



## **Collaborative Approaches to Well-Being in Rural Communities Request for Letters of Interest**

Letter of Interest Deadline: March 7, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. CST

*Note: This is a print-friendly version of the information available online.  
This document does not contain additional details.*

Eligible organizations in Texas are invited to submit a letter of interest for our new Collaborative Approaches to Well-Being in Rural Communities project, which aims to support rural communities in their efforts to inclusively and collaboratively transform the environments where people live, learn, work, play and pray to support resilience, mental health and well-being. Contingent upon the quality of proposals received, the foundation plans to award up to five, three-year grants totaling \$2 million (not to exceed \$400,000 per award).

The foundation will invite applicants with the strongest letters to submit a full proposal and will offer assistance in the development of that proposal if needed. For the purposes of this project, the foundation defines rural as counties of 250,000 people or less, with a preference for smaller communities. Multiple counties may collaborate as long as each county in the collaboration has 250,000 people or less.

*Please read all information carefully before submitting a letter of interest. It is the applicant's responsibility to refer to the [grant opportunity webpage](#) for the most current information.*

### **Project Description**

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The Collaborative Approaches to Well-Being in Rural Communities project aligns with the foundation's [new strategic direction](#). Through this project, we seek to address a lack of understanding of how communities support resilience and mental health, the significant inequities that exist in Texas, the community conditions that contribute to mental health disparities, and how people come together to create and implement community-driven solutions.

Selected grantees will develop or build on a community collaborative to assess, plan and implement strategies to become a healthier community that supports resilience, mental health and well-being. Using a population health approach to address specific conditions that contribute to mental health disparities, each community will determine their path toward mental health equity and community wellness. In addition, we will fund a separate coordinator grant to facilitate

technical assistance and evaluation for the grantees, and to assist the foundation in thoughtfully partnering with and learning alongside the grantees.

The foundation will fund grantees to facilitate collaboration in their communities in which all partners contribute expertise, share decision-making and ownership, increase understanding of community conditions, and integrate knowledge gained with the goal of improved community well-being. Ultimately, the result we seek is that all people in Texas thrive in communities that value and support their resilience, mental health and well-being.

We intend to select grantees who demonstrate a commitment to:

- Shared learning through partnership with the foundation and other grantees
- Creating learning environments in collaboration with the technical assistance and evaluation coordinator, foundation staff and other key stakeholders
- Meaningful inclusion of traditionally excluded groups in planning, program and policy development, and change implementation
- Collective impact and systems change through strategic partnerships
- Engaging in community-based participatory research (CBPR) for continuous quality improvement and ongoing evaluation
- Engaging in local and state-level policy development and advocacy
- Prioritizing mental health as equally important to well-being as physical health
- A sustainable community collaborative invested in developing and maintaining resilience, mental health and well-being of all community members

## **Project Activities**

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The first phase of the grant project will likely include substantial time for community development activities (like community assessments, community building, relationship development, education and training) as identified by the collaborative. In phase two, grantees will submit an implementation plan outlining strategies to improve community resilience, mental health and well-being.

Activities in which communities might engage if selected:

- Assessment of community strengths, challenges and opportunities to better support resilience, mental health and well-being, and development of recommendations and a timeline for change
- Development of metrics to measure progress and community outcomes
- Professionally-facilitated meetings that convene and encourage engagement from various community stakeholders and groups who are traditionally excluded due to disability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, etc.
- Trainings that build a shared understanding of the impact of social inequities and trauma, educate about prevention and early intervention strategies, challenge assumptions, highlight stories of recovery, and more

- Educational activities that increase the community's ability to participate in policy discussions at the state, regional and local level, including policy development, analysis, implementation and evaluation
- Advocacy planning to identify necessary system-level changes (such as funding gaps, policy barriers, etc.), including strategy development and timeline, and a work plan to influence those changes

## **Key Dates**

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- Teleconference Registration Deadline – February 12, 2018 (11:59 p.m. CST)  
*[Register today!](#) By February 12, 2018, please inform us of questions to address during the teleconference by emailing [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu).*
- Teleconference for Applicants (optional, highly recommended) – February 15, 2018 (10:00 – 11:30 a.m. CST)
- Fluxx Registration Deadline – [Create or update account](#) by February 28, 2018 (3:59 p.m. CST)
- Letter of Interest Submission Deadline – March 7, 2018 (11:59 p.m. CST)
- Notification of Invitation to Submit Full Proposal – early April 2018
- Full Proposal Submission Deadline – approximately four weeks after notification
- Notification of Grantee Selection – early June 2018
- Grant Start Date – July 1, 2018

## **Background**

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We believe mental health is not solely an individual responsibility, but also a product of community conditions, and the potential for change is greater when we focus our efforts on diverse, historically excluded or underserved populations. By working together, we can positively influence individuals' well-being, and change the patterns of mental illness across Texas.

Nationwide, there is growing momentum to address health disparities and inequities, and a number of philanthropic efforts to improve health outcomes in communities. With this project, we join these efforts by partnering with rural communities as they work with diverse and historically excluded groups, facilitate courageous conversations, and implement improvements to support resilience, mental health and well-being.

The current political and cultural climate our country is experiencing poses both challenges and opportunities to address longstanding cultural, social and

economic inequities. As our population evolves to be more ethnically diverse, we must address mental health needs in ways that recognize and are sensitive to individual cultural experiences. For example, there are groups of people in Texas who experience higher rates of mental health challenges as a result of community conditions that influence their health and well-being. These conditions include social, environmental and economic factors, often stemming from structural differences in power and resources. The root causes of these differences include racism, sexism, classism, and other institutional and historic ways resources, opportunity and power are distributed. Further, misperceptions persist about associations between mental health and violence. Opportunities exist to address these stigmas in community settings. [Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(2017\)](#)

## Definitions and Resources

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**Collaborative:** “Collaboration is a process of participation through which people, groups, and organizations work together to achieve desired results. Collaborations accomplish a shared vision, achieve positive outcomes for the audiences they serve, and build an interdependent system to address issues and opportunities.” A collaborative is a group that comes together “to share vision, mission, power, resources and goals” to “jointly plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals” for collective impact. [Learn more](#)

**Mental Health and Well-Being:** Mental health, as defined by the World Health Organization, is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” We believe the concepts of mental health and well-being should be promoted beyond the walls of health clinics and integrated into everyday life. Community members, leaders and professionals—from teachers and preachers, to police officers and judges—should understand the importance of well-being and the factors that influence it, and its relationship to resilience. [Learn more](#)

**Rural community:** For the purposes of this project, the foundation defines rural as counties of 250,000 people or less, with a preference for smaller communities. Multiple counties who share an interest in building a resilient, mentally healthy and well community may collaborate as long as each county in the collaboration has 250,000 people or less.

View [additional definitions and resources](#) related to:

- Collective impact
- Community-Based Participatory Research
- Diversity
- Equity versus equality
- Historically excluded or underserved populations
- Health disparities
- Health equity

- Relationship between health equity and health disparities
- House Bill 13 (85th Texas Legislative Session, 2017)
- Inclusion
- Integrated health care
- Mental/behavioral health disparities
- Population health
- Population mental health
- Power and resources
- Resilience
- Social determinants of health
- Social determinants of mental health
- Stakeholders
- Wellness

## **Questions and Answers**

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The foundation does not accept phone inquiries about grant projects. Those who are interested in applying are invited to attend an optional teleconference\* on February 15, 2018, and are encouraged to check the [grant opportunity webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Questions may be submitted to [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu) (we will respond within two business days), however we ask that you review the [Questions and Answers resource](#) before reaching out. Responses to questions addressed via email and during the teleconference that are relevant to all applicants will be posted on the Question and Answer page by February 19, 2018 (and on a rolling basis thereafter).

### **\*About the Teleconference**

The foundation will host a teleconference for applicants on February 15, 2018 (10:00 – 11:30 a.m. CST). Participation is not required, but is highly recommended. Registration is required to access the teleconference. Please [register](#) by February 12, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Registrants may submit questions to be addressed during the teleconference by emailing [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu) by February 12, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

## **Eligibility and Submitting a Letter of Interest**

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### **Who Should Apply**

Nonprofit organizations, governmental entities, and institutions of higher education in Texas are eligible to submit a letter of interest. Applicants must be Texas-based and have offices, chapters or affiliates in rural Texas. Examples of eligible organizations include nonprofit social service organizations; nonprofit mental health and consumer advocacy organizations; faith-based organizations; colleges and universities; research-based organizations; and state, regional and local government agencies.

Letters submitted as a collaborative between multiple entities are encouraged. The lead applicant must be based in rural Texas and the role of each entity must be clearly defined. Applicants do not need to be a fully formed collaborative at the time of application, however, letters of support from potential partners are required. Local mental health authorities may be involved in the collaborative but should not be the lead organization.

Applicants must demonstrate organizational capacity to manage a grant award of up to \$400,000 over a three-year period, or partner with a fiscal agent to apply and manage the budgetary responsibilities and requirements.

### **How to Submit a Letter of Interest**

*Letters of interest must be submitted via [Fluxx](#), the foundation's online grant management system, by March 7, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. CST.*

Fluxx registration is required for organizations without an existing account by February 28, 2018 at 3:59 p.m. CST. To create a new account, visit <https://hogg.fluxx.io> and click "Create an account now" at the bottom right of the Fluxx welcome page. If you have a username, but have forgotten the password, click "Reset or create password" on the left side of the Fluxx welcome page. Once application materials are submitted through Fluxx, you will receive an automated email confirmation, or an alert if materials failed to upload. If your application is incomplete, you are expected to complete submission immediately.

Need help? For step-by-step instructions, check out the [Fluxx How-To Guide](#). For technical assistance with the online submission process, contact Grants Management at (512) 475-7089 or [hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu).

### **Review and Selection**

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Foundation staff will use a rating system to evaluate the merits of letters of interest and identify a subset of applicants to invite to submit full proposals. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be notified in early April. Upon notification, selected applicants will have approximately four weeks to submit their full proposal. Up to five grantees will be selected and all applicants will be notified in early June 2018.

Factors used to evaluate letters of interest include:

- **Community Need and Demographics:** Description of the community and it's needs, including: 1) population or audience who will benefit from this grant, including race and ethnicity; 2) socio-economic status, 3) geographic area (e.g., city, zip codes, neighborhoods, etc.), 4) needs, challenges and opportunities to be addressed in this project, 5) data sources for relevant facts and information that support the need and demographics.

- **Project Goals:** Description of the main purpose of your project, including: 1) goals of the project and 2) strategies or methods that will be used to achieve the goals.
- **Project Description and Activities:** Description of how you intend to accomplish the goals of the project, including: 1) activities (type and frequency) to be conducted during the grant term, 2) how the activities will advance the strategies and goals, 3) key potential partners and individuals responsible for carrying out activities.
- **Background and Ability to Complete Project Goals:** Description of your mission and vision and how they align with the goals of the project, including: 1) interest in or experience with mental health, 2) internal support for the project, including leadership, 3) history of relevant programs and accomplishments, 4) relevant community involvement, 5) history of population served or impacted.