



Affordable Care Act Implementation Fund: Frequently Asked Questions February 1, 2012

A. Application Process Questions

1. What is the maximum amount of funding we can request?

The Fund will provide 12-month grants in the range of \$75,000 to \$250,000 per year. Advocates in each state will be informed of the maximum level of funding for which they can apply. The size of the grants will be based on the needs and scope of the project and the population and size of the state.

2. What are the formatting requirements for the proposal?

The narrative, including the section headings, should not exceed a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages, with one-inch margins on the top, bottom and sides of the page, 12 point Arial font (black).

3. Can we send our proposal by email, mail or fax?

Proposals must be submitted electronically, by email to ACAFund@communitycatalyst.org. Send back all docs as separate word or excel files (not combined into one document as a pdf).

4. Can we submit a proposal after the deadline?

No, applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

5. Who will be reviewing submissions and making final decisions about which proposals are funded?

Community Catalyst senior staff will be reviewing grant proposals. Community Catalyst is responsible for final funding decisions in consultation with the Fund's Advisory Committee (comprised of major donors to the Fund).

6. How many grants will be awarded?

The Fund plans to award up to 16 grants. Additional grants may be awarded later in the year if more funds become available.

7. These are one-year grants, is there a possibility for renewal?

The goal of the Fund is to support health advocacy throughout the implementation process. There is a small amount of funding available for the following year, and we are working to build the funds as we move forward.

8. Will additional states be funded, either now or in the future?

We will continue to work to raise additional funds for this year and the future. Additional grants may be awarded later if more funds become available.

9. If we are awarded funding, can we issue a press release?

Yes, Community Catalyst will provide template press materials.

10. What support and assistance will be provided during the proposal preparation and submission process? What if I have questions?

Applicants are encouraged to forward questions about their specific proposal or general questions about the Fund to ACAFund@communitycatalyst.org and a Community Catalyst staff member will respond.

11. Where do we send our materials? What are the deadlines for submission?

All submissions should be emailed to ACAFund@communitycatalyst.org. The timeline for this process is:

- February 29, 2012: Final proposals are due
- April 1, 2012: Grants start

14. Will Community Catalyst provide feedback about drafts?

Community Catalyst will provide informal feedback to applicants as a part of our regular technical assistance support. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant organization to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of the program outlined in the RFP.

B. Eligibility Questions**1. Can individuals apply to the Fund?**

No.

2. What are the organizational requirements to apply?

An applicant organization must:

- Be a consumer advocacy organization with documented expertise in health care advocacy
- Have a state-level policy agenda
- Have a history of engaging and collaborating with other consumer groups and key health care stakeholders such as business, government officials, labor, payers and providers
- Have a 2012 operating budget at least equal to the level of annual funding requested
- Operate as a non-profit organization that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code

C. Applicant Organizations**1. What is the role of the applicant organization?**

The applicant organization must focus on building consumer voice and influence in health policymaking and must meet the additional eligibility criteria. The applicant organization must play a leadership role in developing and coordinating the project and must also identify a project leadership team whose members include individuals with decision-making authority from the partner organizations that will lead the project and that will collaborate on this effort (see Section F).

2. Does there need to be one specific applicant organization or can a coalition respond to the RFP?

One specific applicant organization needs to have fiscal and overall responsibility for the project, but other organizations can get funding through sub-contracts if appropriate.

D. Budget and Use of Funds Questions

1. What budget information will we need to submit in our proposal?

Applicants will need to submit a complete line-item budget spreadsheet and accompanying narrative that explains the cost for the entire project. This includes items such as: personnel salary and benefits, travel, supplies and any other expenses relevant to the proposed project.

2. Can any part of the budget be used for direct service?

No. Direct services will not be funded.

3. What can we spend the grant funds on?

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, convening and coordinating work, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, communications and other direct project expenses. There are also limited funds available to support lobbying activities (see Section H.) Please review the budget documents for more information.

4. Do we need to have additional funds for this project?

We are requesting that applications seek 1:1 matching funds from any combination of national, state or local funders, or individual donations.

5. Will we be required to sub-contract some of the funds we receive?

There is no requirement to sub-contract. However, since a key objective of the project is to engage a strong network of collaborating organizations to achieve the project goals, sub-contracts may help support the involvement of participating organizations and their contributions in this effort.

6. Is there a requirement on how much the applicant organization sub-contracts and how much it keeps?

No. The amount to sub-contract is a decision that is made between the applicant organization in consultation with others participating in the project.

7. Can any organization be a sub-contractor on this grant?

The applicant organization, in consultation with others participating in the project, should determine who will receive funding from this grant. Working together, partners should identify the specific organizational capacities necessary to carry out the strategy and agree on the most effective use of the available funding. Since this effort is to support consumer advocacy, it is anticipated that organizations receiving funds are working to build a strong consumer voice to implement the ACA.

8. Do we have to fund the same sub-contractors as we did for our original grant?

No.

E. Program Questions

1. What are the goals of ACA Implementation Fund?

The goals of the Fund are:

- To support successful state implementation of the ACA to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities
- To increase the resources available for state-based health advocacy by encouraging the participation of new foundation partners and other major donors in supporting this work
- To ensure that ACA implementation reflects consumer interests and concerns, especially those of low-income and vulnerable populations
- To increase awareness of progress in ACA implementation and benefits from ACA participation

2. What are the policy issues that can be a part of the ACA Implementation Fund project?

Since the ACA addresses a wide range of policy issues – from Medicaid expansion to delivery system reform to insurance market issues to Exchanges – proposals to the Fund may address this full range. A list of the most timely policy issues is attached. It will be important to select an issue that is “ripe” in the applicant’s state environment. Currently there is funding for one year, therefore showing concrete implementation progress using measurable outcomes will be important to securing future funds. The Fund will not support projects that focus primarily on broad-based communications strategies, although outreach and education should be an important component of the project

In a few cases, state environments may be so hostile that the most appropriate issue is countering a proposal that would impede or undermine implementation of the ACA.

3. What are the reporting requirements for this program?

There will be a required quarterly progress and impact report. In addition, grantees will participate in informal strategy and impact conference calls so they can learn from each other’s projects. Standard financial reports will also be required.

F. Project Leadership Questions

1. Who should be members of the project leadership team?

It is up to the applicant organization to identify a project leadership team. Each proposal may look different depending on the particular characteristics of the state and the goals of the project. Project leadership team members must include individuals with decision-making authority from their organizations.

Organizations who could potentially be part of a project leadership team may include: health care advocacy groups, low-income advocacy groups, state fiscal policy groups, children’s advocacy groups, multi-issue grassroots organizations, faith groups, labor unions, and groups representing communities of color, seniors, women and people with disabilities and chronic health conditions.

2. Should we submit Letters of Commitment from organizations that are collaborating with us?

Yes. The information is included in the Proposal Narrative document. The letters will not count toward the narrative page total.

3. What should be included in the Letters of Commitment from the project leadership team?

- Why the organization is participating
- Who will participate from the organization and whether they will be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization
- The organization's role on the project leadership team
- How the organization will contribute to the success of the project

4. What should be the size of the project leadership team?

There is no predetermined size for the project leadership team; it depends on the goals of the project and what the applicant organization believes the size of an effective working group should be.

G. Match Requirement

1. When do we have to have the match?

The Fund must be matched within the grant period (April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013.)

2. What can we count as our match requirement?

Any commitment that the applicant organization or members of the project leadership team have received within the grant period will be counted, if:

- The funded activities relate to the goals of the proposed project
- The funding commitment overlaps with this new grant for at least six months

3. Can I only get the match from another foundation?

Match requirement can be obtained from the following:

- National foundations (EXCEPT NATIONAL FOUNDATIONS THAT ARE DONORS TO THE FUND)
- State or local foundations
- Major donors

4. Can the matching funds go to another member of the project leadership team to support the work?

Yes. Funds given to any members of the project leadership team to support their efforts in the proposed project can count towards the match requirement.

5. Our organization will be conducting house parties in February (a yearly fundraising activity for the organization), can this count toward our match?

While we strongly encourage activities aimed at building a small donor base, house parties cannot count toward the match requirement.

6. Will the Fund accept donations from individuals as a qualifying match?

Yes. Individual donations can count toward the match.

7. Will the Fund accept matching funds from candidates or issue campaign committees?

No, funds from candidates or issue campaign committees will not count toward the match for the Fund.

8. Can funding we receive for 501(c)(4) activities be counted as a match for the Fund?

Yes, 501(c)(4) donations can count toward the match.

9. Can funding from our 501(c)(4) sister organization count as a match for the Fund?

No. The match must come from a Foundation or a major donor, it cannot come from your own sister organization.

10. In order to qualify for the match, must the grants support work on the same policy goals as proposed to the ACA Fund, or could they be grants to work generally on ACA implementation?

The grants must support work on the same policy goals. However, the goal is to pull in new funders and some of them may not be interested in supporting policy advocacy. We will accept adjunct areas of work (e.g., public education, particular community mobilization) that help shape the environment for the ACA Fund policy work.

11. Will any combination of grants to the individual groups within our coalition to do work that falls within your match criteria – in addition to any money the coalition raises collectively – count toward the match?

Yes, as long as it is from a foundation or major donor.

12. Do we need to have commitments at the time of proposal submission?

No, you do not have to have a commitment at the time of submission.

H. Lobbying

1. May this grant be used for lobbying?

There is a limited amount of funding available to support lobbying activities. It may not be used for election activities, including ballot measures, initiatives, or referendums. The funds should be used as effectively and accountably as possible, so grantees will be asked to identify in the budget how much will be spent on lobbying activities and how the funds will be used.

To be eligible for these funds, applicants must be able to demonstrate compliance with all applicable state and federal lobbying registration and reporting requirements at all times. Grantees are further subject to the federal and state guidelines and limits on lobbying activities that apply to their particular situation.

2. Are the lobbying funds only available to 501(c)(4) organizations?

These funds are available to both 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations.

3. What types of activities can be undertaken with these lobbying funds?

These funds may be used for any lobbying activities that are permissible for the type of applicant organization and are consistent with what is outlined in the grant application. However, these funds may not be used for election activities, including ballot measures, initiatives or referendums.

4. If I do not specifically request lobbying funds, may I still use the ACA Fund grant to do lobbying?

No portion of the ACA Fund grant may be used for lobbying unless the applicant has submitted a specific request for lobbying funds. This is due to restrictions on the use of Funds donated to the ACA Fund.

I. Current CVC Grantees Questions

1. Can my organization be the lead organization in our state to respond to the RFP if we are the grantee for the Consumer Voices for Coverage program?

Yes.

2. Can we use the same policy goals for the Fund proposal as those identified for our CVC project?

You may identify the same policy goals, however the proposal must articulate what additional work and deliverables will be provided with these additional funds. Grantees will need to carefully track what activities are tied to the respective funding. Community Catalyst will want to know exactly how the CVC resources are being used and what they are accomplishing, as well as how the ACA Implementation Fund resources are being used and what they are accomplishing.