



2019 Strengthening Systems Concept Paper Guidelines

The Community Foundation invites concept papers for its Strengthening Systems grant track. Our goal is to work with partners to strengthen how services and activities are delivered and accessed in our community. Oftentimes, systemic limitations of insufficient capacity, lack of coordination, inefficiencies and access barriers keep community members from benefitting from programs and activities that are available. An underlying principle of this grant track 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.

Through this grant track, we aim to work with partners to clarify their systems strengthening goals and outline the course of action needed to achieve them in a 2-3 year period. We hope to provide thought partnership and guidance through the proposal development phase, and for those selected for funding, we actively find ways to help you achieve program success. While funding provided will vary according to program requirements, we anticipate awarding grants in the range of \$75,000-\$100,000, annually, for 2-3 years.

How is system defined?

For the Community Foundation, we define a “system” as the network of actors, policies and practices affecting the provision of services and activities. Generally speaking, systems are the environment in which activities take place and they can shape how well those activities impact the people for whom they are intended to reach. Systems occur in every sector and in various forms.

This grant track is focused solely on improving systems delivery for the community, and not on strengthening internal systems within a single organization.

What has been funded through this grant track before?

We have awarded 7 grants to date. They include:

Piedmont Virginia Community College - To work with the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) to align curriculum, engage stakeholders and design a career pathway in the field of cybersecurity so that students can obtain middle skill jobs. The process will serve as a model for developing career pathways in other industry sectors.

Louisa County Resource Council – To partner with the University of Virginia Center for Survey Research to design and conduct a household-based survey that will map food insecurity and other needs in the County. The results of the mapping will be then used with key stakeholders to make



changes to the food distribution system so that it can better address households' un-met need for food across the county.

Charlottesville Works Initiative – To establish the pilot program that supports low-income job seekers on a pathway to obtain and retain a sustainable wage job and to scale up the program to reach an estimated 200 people. The grant will establish a system of support that doesn't currently exist in this form.

Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Public Housing Association of Residents and City of Charlottesville – To conduct resident-led engagement that strengthens the relationship between residents, the Housing Authority, and the City. The grant will lead to actionable plans that prepare the community for public housing redevelopment.

Piedmont Environmental Council and Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission – To complete plans and execute a community engagement campaign that leverages financial support to build a regional bike and pedestrian trail network in Charlottesville and Albemarle.

Partner for Mental Health – to strengthen the coordination of services and supports provided to qualifying mentally ill individuals discharged from University of Virginia Emergency Department. The program will demonstrate cost reduction and/or avoidance for the UVA Health System and serve as a proof-of-concept to establish ongoing funding.

Charlottesville/Albemarle Evidence Based Decision-Making (EBDM) Policy Team – To strengthen the coordination of services provided to inmates transitioning from the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail (ACRJ). The grant will lead to an optimal model for identifying inmates, connecting to in-jail services, planning for release, and transitioning to the community.

Guidelines to Submit a Concept Paper

The Community Foundation welcomes prospective partners to submit 2-page concept papers that provide an initial overview of a Systems Strengthening 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. It is important, however, to validate that any identified partners in your concept are willing to participate if it is selected to advance.

Please share the following in your concept paper:

- What trend, issue or challenge are you seeing in the community, and over a 2 or 3-year period, what do you want to change? Please include local data or other relevant evidence that supports your observations.

- 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.
- Share the area(s) in which you think the system could be strengthened and your best understanding of what might be a good approach.
- Describe the degree to which engagement and feedback from those most impacted by this system have influenced the design of your proposal.
- Describe the demographics of those most impacted by this system with as much specificity as possible. For example, disaggregating data by race, neighborhood, gender, socioeconomic status, age, etc. as it relates to your project.
- 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 February 1, 2019. Submit your 2-page concept paper to Eboni Bugg, Director of Programs, at ebugg@cacfonline.org. The email should include the following subject line: Strengthening Systems Concept Paper Submission. Be sure to include the name, email address and telephone number of the primary contact(s) with your proposal.

Eligibility

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) organization, governmental or religious entity, or fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization. The Foundation will consider applications from organizations working to benefit the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Buckingham, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Nelson and Orange. Organizations may submit one application per grant cycle, unless the organization is a public school or serving as a fiscal agent for another organization.

Criteria

The Grants Portfolio Committee uses the following criteria when evaluating proposed opportunities:

- The presence of a system to be strengthened and how well the concept being presented fits with the goals of the grant track.
- The size and scope of the system to be strengthened and whether the available funding could have an impact on the identified system.
- The potential to successfully develop a course of action to impact the identified system.
- The anticipated timeline and the partner's current capacity to develop and implement a course of action to have the anticipated impact.

Additionally, the Committee considers the following areas when reviewing full proposals of finalists:

- Feasibility to implement the 2-3 year course of action
- Timing of this effort (circumstances that may significantly improve or limit chances of success)
- What specifically the grant funds will cover
- Organizational leadership capacity
- Potential impact of key deliverables



- Sustainability of the systems improvements after the grant period
- Designated measures and methodologies for project evaluation

Next Steps

The Foundation will review all concept papers and respond to applicants by March 2019. In 2019, the Foundation team will conduct further due diligence on a small group of finalists with a goal to ultimately select 1-2 programs to support.

If your concept is selected as a finalist, you will be asked to participate in at least one meeting with the Foundation team to discuss your goals, strategy and the details of the full proposal package. We are available to hold subsequent meetings to help you flesh out your concept idea and proposal if you would find that helpful. The full proposal will be due on May 15, 2019 and we will communicate final decisions by June 15, 2019.

Please contact Eboni Bugg, Director of Programs, at (434) 296-0045 or ebugg@cacfonline.org with additional questions.