approach.
- Share a list of unanswered questions that you would want the Foundation team to help you explore and answer during further due diligence of this concept.

The deadline to accept concept papers is March 1, 2016. Submit your 2-page concept paper to Brennan Gould, Director of Programs, at bgould@cacfonline.org. The email should include the following subject line: Strengthening Systems Concept Paper Submission.

Next Steps

The Foundation will review all concept papers and respond to applicants by April 15, 2016. In 2016, the Foundation team will conduct further due diligence on a small group of concepts with a goal to ultimately select 1-2 programs to support.

Please contact Brennan Gould, Director of Programs, at (434) 296-1024 or bgould@cacfonline.org with additional questions.