



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
CAPACITY BUILDING OF GRASSROOTS, BLACK- AND BROWN-LED ORGANIZATIONS
December 2, 2020

You are invited to submit a proposal for *CAPACITY BUILDING OF GRASSROOTS, BLACK- AND BROWN-LED ORGANIZATIONS*. We expect that the project will begin around February 2021 and be completed by December 2021. We anticipate that this work will not exceed \$50K.

I. Need

Richmond Memorial Health Foundation (RMHF) and the members of the Grassroots Capacity-Building Cohort (“Cohort”) are seeking a consultant to lead a community of practice within RMHF focused specifically on capacity building of grassroots, Black- and Brown-led organizations. The selected consultant will perform the following:

- Design and facilitate a community of practice with seven, Black- and Brown-led organizations seeking growth in capacity, scale, and overall sustainability
- Assess and evaluate where the gaps and barriers exist for Cohort members as they seek to expand their capacity and sustainability
- Identify opportunities and resources for Cohort members that support their growth in capacity and sustainability
- Provide recommendations to RMHF that reflect the findings and observations of the community of practice

The ideal consultant is someone with direct experience engaging smaller capacity, grassroots organizations within communities of practice. This consultant is highly analytical, inquisitive, and capable of weaving together a range of needs, perspectives, and experiences. Experience advancing health and racial equity, and centering the voice of historically marginalized, disenfranchised groups is highly preferable.

II. Goal

Advance the capacity and long-term effectiveness of Black- and Brown-led grassroots organizations working to create a healthier, more equitable Richmond region.



III. Purpose

In June 2020, the Chair of the Board of Trustees at RMHF, Dr. Deborah L. Ulmer, and the President and CEO of RMHF, Dr. Mark Constantine, published a [note](#) on behalf of the Board and staff at RMHF responding to the killing of George Floyd. The note acknowledged the pervasiveness of systemic and structural racism in our society, affirmed the dignity and value of Black and Brown lives, and articulated the Foundation’s commitment to advancing health and racial equity in this moment and in the future. Specifically, the Trustees at RMHF made a commitment to: *building the capacity of grassroots organizations and organizations led by people of color.*

IV. Background

In [2016](#), the Trustees of RMHF approved a new mission for the Foundation, expressing a commitment to “fostering an equitable and healthy Richmond region.” In the subsequent months and years, the Trustees and staff have embarked on a collective journey seeking to understand the Foundation’s role of living into that mission. This journey included assessing the Foundation’s role in addressing the social determinants of health, the means in which the Foundation would engage the community, and the overall need to address equity in the region. In an effort to engage community partners on what a potential equity agenda could look like for the Foundation, the Trustees launched an [Equity + Health Fellowship](#) in late 2016. Over the next year, 18 individuals from throughout the region met and mapped out goals and recommendations for the RMHF Trustees to consider as they sought to lean deeper into the Foundation’s mission. One of the goals expressed by the Fellows called for “opening up decision-making power,” with a recommendation to “develop and support a cohort of grassroots leaders to promote health equity.”

The Trustees seized on that recommendation, and in May 2018, the second class of Equity + Health Fellows kicked off. The 2nd [Equity + Health Fellowship](#) brought together 12 grassroots and community leaders from throughout Richmond to identify priorities for the Foundation to consider in achieving greater health and racial equity in the built environment, along with recommendations on how the Foundation could advance grassroots leaders in building a healthier, more equitable Richmond region. In spring 2019, the Fellows presented their final report to the Trustees and staff of RMHF, naming specific recommendations for the Board to consider for increased support of non-profits, individual leaders, and broader community-led efforts. Grounding the Fellows’ recommendations was a question posed to the Trustees and staff of RMHF: *What would it look like for the funding community to use its power and influence more intentionally to advance grassroots leaders working toward these aims and others?*

Following the commitment of the Trustees to explicitly invest in the capacity and organizational growth of Black- and Brown-led grassroots organizations, the program staff of RMHF met over the summer of 2020 with the goal of understanding how RMHF



interpreted and defined capacity building, how internal practices of RMHF contribute towards or inhibit effective implementation of capacity-building efforts, and ultimately, what a co-learning initiative with Black- and Brown-led grassroots organizations would look like for the Foundation. Ms. Gladys Washington, retired Deputy Director at the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, led and facilitated the RMHF program team through this process, assisting the Foundation to refine its definition of [capacity building](#) and helping to shape the learning questions we would seek to answer during this initiative.

V. Overview of Capacity-Building Initiative

The RMHF Trustees approved the Grassroots Capacity-Building initiative on September 25, 2020. This initiative is a year-long process focused on shared learning and strategy sessions. Each organization invited to participate will receive \$15,000 over the duration of the program. In deciding which organizations to invite to the initiative, the Board and staff of RMHF considered the following criteria:

- **Black- and Brown-led current and past grantee organizations (not individuals)**
- **Gender equity**
- **Black and Brown parity**
- **Evidence of accountability to communities being served**
- **Commitment to health equity using the lens of the social determinants of health**
- **Organizations with smaller staff/budgets**
- **Organizations not currently receiving multiple grants from RMHF**

Seven organizations were ultimately approved by the Trustees to invite into the initiative. The seven organizations currently participating in the cohort include:

1. **Education Connection Academy**, led by a Black woman with a commitment to address health equity with a focus on childhood obesity and behavioral health issues
2. **Nationz Foundation**, led by a Trans Black woman with a commitment to address health equity issues facing the Trans and LGBTQIA+ community
3. **Groundwork RVA**, led by a Black man with a commitment to address health equity issues through the lens of climate change and extreme heat
4. **Virginia Excels**, led by a Black man with a commitment to address health equity through the lens of educational equity
5. **Latinos in Virginia Empowerment (LIVE) Center**, led by a Latina with a



commitment to address health equity focusing on domestic violence and intimate partner violence

6. **Waymakers Foundation**, led by a Latina with a commitment to address health equity focusing on food insecurity and access issues
7. **Faces of HOPE**, led by a Black woman with a commitment to address health equity focusing on childhood obesity

VI. **Community of Practice Scope**

The Community of Practice process includes the seven members of the Grassroots Capacity-Building Cohort and program staff at RMHF. We anticipate the following outcomes within this Community of Practice: 1) Investigate and answer the [Learning Questions](#) approved by the RMHF Board of Trustees, 2) Identify and advance concrete opportunities for Cohort members that accelerate and sustain their work, 3) Advise RMHF on how its grantmaking policies and practices can be more accessible to and supportive of Black- and Brown-led organizations, and 4) Provide pragmatic guidance and direction on how philanthropy and social investors in Virginia can further support the capacity of Black- and Brown-led organizations.

Key activities include:

- Design and implement a Community of Practice process that prioritizes shared learning, strategy development, collective action, and systems change;
- Utilizing this [framework](#), engage each Cohort member to understand their current organizational health and capacity and provide an assessment of the findings directly to the cohort members. The findings of the assessment will not be shared by the consultant with RMHF;
- Utilizing the findings of current organizational health, provide an analysis of where the gaps exist and present to the seven Cohort members opportunities to address these gaps;
- Building upon the findings produced in the assessment of current organizational health, identify areas of overlap of Cohort members and opportunities for relationship building and collective action; and
- Elicit conversations and discussions around the [Learning Questions](#) and document findings in the final report to the Cohort and RMHF.

We anticipate the following deliverables:

- Six (6) Learning Sessions
- Seven (7) organizational assessments
- One-on-one check-ins with each Cohort member in between each Learning Session
- Monthly check-in with RMHF's staff lead
- Short reflection memos submitted to the Cohort and RMHF following each Cohort meeting (2 pages)
- A final report presenting the findings, evaluations, opportunities, recommendations, and testimonials of the Community of Practice (5-7 pages)
- Presentation of the final report to the RMHF Board of Trustees



VII. Selection Criteria

The members of the Grassroots Capacity-Building Cohort will review all submissions and provide a recommendation to the RMHF Board of Trustees. Submissions are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience engaging Black- and Brown-led grassroots organizations. Please provide examples.
- Demonstrated experience engaging and affirming LGBTQIA+ organizations. Please provide examples.
- Demonstrated experience developing communities of practice. Please provide examples.
- Demonstrated experience working to advance health and racial equity and representation for historically marginalized, disenfranchised groups. Please provide examples.
- Demonstrated experience examining why the non-profit and philanthropic sector has not traditionally engaged with and been supportive of Black- and Brown-led organizations. Please provide examples.
- Demonstrated experience working in Richmond, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and/or communities within the South. Please provide examples.

VIII. Submission Requirements

Please submit a proposal that includes the following:

- Experience creating learning cohorts and communities of practice;
- Overview of your firm and work samples highlighting your previous experience meeting the identified criteria;
- Demonstrated examples developing and managing communities of practice in a virtual setting;
- Detailed approach to meeting facilitation and engagement, specifically mechanisms for engaging in a virtual setting;
- A rationale behind your approach to advancing health and racial equity;
- Project budget and any expectations related to your role as consultant; and
- Three references.



Application and Selection Process Timeline

RFP Release	December 2, 2020
Application Deadline	December 21, 2020
Consultant Selected	January 2021
Contract Begins	February 2021

Contact Information

Please submit the final proposal to:

Michael Smith

Director for Community Investments and the Built Environment

msmith@rmhfoundation.org

***All questions regarding this opportunity shall be forwarded to Michael Smith.**