

Fellows Action Network—Network Support Request for Proposals

Summary of Opportunity: The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York seeks proposals from community-based organizations to provide network support to the Fellows Action Network. The successful proposal will offer a vision for cultivating and supporting an environment that facilitates communication, networking, resource sharing, and collaborative action by graduates and participants in the Health Leadership Fellows program.

I. Overview

The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York

The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York advocates for continuous improvement in health and health care for the people and communities of western and central New York. From its inception in 2003, the Foundation has focused its funding and initiatives on improving health outcomes for older adults and children ages zero to five who are impacted by poverty. In addition, the Foundation supports non-profit capacity building to strengthen organizations that work on behalf of these populations. The Foundation works strategically to advance priorities in each of these areas, and is currently working on a plan that will guide its work over the next several years.

The Foundation's funding areas include: the eight WNY counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming; and the eight CNY counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego and Tompkins. For more information on the Foundation, please visit our website www.hfwcnny.org.

The Health Leadership Fellows Program

The Foundation developed its Health Leadership Fellows Program with a long-range goal of developing a cadre of community leaders that understand and advance the goals of HFWCNY and community focused collaboration. The Fellows program enables individual leadership development while giving participants the opportunity to apply the core competencies necessary to improve health outcomes both within their organizations and across organizations.

The Fellows, who are selected based on demonstrated organizational leadership, serve in positions of influence within organizations that impact the health of older adults and children impacted by poverty. They represent a variety of relevant professional settings, including community-based organizations, government agencies, schools, rural health networks, federally qualified health centers, organizations serving older adults, and philanthropy.

Collaborative efforts by the Health Leadership Fellows address barriers to quality healthcare for children and older adults, and include work to advance trauma-informed care, transitions of care, and co-location of clinical services, to mention a few.

Beginning with Cohort 10, which will launch in 2020, the stated goal of the Fellows program will transition to: *“To develop and strengthen a network of collaborative leaders within organizations and systems that serve young children impacted by poverty and vulnerable older adults.”* This change reflects a shift in emphasis from individual leaders to the overall network which has been created over years of sustained commitment to the program.

The Fellows Action Network

The Fellows Action Network (FAN) was created in 2007 to provide graduates of the Foundation’s Health Leadership Fellows program a mechanism for remaining connected and working together. Through FAN, Fellows build upon the work undertaken in the Fellows program, collaborate on new projects, participate in a continuous learning community and become active in other Foundation initiatives. Since its inception, FAN has grown from 99 members to 328, reflecting the Foundation’s continuing commitment to the Health Leadership Fellows program. As the number of Fellows grows, the need to provide a vehicle for collaboration becomes even more important.

Faced with a growing membership base, in 2017-18, FAN undertook a strategic planning process to assess its strengths and weaknesses and determine a path forward to strengthen the infrastructure of FAN and provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and participation to members. This process was guided by the FAN’s Strategic Direction Committee and included input from Fellows via the 2018 FAN survey.

The strategic process resulted in a reformulated FAN mission and vision:

FAN MISSION: A collaborative network of leaders strengthening individuals, organizations, and systems to improve health and health care.

FAN VISION: Our vision is for all communities to leverage resources and relationships to create lasting health solutions.

In addition, five organizational goals emerged from this process:

Goal ONE: Strengthen FAN Infrastructure: Increase organizational capacity to deliver high quality programming and service to FAN membership.

Goal TWO: Increase Fan Membership Engagement: Develop opportunities for FAN member promotion, engagement, self-organization, and leadership.

Goal THREE: Build and Enhance Collaborations: Build and enhance collaborations with aligned community partners in support of FAN’s mission and vision.

Goal FOUR: Actively Engage in Advocacy: Prepare for active advocacy activity in partnership with the Health Foundation.

Goal FIVE: Demonstrate the Value of FAN through Measurement: Develop mechanisms to effectively and efficiently measure the success of FAN and its members.

FAN members developed a strategic plan that outlines specific activities that will advance each goal. Identified activities reflect a continuing commitment to the practices the FAN has embraced since the beginning and the values of the Fellows—on going professional development, collaboration, member-defined programming, and using Results Based Accountability to identify strategies and measure impact. (The strategic plan is presented at the end of this proposal).

In addition to the strategic planning process, FAN and the Foundation conducted extensive outreach to FAN members in the second half of 2018. This included a survey distributed to all members and interviews conducted by Ginny Oehler (Fellows program designer), Diane Oyler (Fellows Cohort 4), and Stephanie Smith (Fellows Cohort 5). This outreach affirmed that Fellows value FAN and the assistance it provides in keeping Fellows connected. It points to a desire for more face to face networking opportunities, more local networking opportunities so that FAN members can connect in their own communities, enhanced information exchange through a newsletter and other vehicles, and more opportunities for Fellows to work together, share expertise, and impact the broader community.

II. Description of Need

The Foundation believes that FAN is an essential part of its community capacity building work and an extension of its investment in the Health Leadership Fellows program. A strong and effective FAN makes it easier for busy Fellows to remain connected and to work together to impact the community.

While FAN continues to place an emphasis on relying on Fellows to do most of the work of the FAN, support is needed to enable communication, facilitate collaboration, and assist in the coordination of programmatic offerings.

We seek proposals from organizations to continue current support activities and to cultivate further development of FAN over the next two years. Minimum support requirements include: publishing the weekly FAN newsletter; coordinating FAN governance efforts; working with FAN members to develop programming; maintaining a profile of FAN membership, activity, and impact; and providing on-going communication to Foundation leadership regarding the state of the network, activities of FAN, and notable collective impact achieved by Fellows. In addition, the supporting organization will work collaboratively with the Foundation to assess and address network needs and opportunities, identify common priorities, and cultivate engagement among FAN members. We will look to the selected organization to assist the Foundation with educating Fellows on its evolving strategic priorities, and develop opportunities to leverage the experience and expertise of Fellows in advancing those priorities.

III. Requirements

To be considered, organizations responding to this Request for Proposals must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a 501(c)3 community-based organization
- Must have at least one Fellow on staff in a leadership position
- Must have experience and capacity in social media and communications
- The organization must have experience participating in, cultivating, and/or supporting networks or community coalitions
- Must be willing and capable of supporting FAN across the 16 counties served by the Health Foundation

In addition to the criteria above, preference will be given to organizations that have more than one Fellow on staff who have been active in the FAN; those that have documented experience working collaboratively to achieve organizational goals; and those whose missions are in alignment with the goals and practices of the Fellows Action Network.

IV. Proposal requirements

Each proposal must provide sufficient information so that the Foundation can assess the organization's ability to fill the role of providing network support to the FAN. We are looking for organizations that are in alignment with the FAN's mission and vision and have experience supporting collaborative work.

Please provide the following information, which will be used to assess organizational fit:

1. Background information on the organization and Fellows on staff

- Description of the organization, its mission, and the role that networks and collaboration plays in advancing the goals of the organization.
- Names and roles of staff members who are graduates or current participants in the Health Leadership Fellows program.
- Description of how each Fellow has been involved in the FAN.

2. Description of organizational experience performing key supportive functions

- Describe the organization's experience with social media and communications, including publication of e-newsletters. Provide links to examples of your work.
- Describe the organization's experience coordinating collaborative activity involving several organizations working across multiple sectors.
- Describe the organization's experience in developing programming including educational events, trainings, webinars, and other activities.

- Describe the organization's experience tracking performance metrics, collecting and communicating stories of impact, and performing other evaluative activities.
- Describe the organization's experience in organizing and participating in advocacy efforts.
- Describe the organization's understanding of and experience with self-organizing from a network perspective.

In addition, we ask that all proposals address the following:

3. Describe how the organization will use personnel to support the FAN. Will there be a single staff member serving as coordinator, or will several staff members be involved? Please note that while at least one contributing staff member must be a Fellow, resources may be used for staff members who have not participated in the Fellows program. Please be specific and indicate staff names, whether they are Fellows, and the cohort in which they participated.
4. Describe how the organization would approach increasing communication among Fellows? How might you enhance the weekly newsletter? How might you approach making communication more interactive?
5. Describe how the organization will approach engaging Fellows across western and central New York. How might you encourage participation and self-organizing among Fellows, especially in locations outside of Buffalo and Syracuse?
6. Describe the role you see the organization playing in supporting the governance structure of the FAN. Currently the governance structure includes a steering committee, and committees for strategic direction and communications. In the past there has been a professional development committee and interest in forming an advocacy committee. Would you recommend changes to the governance structure? Please elaborate.
7. An overarching goal of the Fellows and the FAN is to encourage collaboration with the goal of improving health and well-being of western and central New Yorkers. How can FAN be a better vehicle for fostering collective action and making positive change in our communities?
8. How might the organization help meet the goals of the FAN over the next two years? This includes increasing and diversifying financial support for FAN, so that the support structure can grow over time. What opportunities would you leverage to help accomplish those goals?

V. Budget

The Foundation will provide the selected organization with a total of \$240,000 to support the FAN for 2 years (2020-2021). It is expected that \$120,000 will be budgeted for each of the two years. A minimum of \$45,000 must be earmarked per year for programming, not including communications. Personnel expenses should not exceed \$50,000 and Indirect expenses are capped at 10% of the total budget.

Applicants may include both Personnel and Non-Personnel expenses.

- a) **Personnel expenses** include staff time (including fringe) for planning meetings, coordinating with Fellows, organizing outreach efforts, and other activities included in applicant's plan of work. Currently, the consultant-coordinator provides approximately 40 hours of support per month.
- b) **Non-personnel costs:** Appropriate expenses include mileage, meeting space, stipends, communication-related costs, programming expenses, postage and supplies and operational costs.

Key Dates:

Application release date:	November 7, 2019
Application due date:	December 18, 2019
Deadline to submit questions:	November 15, 2019
FAQ document distributed to FAN members:	November 20, 2019
Review of applications:	December 19 through January 24, 2020
Anticipated award announcement date:	January 27, 2020
Anticipated contract start date:	No later than March 1, 2020.

Questions: Please submit questions to Diane Oyler at doyler@hfwcnyc.org

Questions will be reviewed by Foundation staff and answers will be provided in a Frequently Asked Questions document which will be distributed to all FAN members. See key dates above for deadlines.