Texas Communities Count

Questions and Answers from Potential Applicants

Below is a summary of questions we have received via email or during the teleconference from potential applicants. Please review our answers below and email hogg-grants@austin.utexas.edu if there are remaining questions you have.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS:

The review criteria include designation as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). Since so many counties are on the HPSA list, what is the foundation looking for in its review? There are several 'designation' types.

Yes, that is correct. 93 percent of the 254 counties in Texas are designated health professional shortage areas. The foundation arrived at that number by analyzing data from Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that included data with medical care and mental health professional shortages. A full list of counties in Texas who are designated HPSAs can be found here.

Applicants must be designated a HPSA to apply. Therefore, HPSA designation will be considered an eligibility criterion for the county in which the applicant will focus its "get-out-the-count (GOTC)" efforts.

Proposals will be rated based on priorities informed by Census survey return rates for hard-to-count populations, communities, and geographical regions as well as rankings from the Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings indicating the health of your county.

How much weight will be given to the overall county health outcomes ratings in the foundation's review factors?

The foundation will prioritize funding to strong applications from the hardest to count (HTC) communities in Texas (as determined by the HTC 2020 map and Census survey return rates for the focus populations proposed) as well as the lowest county health rankings as determined by the RWJ County Health Rankings for Texas.

Will the number of people living in the proposed focus area (i.e. community, city, county, region) be taken into consideration for review?

No, the review committee will not be making decisions based on population numbers. It will use information from the U.S. Census Bureau about the survey return rate for the HTC population proposed as well as the Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings.

Can a grantee host an event where people fill out the survey as part of the event?

Yes, that is an excellent strategy for "getting-out-the-count (GOTC)."

It is not in the review criteria, but would having local matching funds as leverage help an applicant?

It is not a requirement to have any matching funds or additional funding sources to apply for this grant initiative.

<u>**STATEWIDE VS. REGIONAL VS. LOCAL PROPOSALS:**</u>

Please clarify what level of coordination and reach might be considered 'statewide'."

Texas is a big state with a variety of diverse populations and groups. Statewide coordination is the effort to increase collaboration and build partnerships across sectors to increase participation. Statewide coordination efforts could include activities such as providing capacity building opportunities, technical assistance, coordination of a learning community, development of communication materials, or sharing of key data and information.

If an organization's geographic reach covers a large area but not the entire state, should it submit a proposal for a local GOTC effort or for a statewide coordination grant?

We have revised our application options to allow applicants to designate themselves as a regional grant applicant. Organizations with a multi-county reach are encouraged to submit a regional grant application proposal that could range from $50,000 - $125,000.

Are there different expectations for statewide and local grantees? For example: Would the statewide grantee serve more in an advisory, training, and support role as opposed to local grantees, who would be dealing directly with the HTC population?

Yes, that is correct. The foundation envisions local grantees implementing GOTC activities while the statewide coordinator grantee is responsible for high level coordination of local grantee efforts, capacity building, technical assistance and training, and promoting peer-to-peer shared learning platforms.

If an organization is a statewide trade association with dozens of member organizations across Texas, could it provide pass-through funding to those organizations while the main organization works as a facilitator and implementer of grant funds? In this case, the trade association would work to convene the organizations, share best practices, and build capacity, while the member organizations would be doing the on-the-ground outreach.

In this case, it might be best to apply for a statewide coordination grant focusing on sharing best practices, building capacity, and supporting convenings. Statewide coordinating grantees can serve as the fiscal agents and can disperse funding as they see fit once it is approved by the foundation. The applicant should outline how it plans on using funding in the budget template. If "on-the-ground" outreach will be focused on community members outside of the trade association network, then the applicant could also consider applying for local grant funds to do that work. However, if outreach efforts are specific to members of your trade association network, we would recommend a statewide coordination grant proposal.

Is there a cap for applying as a statewide effort?

Statewide coordination efforts are allowed to submit proposals that range from $50,000 – $125,000 per application.

What opportunities for partnership with the Hogg Foundation will there be after grants have been awarded? For example, would a fill-in-the-gap strategy to identify unaddressed areas and I locate organizations to work in areas where grantees do not reach be beneficial?

Efforts are already underway through the Texas Counts Campaign to coordinate statewide efforts and support cross-sector collaborations. The foundation will connect our grantees to the Texas Counts Campaign community to ensure that all partners have the opportunity to work together.

COLLABORATION:

Does more partners increase an applicant's chances of winning an award?

The foundation values proposals that show a strong partnership component.

If there are several departments who would be interested in applying, is there a requirement to either submit a consolidated application or separate applications?

There is no requirement for different departments within an organization to submit consolidated applications; however, each individual application must list a different primary point of contact and distinct HTC areas of focus.

If different departments within one organization are submitting separate proposals, should the organization have one central Fluxx account or create several based on the department applying?

Each department applying should create its own account. Each department will only have access to the applications/grants that are attached to them and not to the other departments within their primary organization.

How does the Census Bureau or the local Census Count Committees plan to coordinate efforts to avoid duplication? Will grantees be able to know which households have already completed their Census survey as they are completed online or received?

There are several ways that grantees will be able to coordinate efforts. A learning community will be established for all awarded grantees through the Hogg Foundation Texas Communities Count initiative. This community seeks to meet online monthly for open dialogue around best practices and challenges they are experiencing. The community will also have access to a general list-serve that they can email with questions, share knowledge, and support each other through the complete count timeline. The Hogg Foundation learning community also hopes to work closely with the Texas Counts Campaign, which is the organizing body for statewide 2020 Census efforts. Grant partners should also coordinate closely with their local complete count committees (CCCs) who will have access to the most up-to-date resources

and information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Census is working closely with CUNY's Center for Urban Research to provide data on hard-to-count populations. [Learn more](#).

Will duplication efforts be allowed with existing efforts?

The foundation encourages all individuals, groups, or organizations working on complete count efforts in Texas to collaborate and work together to efficiently and effectively ensure that all Texans are counted during the 2020 Census. Through the learning community and thoughtfulness around strategic partnerships, the foundation will work to connect individuals, groups, or organizations doing similar work and encourage them to collaborate efforts.

How will the Hogg Foundation collaborate and coordinate with State of Texas agencies, institutions of higher education, and other statewide or regional nonprofit organizations that will also be working to ensure that HTC populations are enumerated?

Efforts are already underway through the Texas Counts Campaign to coordinate statewide efforts and support cross-sector collaborations. The foundation will connect our grantees to the Texas Counts Campaign community to ensure that all partners have the opportunity to work together.

What types of partnerships are best (i.e. type of organizations)?

The best partners are those whose goals align. Each community will be different in what partners will be the most fruitful to leverage and the foundation believes in the expertise of those in local communities to determine who those might be. An [asset mapping process](#) might be beneficial to help an organization identify potential partnerships. The foundation anticipates that local business, nonprofits or service providers, faith-based organizations, city and/or county governmental agencies, schools or academic institutions, libraries, or health care systems, etc., are some examples of community partners that would be interested in being involved in complete count efforts.

According to the RFP, there will be more than one statewide grant awarded by the Hogg Foundation. How will the work of multiple statewide organizations funded by the Hogg Foundation be managed to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that challenges in counting all HTC populations are adequately addressed?

Efforts are already underway through the Texas Counts Campaign to coordinate statewide efforts and support cross-sector collaborations. The foundation will connect our grantees to the Texas Counts Campaign community to ensure that all partners have the opportunity to work together and ensure that efforts are not duplicated.

It is likely that HTC persons will fall into several of the HTC categories. For example, a non-English-speaking person could be an ethnic minority who is undocumented, living in nontraditional housing, has a low income, and is LGBTQ. How will grantees, both local and statewide, ensure that some people are not contacted multiple times?

Efforts are already underway through the Texas Counts Campaign to coordinate statewide efforts and support cross-sector collaborations. The foundation will connect our grantees to the Texas Counts Campaign community to ensure that all partners have the opportunity to work together and ensure that efforts are not duplicated. At the same time, research shows

that people often need to be contacted three times before they actually take the survey, so contacting HTC populations multiple times by different groups isn't necessarily harmful.

If a person in an HTC population indicates that he/she/it has completed the census survey, how will that be verified without being intrusive or making it appear that the interviewer does not believe the person?

Through the learning community created to support grant partners, the foundation will host a "Get-Out-The-Count (GOTC) Basics" webinar early in the grant term. At that time, a variety of resources will be shared with grantees including how to find the most up-to-date data on survey return rates in order to inform outreach efforts.

COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE (CC) COLLABORATION:

If applying as a statewide grantee, will the organization be required to join all Complete Count Committees (CCCs) in the areas the organization is coordinating?

Grant partners will know the best way to execute the goals of the grant initiative. Knowing what is happening "on-the-ground" in the communities a statewide coordinator is working to support could be very helpful, but the foundation understands that if an organization seeks to support the whole state, involvement in 200+ CCCs would take up a lot of time. The foundation feels that a best faith effort should be made to coordinate and support local CCCs.

Does an organization need to be a Complete County Committee (CCC) in order to apply?

An organization does not need to be a CCC in order to be eligible for this grant initiative. Coordinating with local CCCs and ensuring collaborative efforts is what is most important.

TIMELINE:

When can an applicant begin assisting individuals and families to complete their survey? Will the applicant have to wait until the official Census date— April 1st, 2020?

Grant activities using grant funds must start after the grant term begins, which is December 1, 2019. A statement of agreement (SOA) will need to be signed by both parties (the foundation and the grant partner) before the grant begins. Outreach activities can begin once those requirements are met.

CENSUS JOBS COORDINATION:

Will statewide grantees be required to encourage local community members in all areas served by their statewide grant to apply for temporary jobs through the US Census Bureau to assist with the 2020 US Census Count?

As outlined in the RFP, the foundation is asking grantees to encourage local community members to apply for temporary jobs through the U.S. Census Bureau to assist with the 2020 U.S. Census count (if positions are available in the applicant's community). The foundation believes local citizen participation will result in an increased census count as opposed to no

local citizen participation or census efforts implemented by people outside the local community.

EVALUATION/ MEASUREMENT / ASSESSMENT:

How specific do the application's goals have to be? For example, should the application include a number of individuals or families that it aims to reach? Should it specify how the applicant plans to measure or assess if these have been achieved?

The applicant should propose goals that it believes are accurate and feasible. Having a goal for the number of individuals or families that it aims to reach can be a helpful way to operationalize activities and planning, but it is not required. A strong application would take into consideration the role that data can play in informing the most strategic outreach practices and maximizing effectiveness, but it is not required that such goals be planned out in detail at the time of application. A narrative report will be required at the end of the grant term outlining what the applicant felt was successful and what could be improved upon in the future.

ELIGIBILITY:

Are organizations with different IRS determinations, e.g., 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(9) eligible to apply?

The Hogg Foundation endowment funds cannot be used to support lobbying activities/efforts. The foundation highly encourages collaborative approaches to this project and recommends that organizations without a 501(c)(3) designation partner with a 501(c)(3)-designated organization, a government agency, or an academic institution to serve as the fiscal agent for the grant application. This will ensure that grant funding does not support political/lobbying efforts.

If an organization was tax exempt but is now in the process of getting an IRS renewal, can it still apply for the grant?

If an organization's 501(c)(3) status is not current at the time of application submission, that organization is ineligible to apply.

Are local governments eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?

Yes, local governments (city, county and state) are eligible to apply.

If there are several county departments who would be interested in applying, is there a requirement to either submit a consolidated application or separate applications?

No, in this case there is no requirement that applicants submit a consolidated application; however, each individual application must list a different primary point of contact and distinct HTC areas of focus.

Can an applicant use a fiscal sponsor to apply for this grant?

Yes, if the 501(c)(3) status is not current at the time of application submission, the applicant will need to partner with an entity with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status who can serve as the fiscal agent.

Can an applicant apply if it submits two applications for statewide coordination grants that cover two different geographic areas? For example, one application would cover five counties on the Texas Mexico Border and another application would include staff to cover an additional seven rural counties.

In cases like this, an applicant might be better off applying for multiple regional grants. The application options have been revised to allow applicants to designate themselves as a regional grant applicant. Organizations with a multi-county reach are encouraged to submit a regional grant application proposal that could range from $50,000 - $125,000.

<u>**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:**</u>

If the City of Irving Complete Count Committee wishes to apply, would we need a letter of approval from our Mayor?

Yes, that is correct.

If an applicant wished to, for example, run a poster competition for school students (as a means of educating the children and their parents), would it need letters of approval from the superintendents of all the participating school districts, or would the mayor's letter of approval suffice to meet grant submittal requirements?

If strategies and activities are solely focused on activities within school districts, then letters of approvals from key decision-makers (principals or superintendents) would be most helpful for reviewers to understand that the applicant has support for the implementation of its plans.

Sample Letter of Approvals can be located in the Resources for Grantseekers and Grantees webpage http://hogg.utexas.edu/funding-opportunities/grantseeker-resources. Strong applications often include letters of support from partners.

Does the foundation suggest having letters of support or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) from collaborative partners included in the application?

Applicants are not required to submit any letters of support or MOUs in their application materials. Collaborative approaches are an important vehicle to successful get-out-the-count (GOTC) efforts and the review committee will be rating proposals based on their proposed plans for collaboration. If an applicant has collaborative partners who would like to submit a letter of support or has already established MOUs, the review committee would be happy to review them.

The fiscal documents to be submitted relate mostly to nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organizations. What documents are you looking for from a city that applies?

Government agencies may submit a comprehensive annual financial report, adopted annual budget, and a Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption certificate as required fiscal documents.

Are any specific items or statements required to be included within the Letter of Approval, such as final budget amount, project name, etc., or can it be a more general statement indicating approval of the application to be submitted?

The letter of approval should be on the applicant's letterhead and should state that as lead (or authorized signatory) of the entity, they are in support of their named entity submitting a proposal for this funding opportunity, how this project aligns with the mission and vision of the applicant and of the foundation, and a statement that if awarded, the applicant intends to partner with the foundation in this important effort.

Sample Letter of Approvals can be located in the Resources for Grantseekers and Grantees webpage http://hogg.utexas.edu/funding-opportunities/grantseeker-resources.

FUNDING:

If several proposals are consolidated, does the per-proposal maximum remain $75,000?

Yes, proposals that focus on local GOTC efforts are limited to a budget proposal that would not exceed $75,000. Regional or statewide proposals are limited to a budget proposal that would not exceed $125,000.

Are the grant funds paid in advance or are they reimbursement-based?

One hundred percent of award funds will be dispersed by the University of Texas within 30 days of receipt of a fully executed statement of agreement.

Can grant funds be used to reimburse city coffers for money previously spent on outreach materials?

The foundation can only fund activities that take place or materials that are created **after** a signed statement of agreement is in place.

Are there any budget guidelines that you could be shared with applicants?

Budget guidelines for this initiative can be found in the RFP (http://hogg.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Texas-Communities-Count-RFP.pdf), as well as in the application budget template via our online grants management system. Applicants will need to register with the system at https://hogg.fluxx.io in order to access it.

Has the foundation determined how many grants will be issued?

No, the review committee will be making selections based on the quality of the proposals received, the focus populations identified, and the strategies/activities that will be used to support a complete count.

The RFP states 10 percent of funding is included for overhead. What does overhead cover?

The foundation defines overhead (often referred to as indirect costs or administrative expenses) as normal business costs incurred by a grant recipient that benefits more than one cost objective. Examples of what overhead can be used for: rent, utilities, accounting costs,

general office equipment, etc. The foundation does not require itemized expense reporting or receipts for overhead.

If the primary grantee is a 501(c)(3), could that organization disburse funds to other organizations that are 501(c)(4)s?

A 501(c)(3) may serve as a fiscal agent. Regarding disbursement of funds to 501(c)(4) partner organizations, this is permissible as long as the 501(c)(4) partner organizations are using the funds to support GOTC efforts as referenced in the RFP. Use of foundation funds for lobbying or political action/advocacy is not permissible.