

## Funding Opportunity

# Identifying Health Priorities in Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities

**Issue Date:** September 28, 2023

**Submission Deadline:** November 6, 2023

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### SPECIAL NOTES:

- (\*) denotes a key term defined at the end of the document for shared understanding.

### Overview

Despite totaling more than 300,000 and growing, North Carolina's Asian American and Pacific Islander\* population is not represented in many statewide initiatives connected to social drivers of health\* and population health efforts overall. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to discover and capture key information, insights, and analysis that can inform strategies to elevate social drivers of health and other factors that contribute to the health and well-being of the diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander communities\* living in our state. Two-year grants of up to \$300,000 (\$150,000 per year) will support up to two community-based organizations (and/or collaborative partnerships that have a community-based organization as the lead applicant) to undertake this work. Should two organizations be selected, there will be an expectation of collaboration and coordinated efforts.

## Background

Over the last decade, North Carolina’s Asian American and Pacific Islander population has increased by 65 percent to more than 300,000 according to Census data from 2010 – 2020. This is a population that is uniquely diverse, with many languages and ethnicities as well as a broad range of lived experiences and social factors that contribute to the health outcomes of this growing segment that calls North Carolina home.

Despite their growth, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are not consistently represented in statewide efforts that are addressing drivers of health and health disparities, or in quantitative health and well-being data. Additionally, there is often an absence of qualitative information that lifts up the voices and experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander community members. Despite this data gap at the state level, national data sources suggest that disparities do exist in this community with regard to cancer, chronic illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, health care and language access, and mental health.

This funding is designed to support a body of work that will surface North Carolina-specific learnings about the health priorities of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and the kinds of strategies and systems changes that could be successful in promoting and improving the overall health and well-being of these communities. With a significant focus on community engagement and generating both qualitative and quantitative information, this effort is expected to yield important insights that can inform local and statewide efforts that are addressing social drivers of health. Findings may also contribute to the work of existing coalitions and networks that are advancing efforts to improve overall health outcomes.

## Eligibility Criteria

### Lead Applicant and/or Collaborative Partnership

**The lead applicant for this funding must be a community-based organization\***. Applicants are welcome, however, to present a proposal that includes non-community-based partners and/or sub-contractors as part of a collaborative or core team to advance various aspects of the funded work. For example, the community-based organization (lead applicant) may contract with consultants to support their data or communications efforts.

We recognize that some consultants/sub-contractors may be identified at the outset and others may be brought on as the work progresses. For proposals that are presented as a collaborative at the outset, those partners should be identified in the proposal narrative, and each should provide a letter of engagement as described in Part 1 of the applicant section below.

### Organization Size

- There is no minimum organizational budget requirement. Organizations of all sizes are eligible to apply.

### Organization Type

- **Nonprofit organization** that is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is classified as “not a private foundation” under Section 509(a).

- OR-

- **Fiscally sponsored program** – A group or project with a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization acting as a fiscal sponsor. Please note that the fiscal sponsor is considered the grantee and is responsible for all legal aspects of the project including reporting and financial management.

- OR-

- **Coalitions** – Applications involving more than one group or organization are welcome; however, one organization will be the recipient of the grant and must be an established 501(c)(3) nonprofit or fiscally sponsored organization. Organizations and coalitions of any size are eligible to apply if the other eligibility criteria have been met.

### Organization Characteristics

We seek to partner with organizations and/or collaboratives that share this vision and embody the following characteristics:

- Grounded in Community – Organizations that have strong connections to and within Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and a demonstrated track record of effective partnerships and authentic engagement with Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, networks, and/or organizations.
- Community Trust– Organizations that are invested in cultivating authentic relationships with diverse groups of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities; prioritizing the groundwork that is needed to understand community health priorities.
- Collaborative – Organizations that can effectively work with a range of stakeholders including residents, organizations, subject matter experts, and others as relevant in the implementation of this initiative; organizations that have strong facilitation and community engagement skills as evidenced through work on similar projects.

**Please note:** Current and past Blue Cross NC Foundation grantees are welcome to apply.

### **Description of Funded Work**

This opportunity is specifically designed to support community-based organizations and collaborative partnerships with strong connections to and within Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in an effort to identify and provide insights on health priorities and community conditions impacting health. Funding will support direct community engagement efforts, as well as the identification and compilation of the most current data (qualitative and quantitative) on population health trends and other demographic information that can be useful in understanding health drivers and outcomes in the broader North Carolina landscape.

Funding will support the following (types of) activities:

- **Direct engagement of community partners, representative organizations, residents, and others across the state to capture first-person perspectives and lived experience.** It is anticipated that a structured plan for engaging with Asian American and Pacific Islander community members, residents, organizations, and networks will be developed and implemented, and learnings from these engagements will be captured and documented. Grant funding will support activities that center engagement with community members from

Asian American and Pacific Islander communities such as: focus groups, listening sessions, community meetings, town halls, and interviews. It is anticipated that proposed budgets will include a significant allocation for these engagements, including appropriate compensation for community members and other organizations that participate in, and contribute, this effort. Applicants should also include funding for services, such as interpretation/language access, if needed.

- **The compilation and analysis of the most current quantitative and qualitative data.** Funding will support efforts to aggregate and analyze a range of data sources including population health outcomes and social drivers of health, demographic data, and community and cultural assets that support improved health and well-being. This may take the form of issue briefs, topical presentations, reports, or other formats. If needed, funding can be used to compensate the work of data partners (academic institutions, data consultants, etc.) to cover expenses that may be associated with data acquisition, and/or other consultant services such as communications.

The Foundation anticipates working with the selected grantee(s) on a communication approach (such as a convening or other platform) where learnings from this engagement can be elevated and shared more broadly. The format of this shared learning opportunity will be co-designed with the grantee partner(s), and the Foundation will separately fund this aspect of the work.

#### Anticipated Outcomes

There are three primary anticipated outcomes for which funded organizations will report progress toward throughout the grant period. These include:

- The development of a report including the compilation and analysis of key insights and information obtained from community engagement activities on health priorities as identified by Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The data should be as granular as possible to shed light on opportunities and differences that may exist between different populations and communities.
- The development of documentation (such as infographics, profiles, issues briefs, etc.) that compiles the most current data on population health trends, and other demographic information that can be useful in understanding health outcomes in the broader North Carolina landscape.
- Collaborative work with the Foundation to develop and implement a communications plan that will identify a platform to share learnings from this funded opportunity.

While it is important for the proposal to demonstrate a clear pathway to achieving these outcomes, the Foundation is open to different ideas on how to best report and display the insights and information from community engagement activities, as well as the data on population health trends and demographic data in order to inform strategies to elevate social drivers of health and other factors that contribute to the overall health and well-being of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities living in our state.

## Funding Partnership

As a partner with our grantees throughout this work, in addition to providing funding support, our Foundation commits to:

- Engage in thought partnership with grantees with a focus on listening to understand.
- Support grantees to achieve their goals and to adapt to new and unexpected circumstances.
- Solicit, and be open to, direct, constructive feedback about our approach to, and implementation of, this project and specific opportunities to change course and adapt.
- Provide timely communication about any changes or updates that might impact grantees.
- Operate in consistency with our organizational values as we work to assure that everyone in North Carolina has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

## How to Learn More

**Ask Questions (optional):** Organizations interested in this opportunity are encouraged to submit questions about the funding opportunity **by October 16, 2023** to Shelia Reich at [shelia.reich@bcbsncfoundation.org](mailto:shelia.reich@bcbsncfoundation.org). An FAQ will be posted to the Foundation website by **October 25, 2023**.

In addition to submitting questions via email, applicants will also have the opportunity to schedule a consultation with the Foundation. We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to have a conversation with Foundation staff prior to submitting the final application. This will help us get to know you and will help to determine if your proposed work is a potential fit for this funding opportunity.

**To sign up for a 30-minute conversation**, please click [here](#) and select “Applicant Consultation.”

## How to Apply

### Part 1:

**Submit an Application by November 6, 2023:** Organizations seeking funding through this opportunity must complete an [Online Application](#) to provide information about their organization and prior experience and proposed approach.

**Application Questions:** Answers to the following will be submitted as part of the online application process.

- Please provide a brief organizational description for the lead community-based applicant, including mission, vision, and current bodies of work.
- We recognize that some applicants may enlist collaborative partners to advance specific aspects or elements of this funded work. If applicable, please identify any partners that will be working with the lead community-based applicant on this project. Please describe how the collaborative partners will work together to advance activities described in this funding opportunity.

*Please note that the Foundation is also requesting a letter of engagement from each of the collaborative partners listed. The letter of engagement is intended to allow each collaborative partner identified to confirm their intention to work in collaboration with the lead community-based organization in the manner described in the application should they be selected for*

*funding. The letters of engagement will be submitted as part of the online application process, and a template is provided for your convenience.*

- Please describe your organizational qualifications for this project, including previous experience with similar initiatives. This should include the following:
  - Description of your ability to advance the types of activities that will be funded.
  - Description of successful partnerships and engagement with Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, networks, and/or organizations.
  - Description of your knowledge and understanding of social drivers of health.
  - Description of your experience managing similar work.
- Please describe your proposed approach to this work, including:
  - Method/approach to engaging diverse community partners, residents, and others from the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in listening sessions, focus groups, convenings, and/or other formats that will yield important insights connected to the stated funding aims. Describe your knowledge of and plan for engaging with the diversity of ethnicities and identities within the Asian American Pacific Islander communities.
  - Please highlight existing networks and/or partnerships that may be activated and your approach for compensating community expertise in this regard.
  - Methods/approach to identifying and compiling the most current data on population health trends and other demographic information.
  - Proposed format for:
    - Capturing and translating lessons learned from community engagement in ways that can be more broadly disseminated.
    - Displaying current data on population health trends and other demographic information.
  - Proposed process for ensuring language access supports for community engagement. Please note how you anticipate addressing translation and/or interpretation services and supports as needed. Funding will support this function.
  - Process and methodology for collaborative work with any identified partners to advance the funded activities, with specific emphasis on the compilation of demographic and other relevant data.
  - Anticipated challenges and how you might navigate these over the course of the work.

**Project Budget:** Up to \$150,000 per year for two years. The project budget will be submitted as part of the online application process, and it should reflect how funds would be allocated to support the applicant's approach.

## **Part 2:**

### **Finalist Conversations (Virtual)**

After proposals are submitted, a committee of Foundation staff and external subject-matter experts will review the applications received and select a group of finalists. Applicants (and their collaborative partners) will be invited to participate in a conversation via Zoom, with the review committee. Specific

questions will be shared in advance of these conversations and will be provided with at least one week to prepare. No written documentation or slides will be required.

Applicants will be notified in mid-December whether their proposal has been approved for funding.

**Timeline:**

<b>Deadline or Activity</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Funding opportunity released and online application opens	September 28, 2023
Submit questions about the funding opportunity	By October 16, 2023
Answers to prospective applicant questions published on the Foundation website	October 25, 2023
Foundation staff available for consultation	October 9, 2023 – October 23, 2023
Applications due	November 6, 2023
Notifications to selected applicants regarding finalist conversations	The week of December 4, 2023
Finalist conversations (virtual)	December 11-15, 2023
Grantees selected and notified	December 18-19, 2023

For questions about this funding opportunity contact:

Shelia Reich – [shelia.reich@bcbsncfoundation.org](mailto:shelia.reich@bcbsncfoundation.org)

For questions about the portal or proposal submission contact:

Cindy Alvarado – [cindy.alvarado@bcbsncfoundation.org](mailto:cindy.alvarado@bcbsncfoundation.org)

## Appendix: Key Terms

**Asian American and Pacific Islander:** Includes “all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins to the countries, states, jurisdictions and/or the diasporic communities of these geographic regions.”

<https://www.commerce.gov/bureaus-and-offices/os/whiaapi>

**Community:** In the context of this funding opportunity, community means a group or groups of people who live in the same area (such as a county, city, town, or neighborhood), or have common interests who come together with a sense of belonging such as occupational, linguistic, national origin, or others.

**Community-based Organization (CBO):** CBOs are public or private not-for-profit resource hubs that provide specific services to the community or targeted population within the community. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

### **Social drivers of health:**

Social drivers of health are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes. Examples of social drivers include access to healthy food, education, and transportation, English language proficiency, socio-economic status, and immigration status, and a range of many other factors.

## About the Foundation

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation is a private, charitable foundation established as an independent entity by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina in 2000. Its mission is to improve the health and well-being of everyone in North Carolina. Over the past two decades, the organization has worked with - and supported - nonprofit organizations, government entities, and community partnerships across the state, investing \$200 million into North Carolina through more than 1,300 grants, collaborations, and special initiatives. Within its focus areas of access to care, early childhood, healthy communities, healthy food, and oral health, the Foundation strives to address the key drivers of health, taking a flexible approach designed to meet identified needs in partnership with the community. Learn more at [bcbsncfoundation.org](http://bcbsncfoundation.org).