**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**HOSPITAL FOOD ACCESS PARTNERSHIPS PILOT**

**A. Introduction**

The Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI) is seeking applications from Alliance for Health Equity (AHE) [member hospitals](http://allhealthequity.org/our-partners/) to participate in a *hospital food access partnerships pilot*. The intent of the hospital food access partnerships pilots is to advance hospital partnerships with both food pantries and local food businesses/producers/growers.

IPHI, as the backbone organization for AHE, is coordinating the selection of three hospital food access partnerships pilot sites for inclusion in our submission to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s (RWJF) Cross Sector Innovation Initiative on behalf of the Alliance Hospitals, Chicago and Cook County Departments of Public Health, and other food system partners. While pilot sites will be identified in October, awards for the hospital food partnership pilots are contingent upon funding from RWJF. Notification from the foundation is expected in December 2019, with funding for hospital pilots commencing in January 2020. Depending on the number of pilot applicants, IPHI and the AHE steering committee may seek additional funding to support additional pilot sites.

**B. Background**

In both the 2016 and 2019 AHE Community Health Needs Assessments, the AHE identified healthy food access/food security as a key priority (as part of social and structural determinants of health), recognizing the crucial importance of food security for good health. AHE launched the Food Access and Food Security Workgroup (“food workgroup”) in 2017. An outgrowth of this work is the *Action Agenda for Health Care and Food Security/Food Access Partnerships* (“action agenda”)*,* adopted by the food workgroup in spring 2019 as a roadmap to achieving its population health and health equity goal *to create an equitable food system that builds community health and wealth in Chicago and Cook County.*

The action agenda focuses on collaboration and alignment with various organizations to strategically address food access and food insecurity in Cook County. The action agenda has three main components:

1. **Economic Development:** build entrepreneurship for healthy food, supporting food-related minority-owned businesses (MBEs), and aligning with existing procurement strategies to support local food business.
2. **Policy:** create a shared policy agenda across local public health, food access partners and healthcare organizations.
3. **Screen/Refer/Partner for Food Security**: build on screening and referral programs, healthcare partnerships with food access/security organizations, and community-driven solutions to increasing food access.

One area of specific work will be the exploration of the [Good Food Purchasing Program](https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/program-overview/) (GFPP), a national, metrics-based framework to leverage the power of procurement to advance racial-equity-focused food systems and promote economic development in communities of color. Under the leadership of Chicago and Cook County Departments of Public Health, the city and county governments are working to implement the program across agencies pursuant to resolutions passed by the City Council and Cook County Board. Technical assistance on the GFPP will be provided by the Chicago Food Policy Action Council.

**C. Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot Overview**

Hospitals selected under this RFA will co-create strategies with community food partners to achieve the following goals: (1) improve food access for patients who are food insecure, and (2) increase hospital purchasing of healthy foods from a local food business/producer/grower.

***The Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot is designed to implement components of the AHE food action agenda to systematically address food access and food insecurity.***

Each Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot will consist of a collaboration between a hospital (or up to two hospitals within a system) and both a local food pantry and a local food business/producer/grower. As grantees, hospitals will:

* Identify and advance policies and procedures that can be improved to strengthen healthcare/food security/food access partnerships.
* Advance at least one food access/food security strategy for screening and referral to emergency food services.
* Establish (or strengthen) a relationship with at least one local food business/producer/grower and develop steps to establish a procurement connection, including exploration of the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP).
* Collaborate with food partners to develop strategies, workflows, policies and procedures to achieve pilot goals.

Hospitals may propose to establish new food partnerships, or expand the scope of established partnerships. Hospitals are not expected to have identified food partners at the time of application, but may include methods/approach for identifying food partners as part of their proposed plan. Partnerships should emphasize joint planning between hospitals and community partners to design, implement, and sustain the initiative.

In addition to designing and implementing site-specific strategies, hospitals and their food partners will participate in a learning cohort, facilitated by IPHI, to support site-specific implementation and advance dialogue around best practices as it relates to building community food-hospital partnerships, distribution channels, and healthy food access. IPHI, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Cook County and Chicago Departments of Public Health, and the Chicago Food Policy Action Council will provide technical assistance to the learning collaborative participants. There will be a total of three meetings over the grant period (January 2020 - June 2021). The three hospital food access partnerships pilots are required to attend all three meetings and fully engage in the aims of the learning cohort.

Pilot sites will also continue participation in the food workgroup (or join if not currently a member), and may be asked to occasionally provide verbal reports to the workgroup to support the broader learning of AHE members (on topics such as barriers to implementation, policy issues, innovations, successes and other similar topics). Pilots will also provide brief written mid-project and final reports.

**D. Funds Available and Uses**

If our proposal to RWJF is funded, a total of $60,000 is available to fund pilots at three hospitals\*. Each pilot grant is eligible for up to $20,000 to support pilot site activities and involvement in the learning cohort from January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. Given the geographic scope of the AHE, we anticipate that the cohort will include at least one pilot that will impact suburban Cook County communities.

\*A health system can apply to work with up to two hospitals within one pilot grant.

Of the $20,000 grant amount, the hospital must allocate:

* A minimum of $5,000 to a pantry or food insecurity partner
* A minimum of $5,000 to a local food grower or local food business partner
* A maximum of $10,000 to the hospital

Funding for all organizations is intended to support capacity building efforts, such as staff time for planning, workflow development, change management activities to build internal support, partnership development and integration activities, training, and other infrastructure development. Unless otherwise required by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the funding will be in the form of a stipend and will not require financial reporting beyond evidence that the partner allocations were made.

**E. Eligibility**

The following eligibility criteria must be met to be deemed eligible for funding under this RFA:

* AHE member hospital current on dues. The full list can be found at <http://allhealthequity.org/our-partners/>.
* Letter of support signed by the hospital CEO/President which indicates the commitment of hospital leadership to build community food partnerships in alignment with pilot goals. (Note: this is a requirement from the RWJF funding source.)

**F. Submission of Application**

Submit applications via email to: Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot

Illinois Public Health Institute

Email: [foodaccessRFA@iphionline.org](mailto:foodaccessRFA@iphionline.org)

Application deadline: Monday, October 7, 2019

3:00pm Central Standard Time

Applications must be submitted via email only to [foodaccessRFA@iphionline.org](mailto:foodaccessRFP@iphionline.org). Hard copies of applications will not be accepted. Applications received after the above deadline may not be considered.

**G. Timeline**

IPHI intends to follow the timeline below for review and awarding of funds under this RFA:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RFA for Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot released | September 24, 2019 |
| Deadline for Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot applications | October 7, 2019 (3:00 p.m.) |
| Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot sites selected | October 11, 2019 |
| Notification of RWJF funding decision | December 1, 2019 |
| Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot funding period | January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 |

The above timeline is subject to change to best meet programmatic needs and funder requirements, as applicable.

**H. Application Review**

IPHI will convene a committee of technical experts and practitioners to review complete and timely applications submitted in response to this RFA.

The committee intends to select a cohort with the greatest potential to inform practice and achieve the project goals and is representative of the city and suburban scope of the Alliance for Health Equity. The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

* Description of the Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot alignment with hospital’s strategic priorities, key initiatives and/or investments strategy, key initiatives.
* Community needs related to food access, including communities/populations with high food insecurity that will be served through the pilot
* Description of current initiatives to address food insecurity/access and/or local healthy food procurement
* Description of existing or proposed food partnerships
* Description of project goals
* The extent to which the partnership addresses health equity and racial equity
* Organizational capacity, internal champions, and supportive environment
* Description of decision making process to support co-creation of strategies with community partners
* Anticipated project impact
* Commitment to participating in the learning cohort and sharing lessons learned with AHE members at-large

**I. Questions**

All questions pertaining to this RFA must be submitted via email to [foodaccessRFA@iphionline.org](mailto:foodaccessRFA@iphionline.org).

Potential applicants are encouraged to submit any questions by October 1 to ensure resolution. If applicable, IPHI will issue an amendment to this RFA with responses to all questions received, including any applicable adjustments to the RFA requirements. The RFA and questions received will be posted online at <https://allhealthequity.org/food-access-rfa/>

**HOSPITAL FOOD ACCESS PARTNERSHIPS PILOT**

**GRANT APPLICATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant Information** | |
| **Healthcare Organization Legal Name** |  |
| **Street Address** |  |
| **City, State, Zip Code** |  |
| **Primary Contact for the Application**  (one of the individuals identified below) | **Name:**  **Title:**  **Email:**  **Phone:** |
| **Applicant Representatives** | |
| **Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot Champion**  (Individual leading the hospital’s project) | **Name:**  **Title:**  **Email:**  **Phone:** |
| **Procurement Contact**  (Individual responsible for hospital food purchasing) | **Name:**  **Title:**  **Email:**  **Phone:** |
| **Additional Contact (optional)**  (could be internal or external to the hospital) | **Name:**  **Title:**  **Email:**  **Phone:** |
| **Authorized Signatory**  (Individual authorized to sign on behalf of the hospital) | **Name:**  **Title:**  **Email:**  **Phone:** |
| **Contract Representative**  (Individual responsible for agreement processing and negotiations) | **Name:**  **Title:**  **Email:**  **Phone:** |

**Application components:** Cover sheet with applicant information, Application questions (#1-10), Required attachment (CEO/President letter), Signatory page

**I. Application Questions**

1. Rationale: In 1-2 sentences, describe why your hospital is interested in participating as a Hospital Food Access Partnerships pilot.

*Please provide brief responses (1 paragraph) to each of the questions (2-10) below.*

**Hospital Background**

2. Describe how the Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot aligns with the hospital’s strategic priorities, key initiatives and/or investments.

3. Provide an overview of the hospital’s current work to promote screening for food insecurity and/or procurement of healthy foods from local food businesses/producers/growers. Be specific in terms of partnerships, workflows, policies and procedures, local purchasing goals, electronic health record changes, etc. that have been implemented.

**Food Partnerships - Existing and Proposed**

*Note: Because funding under this RFA supports the development of food partnerships, applicants are not required to have identified partners at the time of application.*

4. Do you have an existing partnership with a food pantry? **YES / NO**

1. If yes, describe shared goals, organizational roles, and accomplishments to date. Describe process for planning and decision making.
2. If no, or if you are proposing a new partner for the pilot, describe how you will identify a pantry partner for the pilot. This may include factors such as strategic alignment, communities/populations with greatest equity needs in the hospital service area, etc. Please be specific when describing the factors that are important to you.

5. Do you have an existing partnership with a local food business/producer/grower? **YES / NO**

* 1. If yes, describe shared goals, organizational roles, and accomplishments to date. Describe process for planning and decision making.
  2. If no, or if you are proposing a new partner for the pilot, describe how you will identify a food business/producer/grower partner for the pilot. This may include factors such as shared vision, communities/populations with greatest equity needs in the hospital service area, etc. Please be specific when describing the factors that are important to you.

**Pilot Project Description**

6. Describe your goals for improving food access for patients who are food insecure and increasing hospital purchasing of healthy foods from local food businesses/growers.

7. Describe the organizational policies and/or procedures you will seek to address as part of the Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot. These may include policies/procedures related to care management, enrollment in food and nutrition benefits, procurement changes to support local purchasing and minority- and women-owned businesses, etc.

8. Who will be involved in the hospital’s planning process? Describe the commitment of the team to the overall goals of the project. List team member names and roles. In addition to the project champion and procurement officer identified above, members may include medical staff, care coordination, food and nutrition, IT, community relations, and population health staff.

9. For both new and expanded partnerships, describe how you will make decisions as a pilot collaborative, and in particular the role(s) for community partners in decision-making. E.g. do all partners have a balanced voice in the decision-making process, how are decisions approved, who has authority to make day-to-day and/or strategic decisions, etc.

10. Provide a brief outline of key steps and timeline to achieve your pilot goals. (Project period is January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.)

**II. Required attachments**

1. Letter of support signed by the hospital CEO/President that indicates the commitment of hospital leadership to build community food access partnerships in alignment with pilot goals (see template provided).

**III. Signatory Page**

I certify that to the best of my knowledge that the information included in this application is complete and accurate.

If selected and funded for this pilot project, our hospital will:

* Advance at least one food access/food security screening and referral strategy
* Establish or strengthen a relationship with at least one local food business/producer/grower and develop steps to establish a procurement connection
* Work jointly with community partners to design and implement the strategies
* Identify and advance policies and procedures that can be improved to strengthen healthcare/ food security/food access partnerships
* Participate in a learning cohort that will meet three times between January 2020 and June 2021
* Participate in the Alliance for Health Equity food workgroup and sharing lessons learned with AHE members at-large

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| --- | --- |
| **Authorized Signatory** | |
| **Signature:** | |
| **Name and title:** | **Date:** |

|  |  |
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| **Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot Champion** | |
| **Signature:** | |
| **Name and title:** | **Date:** |

**CEO/PRESIDENT LETTER TEMPLATE**

**(REQUIRED FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION)**

**HOSPITAL LETTERHEAD**

Elissa Bassler

CEO

Illinois Public Health Institute

310 S. Peoria, Suite 404

Chicago, IL 60607

Dear Ms. Bassler,

This letter is to provide my support for HOSPITAL NAME’s participation in the Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot if we are selected and the funds are awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Description of how the Hospital Food Access Partnerships Pilot aligns with the hospital’s strategic priorities, key initiatives and/or investments.

Description of goals for your participation in the pilot

Other information you wish to include

We appreciate the opportunity to be considered for this pilot initiative, and look forward to hearing the decision.

Sincerely,

Hospital CEO or President