



Missouri Foundation
for Health

Opportunity Fund

Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) invites organizations to submit concept papers for systems change projects that will positively impact the health of Missourians. We are interested in community-driven work that challenges and disrupts inequitable systems.

How we define systems change:

Systems change requires addressing the root causes that hold social problems in place. This intentional process focuses on transforming and disrupting the deeply embedded systems and structures that enable the status quo.

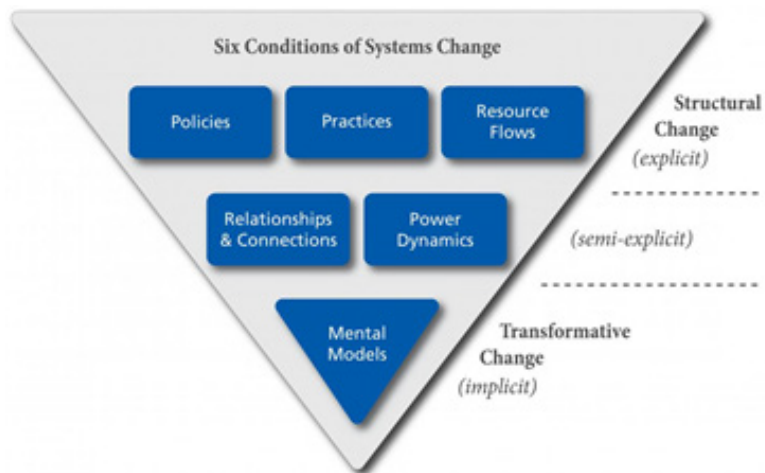
MFH also [created a video](#) to explore this definition.

The figure below highlights some of the common components of systems that can be targeted by systems change work:

Key Application Dates	
Open Date	Wednesday, August 9, 2023
Close Date	Tuesday, October 3, 2023, Noon CT
Concept Papers will be reviewed and select applicants will be invited to submit full proposals in early December 2023.	



Figure 1. Six Conditions of Systems Change



John Kania, Mark Frammer, and Peter Senge 2018. The Waters of Systems Change. FSG. https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/



The goal of this systems change work is to improve health equity in the state. Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. To achieve health equity, obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including a lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care must be removed.

Reviewers evaluate concept papers based on the following criteria. Successful projects often include at least two of these elements:

- **Far-reaching:** Focuses on broad impact that extends beyond one organization's client base
- **Community-informed:** Generates solutions that engage those negatively impacted by the issue (Work that moves beyond engagement toward being led or driven by community is preferred)
- **Timely:** Addresses an issue that has recently surfaced in the environment (or exists in a recently changed context) with a systems approach
- **Connected:** Creates or builds on existing collaborative networks and fits within the broader landscape of what other organizations are doing to address the issue
- **Strategic:** Develops internal or sector-wide planning and preparation efforts focused on systems change
- **Innovative:** Tests unconventional and creative approaches to disrupt systems

Projects that meet the “far-reaching” criteria are much more likely to be invited for a full proposal. It is not necessary or expected for any one project to meet all the elements listed above.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be nonprofit or governmental entities and meet the general [MFH funding guidelines](#) available on the Foundation's website.

Applicants may apply with a [fiscal sponsor](#). (Additional information about your fiscal sponsor will be requested if your organization is asked to submit a full proposal.)

Application Timeline

Concept Papers: Concept papers must be received by **Tuesday, October 3, 2023**, at noon (CT). Please plan accordingly and submit your application well before the deadline, as MFH cannot accept late applications.

Full Proposal: MFH staff will review concept papers to determine if the organization will be invited to submit a full proposal based on fit with the Opportunity Fund and strategic priorities of the Foundation. Applicants will be notified of concept paper status in early December 2023. If an applicant is invited, they will have about 10 weeks from the date of invitation to submit a full proposal. During this period, chosen applicants will also have the opportunity to chat with MFH staff in order to address questions and concerns.

Award Notification(s): May to June 2024



How to Apply

To start a new concept paper application, [click here](#).

To return to a concept paper in progress, log into your [account](#).

Concept Paper Requirements

- **Application Acknowledgement.** Complete and submit the [one-page acknowledgement form](#).
- **Concept Paper Narrative.** In no more than two, 1.5-spaced pages, please concisely consider the following: (*Note: If invited to submit a full proposal, additional details about the approach, major activities, timeline, organizational history, and partner roles will be requested.*)
 1. **Introduction:** Provide a brief summary of what you hope to accomplish through the proposed project, the systems approach, the population that will be impacted, and how that population will be engaged.
 2. **Why?** Why is this project needed to improve health equity in Missouri? Why is now the time to address this topic? Why is your organization well positioned to address this systemic challenge? (We are more interested in the needs of your local community rather than national trends.)
 3. **How?** How will you know if this work is successful? How will this project challenge systems to improve health equity? Systems change can take shape at many different levels – [please see the conditions](#) referenced in the graphic above.
 4. **With whom?** Collaboration and partnerships are essential for systems-level impact. Please share any identified partners and describe your level of engagement with them, their level of commitment, and willingness to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for those central to the project.
- **Concept Budget.** Please complete and submit the [concept paper budget](#), listing the estimated expenses for the project with a brief explanation. (A more detailed budget will be required if a full proposal is requested.) If your request is a multi-year project, please provide a multi-year estimated budget.
- **Annual audit report or IRS Form 990.** Most recent audit report or IRS Form 990.
- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure.** Complete and submit the [disclosure form](#).

Additional Considerations

The Foundation reserves the right to:

- Request additional information from any or all applicants
- Conduct discussions with applicants to ensure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the application requirements
- Request modifications to a respondent's application prior to final award to ensure alignment of project elements with the [core values](#), [mission](#), and operating standards of the Foundation
- Approve subcontractors proposed or used in carrying out the work
- Reject any or all applications submitted



Inquiries

If you have questions about the goals or content of the RCP, please contact Ben Zeno, Senior Strategist – Responsive Philanthropy, via email at bzeno@mffh.org.

For more information on the online application system, [click here](#). If there are additional questions, please contact Wendy Rohrbach, Project Coordinator at wrohrbach@mffh.org or (314) 345-5504.

About Missouri Foundation for Health

Missouri Foundation for Health is building a more equitable future through collaboration, convening, knowledge sharing, and strategic investment. Working in partnership with communities and nonprofits, MFH is transforming systems to eliminate inequities within all aspects of health and addressing the social and economic factors that shape health outcomes. To learn more please visit mffh.org.