

2026
Grant Proposal
Guidance
Document



2026 Grant Proposal Guidance Document

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Advancing Equity Through Oral Health Fund Application

Sub-program: Policy and Advocacy

Q1: Do you have a specific federal or state policy or system you intend to influence, change, and/or maintain? (Yes/No)

Below is a list of examples to consider:

- Policies that expand or protect federal or state oral health policy
- Medicare dental benefits
- Medicaid dental benefits

Q2A (if Q1 = Yes): Describe the specific federal or state policy or system you intend to influence, change, and/or maintain. If there are multiple, please list them all.

Please include an overview of:

1. The current policy or system
2. Historical context that exists
3. The primary population that will be served
4. An explanation of why this is the right time to move in this direction (window of opportunity)

If any policy priorities and/or system changes are less explicitly related to oral health policy (e.g., social and political drivers of health such as food insecurity, nutrition, transportation, language equity, etc.), please be specific and describe how the work will have a positive impact in oral health. Include how a health and/or racial justice lens was used in the decision to focus on any of the listed policies.

Q2B (if Q1 = No): If a specific policy or system has not been prioritized, describe the process you will undergo to prioritize and build alignment around specific policies or systems.

Please include an overview of

1. What internally within your organization, or externally within the environment, has created this window of opportunity for your project,
2. What sparked the conversation around driving federal or state oral health policy
3. How the process and decisions will be intentionally informed by those closest to the problems you are trying to solve

4. The plan and timeline for identifying and determining the policies and/or systems you will work to influence
5. What partners have been identified and what roles they will play in this project.

Q3: Describe the proposed project to complement the workplan below. What are the priority activities or tactics? How will they apply to a larger change strategy? How does this work build on previous work or existing expertise, infrastructure, or partnerships?

Q4: Describe the qualitative and quantitative data that have informed the activities, strategies, and approaches to this work. Describe how the data have informed the proposed work.

Note: This question is meant to lift how data and measurement are used as a strategy for planning and program improvement, which differs from the next question, which is meant to ask about the measurable impact of the proposed scope of work. We recognize that there is the potential for overlap.

Q5: Describe the quantitative and qualitative outcomes the organization is seeking to accomplish through this work. What mechanisms will be used to measure, capture, or collect information about the intended outcomes throughout the project? How will the outcomes of this project be shared with others?

Q6: Share the ways you will use a health and/or racial equity lens to implement this project.

Please include information about:

- How the decision to focus on the strategies described above has been informed by a health and racial equity analysis
- How your data or measurement strategy will further support your use of a health and/or racial equity lens
- How a health and/or racial equity lens will be used to implement any specific activities or strategies, beyond naming who will be primarily impacted by the work
- How community and/or consumer voice, and particularly the voice of underserved and underrepresented communities, will inform, and be centered within, your project

Please note, for open-ended questions, there is a 3,000 character limit.

Q7: CareQuest Institute’s philanthropic work is based on the four pillars listed below.

Please select the area(s) your proposed activities best align with:

- Work that demonstrates the use of a health and racial equity approach
- Work that strengthens capacity and infrastructure through partnerships and collaboration
- Work that engages communities that are closest to the problems you are trying to solve
- Work that seeks to advance local, state, or federal policy or systems change

Sub-program: Community Capacity and Voice

Q1: Describe how your proposed work will center the voices and needs of community members impacted by oral health inequities.

Please include an overview of:

1. How community voices will be incorporated into this work
2. How your community informed the priorities and design of this proposal
3. The primary population that will be engaged and served
4. An explanation of the perceived window of opportunity to influence oral health

Q2: Describe your organization’s work, including its current and historical capacity to meaningfully engage and partner with the community you serve, as it relates to driving systemic change.

Q3: What are the priority activities that will take place during the project period? Please provide a description of the proposed work to complement the workplan below.

Q4: What qualitative and quantitative data have informed your organization’s proposed activities, strategies, and approaches for this project? Describe how the data have informed the proposed work.

Note: This question is meant to clarify how data and measurement are used to guide/inform project planning, which differs from the next question, which is meant to ask about the measurable impact of the proposed scope of work.

Q5: Describe the quantitative and qualitative outcomes the organization is seeking to accomplish through this work, as well as specific Key Progress Indicators (KPIs) that will enable progress measurement. What mechanisms will be used to measure, capture, or collect information about the intended outcomes throughout the project? How will the outcomes of this project be shared with others?

Q6: Please share the ways you will prioritize health and/or racial equity in the implementation of this project.

Please include information about:

- How the decision to focus on the strategies described above has been informed by a health and racial equity analysis
- How your data or measurement strategy will further support your use of a health and/or racial equity lens
- How a health and/or racial equity lens will be used to implement any specific activities or strategies, beyond naming who will be primarily impacted by the work

Q7: CareQuest Institute’s philanthropic work is based upon the four values listed below.

Please select the area(s) your proposed activities best align with:

- Work that demonstrates the use of a health and racial equity approach
- Work that strengthens capacity and infrastructure through partnerships and collaboration
- Work that engages communities that are closest to the problems you are trying to solve
- Work that seeks to advance local, state, or federal policy or systems change

Sub-program: Care Delivery

Q1: Describe the specific opportunities for advancing integrated, effective, and person-centered care delivery models in your state or region that you propose to influence through this project.

Below is a list of examples to consider:

- Expanding the use of care coordination techniques and tools, health information technology (HIT), or interoperability
- Expanding use of population health management
- Building support for the implementation of oral health value-based health metrics payment
- Widening the use of telehealth and/or teledentistry for oral health
- Expanding models of reimbursement that are outcomes- and value-based
- Access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care
- Medical-dental integration
- Alternative payment models
- Social drivers of health
- Care coordinator
- Other (please list)

For each opportunity that aligns with your proposed work, please include;

1. A brief overview of the opportunity and what specific change(s) you seek to create
2. Insight into the current policies or regulations that are currently enabling or preventing these changes
3. Historical context that exists
4. An explanation of why this is the right time to do this work

Note: If any of the selected opportunities are less explicitly related to oral health policy (e.g., social and political drivers of health) please describe how the work will have a positive impact on oral health.

Q2: What are the priority activities that will take place during the project period?

Please provide a description of the proposed work to complement the workplan below. Does the proposed work apply to a larger change strategy? If so, please detail its potential for broader impact and/or implementation.

Q3: How does this work build on previous work or existing expertise, infrastructure, or partnerships? What partners, if any, are you collaborating with on this project, and what is/are their role(s)?

Q4: Describe the qualitative and quantitative data that have informed the activities, strategies, and approaches to this work. Describe how the data have informed the proposed work.

Note: This question is meant to lift how data and measurement are used as a strategy for planning and program improvement, which differs from the next question, which is meant to ask about the measurable impact of the proposed scope of work. We recognize that there is the potential for overlap.

Q5: Describe the quantitative and qualitative outcomes the organization is seeking to accomplish through this work.

- What mechanisms will be used to measure, capture, or collect information about the intended outcomes throughout the project?
- How will the outcomes of this project be shared with others?

Q6: Please share the ways you will use a health and/or racial equity lens to implement this project.

Please include information about:

- How the decision to focus on the strategies described above has been informed by a health and racial equity analysis
- How your data or measurement strategy will further support your use of a health and/or racial equity lens
- How a health and/or racial equity lens will be used to implement any specific activities or strategies, beyond naming who will be primarily impacted by the work

Q7: CareQuest Institute's philanthropic work is based on the four pillars listed below. Please select the area(s) your proposed activities best align with:

- Work that demonstrates the use of a health and racial equity approach
- Work that strengthens capacity and infrastructure through partnerships and collaboration
- Work that engages communities that are closest to the problems you are trying to solve
- Work that seeks to advance local, state, or federal policy or systems change

Sub-program: Research

Q1: Specific Aims Describe the goals of the proposed research, its expected outcomes, and the anticipated impact of the research.

Q2: Significance: Describe how the proposed research will address a particular problem or barrier to progress in the oral health field if the aims are achieved.

Q3: Innovation: Describe any novel outcomes or anticipated impacts that will result from this project.

Q4: Approach: Describe how the proposed research will be conducted. This should include details about the data source(s) to be used, analyses to be conducted, and outcomes that are expected. For proposals including hypothesis testing, the hypothesis/es should be clearly stated.

Q5: Community Engagement and Influence: Describe the community engagement strategies that will be utilized in the proposed research. Include details about how individuals representing historically marginalized and underserved communities, will inform, and be centered within the project.

Q6: Equity: Please share the ways that a health and/or racial equity lens has informed the design of this project.

Please include information about:

- How the decision to focus on the strategies described above has been informed by a health and racial equity analysis
- How your data or measurement strategy will further support your use of a health and/or racial equity lens
- How a health and/or racial equity lens will be used to implement any specific activities or strategies, beyond naming who will be primarily impacted by the work

Q7: Alignment with Initiatives: CareQuest Institute's philanthropic work is based upon the four values listed below.

Please select the area(s) your proposed activities best align with:

- Work that demonstrates the use of a health and racial equity approach
- Work that strengthens capacity and infrastructure through partnerships and collaboration
- Work that engages communities that are closest to the problems you are trying to solve
- Work that seeks to advance local, state, or federal policy or systems change

Emergent and Relief Fund Application

The Emergent and Relief Fund includes several funding opportunities. Please complete the application based on the type of grant you are applying for:

- **Emerging Opportunities:** Projects aiming to respond to a time-sensitive opportunity to develop innovative approaches to oral health systems change.
- **Relief Efforts:** Natural disaster emergency response work, not necessarily related to oral health.
- **Urgent Needs:** One-time, urgent needs to support clinics and organizations through short-term challenges. (This category might include equipment replacement, Missions of Mercy or similar efforts, etc.)
- **Sponsorships:** Support of convenings, events, and activities that promote shared learning and the spread of best practice within the field of oral health, specifically related to oral health for historically marginalized and underserved communities.

Emerging Opportunities:

Q1: Provide an overview of the emerging opportunity you are proposing to address.

Please include an overview of how this need or opportunity came to be. Also, because CareQuest Institute is committed to work that focuses on high-need, underrepresented communities, please provide an explanation of who or which communities specifically will be served by this project.

Q2: Please provide a detailed description of your proposed work.

- What are the priority activities or tactics you plan to use, and how, if at all, do they culminate in a larger strategy?
- What partners, if any, are you collaborating with on this project?
- Please share the ways you will use a health and/or racial equity lens and engage community in your proposed work.
- How will community voice, and particularly the voice of underserved and underrepresented communities, inform and be centered within your project?

Q3: How does the project build on previous work or existing expertise, infrastructure, or partnerships of your organization?

Q4: Describe the quantitative and qualitative outcomes measures you plan to use to assess the progress and impact of this work.

Please describe how you intend to operationalize and/or collect these measures in either the primary or secondary data.

**Please complete/upload a full project workplan as a part of this proposal.*

Relief Efforts:

Q1: Provide an overview of the time-sensitive need you are proposing to address.

Please include an overview of how this need or opportunity came to be. Also, because CareQuest Institute is committed to work that focuses on high-need, underrepresented communities, please provide an explanation of who or which communities specifically will be served by this project.

Q2: Provide a detailed description of your proposed work.

- What are the priority activities or tactics you plan to use and how, if at all, do they culminate in a larger relief effort? What partners, if any, are you collaborating with on this project?
- Please share the ways you will use a health and/or racial equity lens and engage community in your proposed work.
- How will community voice, and particularly the voice of underserved and underrepresented communities, inform and be centered within your project?

Q3: Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes you plan to achieve, including the anticipated number of people/communities impacted by this work.

**No workplan required.*

Urgent Needs:

Q1: Provide a summary of the request and an overview of the urgent need you are proposing to address.

Please include an overview of how this need or opportunity came to be, the geographic area served, the community needs or challenges that the proposed work would address, and the level and nature of community involvement in the project. Also, because CareQuest Institute is committed to work that focuses on high-need, underrepresented communities, please provide an explanation of which communities specifically will be served by this project.

Q2: Please be as specific as possible and describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes you plan to achieve, including the anticipated number of people/communities impacted by this work.

Q3: If this proposal is for the replacement of unusable and essential clinical equipment, please describe the circumstances surrounding the equipment needs.

Please include a description of the current unusable equipment, the type of equipment to be purchased, and the total cost for equipment needs.

**No workplan required*

Sponsorships:

Q1: Sponsorship Proposal Overview

Please provide an overview of how this sponsorship opportunity came to be, the geographic area served, the community needs or challenges that the proposed opportunity would address, the level and nature of community involvement in the opportunity, and an explanation of which communities specifically will be served by this project.

Q2: Sponsorship Event Details

Please provide sponsorship opportunity details, including dates, location, anticipated number of attendees, anticipated type of attendees, if CEUs are offered, any notable speakers/deliverables, etc.

Q3: Sponsorship Event Evaluation

Describe how you will evaluate the sponsorship opportunity, including how the evaluation will be shared with CareQuest Institute.

Organizational Demographics

Instructions:

Please use the link on the application in Fluxx to download the Demographics Form and follow the instructions in the document to complete and re-upload the form.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement:

At CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, our commitment to advancing oral health systems change that is equitable and responsive to the needs of diverse communities across the nation is one that we hope our partners share. If your organization has developed a formal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion /Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (DEI/JEDI) statement, please enter it using the text field on the application in Fluxx. This information supports our capacity to assess commitment and engagement across these values within the context of our grantmaking portfolio.

Workplan

Instructions:

In conjunction with your detailed project description, a workplan that guides project implementation is required.

To complete the workplan table, first, select the number of project goals in the application on Fluxx. Once the number of project goals is selected, enter information for each of the following. Once complete, save, and the table will display. For further assistance, please contact your assigned Grants and Programs Associate.

- **Goal:** Describe your project goal here. (You can enter up to six.) Please note that the goal should be a deliverable you wish to achieve with project funding.
- **By-when goal:** Choose the date by which the goal will be completed.
- **Objective:** Describe interim outcome(s) that, if achieved, will result in the fulfillment of your goal. (You can enter up to three objectives per goal.)
- **By-when objective:** Choose the date by which the objective will be completed.
- **Activity:** Specify the actions you will take to achieve the objective. (You can enter up to five activities per objective.)
- **Stakeholders of focus:** List the key stakeholders that will benefit from the implementation of this activity.
- **By-when activity:** Choose the date by which the activity will be completed.

Budget

Instructions:

Another required component of the grant application is the budget, including a narrative that connects the requested funding with specific elements of the proposal. On the application in Fluxx, enter an indirect expense rate (up to 15%) for your proposal budget, and then select the Proposal Budget Form link to open the table. Please note that the indirect expense rate will automatically be calculated based on the rest of your budget. In the Proposal Budget Form, list personnel, other direct costs, and purchased services, and describe how the funds requested for each line item will be spent and how the amount was determined. Note that the Total Program Expense, Indirect Expense, and Expense Total will be calculated when you select the Save button.

For the personnel section, enter a brief personnel description, annual base salary, FTE, fringe percentage, CareQuest Institute grant support amount, and budget narrative for each line item. Also, include match support and other/in-kind support where appropriate. For the "Other Direct Costs" section, enter a brief description per line item for direct non-personnel project-related costs, CareQuest Institute grant support amount, budget narrative, as well as match support and other/in-kind support where appropriate. For the purchased services line items, briefly describe costs for project consultants or contractors, CareQuest Institute grant support amount, budget narrative, as well as match support and other/in-kind support where appropriate.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can organizations apply for funding?

Organizations can apply for funding through CareQuest Institute's [online grants management portal, Fluxx](#).

2. Where can organizations learn more about the grant process?

Organizations can find more information about the funding areas by visiting our grantmaking landing page or by getting in touch with a member of the CareQuest Institute grants team.

3. What types of organizations are eligible for funding?

CareQuest Institute makes grants to nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations in the United States and US territories. The Institute does not give grants to for-profit organizations or individuals.

4. Should an organization submit a full budget as a part of the concept submission?

If possible; however, organizations do not need a full budget when submitting a concept, which is the first step in the proposal process. Our hope is that after any concept is approved, the process for writing and submitting a full proposal is collaborative and iterative in a way that can clarify any budget questions.

5. Is there a funding amount maximum and/or a range for funding?

We remain flexible in relation to minimums and maximums and consider the scope of your work as well as its alignment with our priorities.

6. Is there a maximum length for our answers?

For open-ended questions, there is a 3,000 character limit.

7. How long is the typical grant period?

Each grant award is made for at most one year, but grantees are welcome to submit new concepts and proposals following the end of their grant period.

8. Does CareQuest Institute have a specific geographic focus or area of interest?

CareQuest Institute works to advance oral health system change efforts in a variety of geographic contexts; therefore, we encourage interested nonprofits to submit a concept regardless of their location or geographic focus. We expect that the work will have a local or state-based strategy, but we are also interested in thinking about how to apply learnings and findings from this work to national-level policy change, and we will welcome our grantee partners to engage in that conversation.

9. Which organizations need to submit a concept in 2025?

We ask all interested organizations to submit a concept prior to submitting a full proposal.

10. What budget line items are eligible/not eligible for funding?

CareQuest Institute does not make grants directly to individuals and does not support capital expenses, direct service, mobile vans, or payments for procedures.

11. Can organizations have conversations with the grants team before applying?

Absolutely! We encourage all organizations to reach out to a member of the grants team to discuss the program or project for which you are seeking funding. To connect with a team member, contact us at grants@carequest.org.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health® is a national nonprofit championing a more equitable future where every person can reach their full potential through excellent health. We do this through our work in philanthropy, analytics and data insights, health transformation, policy and advocacy, and education, as well as our leadership in dental benefits and innovation advancements. We collaborate with thought leaders, health care providers, patients, and local, state, and federal stakeholders to accelerate oral health care transformation and create a system designed for everyone. To learn more, visit carequest.org.

This report and others are available at carequest.org.