The Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative (IMRI) is a community-driven collaborative effort to improve infant vitality in St. Louis and the Bootheel by reducing infant mortality. The initiative uses collective impact, an approach to collaboration in which partners and community members work together toward a common goal. The collective impact effort in St. Louis is called FLOURISH STL and is coordinated by the Maternal, Child and Family Health Coalition.

Infant mortality, the death of an infant less than one year of age, is a complex issue affected by many factors including, but not limited to, lack of access to prenatal care, housing, transportation and lack of preconception care. Because the factors affecting infant mortality are complex, it is understood that community organizations working together are better able to address this issue.

Purpose of Collaborative Grants

The 2016 collaborative grants funding opportunity is available to organizations interested in working within a partnership to implement programs or services that work toward short-term outcomes related to infant mortality reduction efforts. FLOURISH STL has created high-level strategic priority areas that identify areas of focus for infant mortality reduction efforts in St. Louis. Programs and services funded through the 2016 collaborative grants opportunity will accomplish short-term outcomes aligned with at least one of the strategic priority areas listed below.

- Engage the public in infant mortality reduction efforts;
- Increase community knowledge about the need for and availability of services and programs to support women, families and infants (must align with FLOURISH STL messaging);
- Support policies that ensure adequate access to care before, during and after pregnancy;
- Ensure effective and comprehensive service delivery that is easily accessible;
- Increase access to livable wages and supportive and affordable housing to support infant health;
- Work on systems-level changes that have the ability to advance opportunities for families to support their health and the health of their infants.

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<th>REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST</th>
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Organizations may propose to work with new or existing partners to accomplish outcome(s) related to this project. We define a partnership as two or more organizations working together to accomplish a common outcome(s).

**Purpose of Letter of Interest**

The letter of interest (LOI) is intended for use as a tool for organizations interested in this funding opportunity to engage in further discussion with the Foundation about ideas for implementing services or programs in support of women, families and infants that align with the aforementioned strategic priorities. The LOI is the first step in a multi-step application process which is described on pages 3–4 of this request.

**Budget and Awards**

There is $2 million available for collaborative grants across both St. Louis and the Bootheel. If you are interested in applying for the Bootheel Effort, please view the [Bootheel Effort Request for Letters of Interest](#). Applicants may apply for up to two years of funding.

Projects must meet general MFH guidelines regarding **eligible and excluded activities**.

**Eligibility Requirements**

Collaborative grants are open to partnerships serving women, families and infants in St. Louis.

The 2016 collaborative grants funding is not intended to support ongoing operation costs for existing programs and services. Funding can support a justified expansion of an existing service or program.

Applicants must be nonprofit entities and meet the general **funding guidelines** available on the MFH website. In addition, applicants are limited to one LOI submission per Employer Identification Number (EIN) per cycle. Existing grantees of the initiative may apply for funding but priority will be given to those organizations not currently receiving funding through the Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative.

Total Foundation funding cannot exceed 25 percent of an organization's annual operating expenses. Each year the total annual funding from all MFH current grants/contracts with an organization as well as any proposed new funding is considered in calculating the 25 percent limit. In-kind expenses are not considered in determining the annual expense total.

**Fiscal Agents**

If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants may apply with a fiscal agent. Any 501(c)(3) organization that is in good standing with the state of Missouri can act as a fiscal agent for another agency or organization with the following characteristics:

- Nonprofit agency or organization without a 501(c)(3) designation;
- Start-up organization without a stable financial track record;
- Small organization wanting to significantly increase its financial capacity;
- Community coalition. Note: As fiscal agent for a coalition, the fiscal agent organization must be an active member of the coalition and involved with the project, i.e. not just providing grant accounting services.
If funded, the fiscal agent and applicant organization will be responsible for all terms and conditions of the Grant Award Agreement for the duration of the grant.

**Application Process**

Collaborative grants proposals are solicited through a multi-step process. The first step is the submission of an LOI. One LOI may be submitted per partnership. A primary applicant organization should submit the LOI on behalf of all partners.

The Foundation will accept LOIs January 26 through July 25, 2016. LOIs will be reviewed by Foundation staff as they are received. All applicants submitting a LOI will be contacted via phone for additional follow up once they are reviewed.

There are decision points throughout the process that determine how far your application proceeds, including upon submission of the LOI, at the LOI review phase and at the full proposal review phase. The anticipated timeline and process are detailed below.

**Timeline**

Applicants can expect the following process:

1. **LOI Submission:** Your LOI will be reviewed according to the timeline detailed above, based upon the date it is submitted. Once received by MFH, the LOI will be forwarded to a program officer for review. The program officer will reach out to the point of contact listed on the LOI for further discussion. The program officer may provide feedback to refine the scope of your project, if necessary.

2. **Site Visit:** The program officer may request a site visit based upon the applicant’s use of the LOI to demonstrate:
   
   A. Alignment of stated outcomes of the project with the purpose of this funding opportunit

If requested, the purpose of the site visit is for MFH staff to gain a better understanding of the idea proposed in the LOI, including understanding of the role of proposed partners, anticipated short-term outcome(s) of the project and to increase your organization’s understanding of the Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative and FLOURISH STL. At the site visit, the program officer may provide feedback to refine the scope of your project. It will be expected that appropriate representatives from the partnership will be present at the site visit.
3. **Full Proposal Invitation**: The program officer will extend an invitation to submit a full proposal based upon the site visit, if applicable, and subsequent conversations to demonstrate:

   A. Commitment from all proposed partners on the project, including a shared understanding of partner roles and responsibilities
   B. Understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with this project
   C. Clear statement of anticipated immediate impact on women, families and/or children
   D. Alignment of stated short-term outcomes of the project with the purpose of the funding opportunity

   If the organization is not recommended to submit a full proposal, the program officer will notify the organization and provide further feedback.

4. **Review and Recommendation**: All proposals will be reviewed by community reviewers from the community in which the applicant is located. At least two community reviewers will read each application and provide feedback to MFH staff. MFH staff, and additional content area expert reviewers, will utilize the community reviewer feedback in the overall review process. Applicants recommended for funding will demonstrate in the full proposal:

   A. Clarity around the activities that will lead to the intended short-term outcome(s) of the project
   B. Alignment of stated short-term outcome(s) and activities with the purpose of the funding opportunity

5. **Award Notification**: All applicants will be notified of their funding status according to the timeline above.

**Other Considerations**

Organizations receiving funding will be expected to participate in the IMRI’s learning community. The purpose of this community is to provide grantees with an opportunity for learning, relationship building and reflection with peers in order to advance our collective work. All award recipients will be expected to participate in meetings, phone calls or other activities as they relate to the learning community. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be asked to include funds for participation in their project budget.

Organizations receiving a collaborative grant award will be expected to attend a grantee orientation on July 13, 2016, in St. Louis at 9:30 a.m. (grants with a July 1 start date) or December 12, 2016, at 9:30 a.m. (grants with a December 1 start date).

**How to Apply**

LOIs will be accepted beginning **January 26, 2016, through July 25, 2016**.

LOIs must be completed online using the link below. Upon completion, applicants must click the “Review and Submit” button for the LOI to be received by MFH.

To start a new application, **click here**.

To return to an application in progress, **click here**.

For more information on the online application process, **click here**.
Application Requirements

Applications that do not contain all of the required documentation will not be reviewed unless the applicant has contacted and obtained approval from MFH prior to submission to explain why certain documentation is unavailable. Incomplete applications will not be advanced to consideration for funding.

☐ Online application acknowledgement. To complete and submit the one-page form, [click here](#). Please note: A handwritten or electronic signature of the CEO or equivalent is required.

☐ LOI narrative: Submit a narrative up to two double-spaced pages with at least 11-point Arial or Times New Roman font and one-inch margins.

1. State your organization’s mission.

2. What services does your organization provide to women, families and infants?

3. Please state the names of the organization(s) you propose partnering with for this project and the services their organization(s) provide to women, families and infants.

4. On which strategic priority area(s) do you intend on focusing (see pg. 1) and why?

5. Please state the intended short-term outcomes—not activities—of your project. These outcomes should be measurable and able to be accomplished within the proposed timeline. Use bullet points.

6. Please state, in one sentence, the anticipated immediate impact on women, families and infants if this project is successful.

7. What road blocks do you anticipate having to overcome to successfully achieve the intended outcomes?

☐ LOI budget. Submit the one-page form listing the estimated expenses for the project with a brief explanation of each. A more detailed budget will be required if a full proposal is requested. This budget is not included in the two page limit for the LOI narrative.

☐ Annual audit report or IRS Form 990. Provide the most recent audit report prepared by a CPA and issued less than 15 months prior to the date of application submission. Send the report including audit letter, financial statements and notes to the financial statements. If a recent audit report is unavailable, provide the most recent IRS Form 990 tax return. Applicants using a fiscal agent must submit an annual audit report for the fiscal agent as well as the applicant.

☐ Explanation of need for fiscal agent (if applicable). Applicant must submit a written explanation outlining a need for a fiscal agent. This statement is not included in the two page limit for the LOI narrative.

Questions and Inquiries

If you have questions about the goals or content of this LOI please contact Kathleen Holmes, program director, at (314)345-5582 or kholmes@mffh.org.

For more information on the online application process, [click here](#). If there are additional questions, please contact Jenny Minelli, program assistant, at (314) 345-5531 or jminelli@mffh.org.
About Missouri Foundation for Health
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