



Missouri Foundation  
for Health

REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PAPERS

# Health Equity Fund



The Health Equity Fund supports organizations working to ensure all Missourians have a fair and just opportunity to live their healthiest lives by changing systems that create barriers to health. Formerly the Opportunity Fund, the Health Equity Fund reflects our long-standing commitment to [equity](#) and our belief that health is a fundamental human right. Through this Fund, we partner with organizations to change systems so that they better serve everyone in our state.

Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) invites community-based organizations to submit concept papers for systems change efforts that advance health equity across Missouri.

We welcome a wide range of approaches, including but not limited to those listed below. These approaches and many others contribute to meaningful outcomes that advance health equity.

## Approaches

- Pilot models to create long-term change
- Field or sector-wide capacity building to engage in systemic change
- Cross-sector coalition building or strengthening
- Community organizing or mobilizing community members
- Advocacy

## Outcomes

- Policies and institutional practices changed (or in process of changing)
- Resource flows (e.g., funding/budgets, expertise, data, etc.) shifted
- Coalitions, networks, and partnerships built and sustained that bring voices of those most impacted to the table
- Community power strengthened to influence change
- Collective capacity and infrastructure for systems change work created and reinforced

For definitions, please see the accompanying [glossary](#).

## Key Application Dates

|            |                                   |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Open Date  | Tuesday, July 15, 2025            |
| Close Date | Tuesday, August 26, 2025, noon CT |

Concept Papers will be reviewed and select applicants will be invited to submit full proposals in early November 2025.



## How we define systems change

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

Reviewers evaluate concept papers based on the following criteria. Successful proposals meet more than one of the following criteria:

- **Connected:** Partnerships (formal or informal) that will strengthen an existing network or create new networks
- **Community-Driven:** The work is driven by those most negatively impacted by the issue. The work is done in collaboration with the impacted community to integrate input and share decision-making power
- **Equity-Focused:** Health equity is central to the process and outcome of the work. This means that the proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the root causes of inequities, shifts power to those most impacted by those inequities, and prioritizes strategies that create equitable systems and structures
- **Far-Reaching:** The outcomes or effects of the work go beyond a single organization and the organization's clients
- **Strategic:** A clear plan of action, which could include time to assess the system, develop systems capacity and partnerships, and/or create the strategy to make a [structural and/or relational change](#). Work builds on other efforts happening in the community and is not a duplication of existing work

**Please note:** We will not accept proposals related to the following topic areas this year because we have dedicated funds and strategies already addressing these issues. If your work aligns with one of these areas, please use the [contact form](#) to connect with a strategist working in that focus area.

Topic areas not accepted include:

- Behavioral health, mental health, harm reduction, substance use
- Contraceptive access
- Crisis response and justice system diversion
- Firearm injury and death prevention
- Food systems
- Infant and maternal health
- Medicaid expansion



## Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be nonprofit or governmental entities and meet the general [MFH funding guidelines](#).

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, August 26, 2025, at noon (CT).

**Full Proposal:** MFH staff will review concept papers to determine if the organization is invited to submit a full proposal based on fit with the Health Equity Fund. Applicants will be notified of concept paper status in November 2025. If an applicant is invited, they will have about nine (9) weeks from the date of the invitation to submit a full proposal. During this period, invited applicants are encouraged to meet with MFH staff to address questions and guidance on the full application.

**Award Notification(s):** April 2026

If you have any questions or want to learn more about the Health Equity Fund, please review the [FAQ](#).

## How to Apply

Use the following link to apply, [click here](#).

To return to an application in progress, log in to your [Account](#).

For information about the online portal, [click here](#). If you have additional questions, click on the circle in the top right-hand corner of the portal

## 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, font size 11, please concisely state 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. A brief summary of what you and your partners hope to accomplish and how your work will advance health equity in Missouri.
  2. Who will be impacted by this work and how will those impacted by the issue(s) drive the work? How was the impacted population involved in the generation and development of this work?
  3. Which systems approach(es) you plan to use (this may include—but are not limited to—pilot models for systemic change, sector-wide capacity building, cross-sector coalition building, community organizing, and/or advocacy).
  4. What system(s) do you aim to address? What is your plan of action to change the system(s) for more equitable outcomes?
  5. Who will you be collaborating with or partnering with? What is your level of engagement with these partners? *(We will ask for memorandums of understanding or letters of support if you are invited for the full proposal stage)*



## REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PAPERS

- **Concept Budget.** Please complete and submit the [concept paper budget](#). The budget should include the estimated expenses for the total duration of the proposal with a brief explanation for each expense. The brief explanation is helpful as additional context to your concept narrative. A more detailed budget will be required if a full proposal is requested. If your request is a multi-year proposal, please provide a multi-year estimated budget.
- **Financial documents.** Applicants must submit the following documents.
  - Audit report or IRS Form 990 completed less than 15 months prior to the date of concept paper submission
  - Most recent annual accounting period's income statement and balance sheet
- **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 proposal 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
- Use information that we collect, including de-identified applications, in connection with artificial intelligence (AI) tools used by us to analyze and improve our processes, functions, systems, and services.

### Inquiries

If you have questions about the goals or content of this request for concepts, please contact Reana Thomas, Strategist – Strategic Relationships, via email at [rthomas@mffh.org](mailto:rthomas@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](mailto: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](http://mffh.org).