



## Safety Net Fund: Fall 2022 Request for Proposals

HealthSpark Foundation invites applications for grant projects that will build a better safety net system in Montgomery County. This RFP reflects a shift away from the Innovation Fund and Design Grants, which were developed with the input of community partners and first implemented in 2019. However, much has changed and our grantmaking is changing with it.

HealthSpark Foundation is a private, independent foundation serving Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Our mission is to invest in nonprofit organizations, networks, and coalitions promoting a more just and healthy community. Learn more at [www.healthspark.org](http://www.healthspark.org).

Since 2017, our efforts have focused on building a more just and effective safety net through our 10-year Safety Net Initiative. HealthSpark seeks projects or requests for general operating support that reflect the vision, guiding principles, and goals that were originally developed with input from more than 200 Montgomery County community partners and service providers, and that are detailed in the [Safety Net Initiative Framework](#).

A snapshot of the Framework:

### Vision:

We envision a resilient and financially sustainable safety net that allows anyone in MontCo to access high quality, coordinated, equitable, and culturally appropriate services no matter who they are, what they need, or where they live.

We believe that a strong safety net benefits everyone, and Montgomery County's safety net system will thrive through a shared commitment to nourish and sustain it. Montgomery County's safety net will be: connected, respected, person-centered, equitable, and impactful.

### System Goals:

1. **Racial and social justice:** Build the safety net system's capacity for power-building<sup>1</sup> to advance racial and social justice.

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<sup>1</sup> We view power-building from a strengths-based lens. This means we recognize that communities have and utilize their inherent strengths (e.g., relationships, communal sharing, value on multiple backgrounds and perspectives, etc.) as a source of individual and community power. Power-building is the intentional effort to recognize, honor, amplify, and elevate these inherent capacities to effect positive change.

2. **Full and fair resources:** Increase funding and support for the safety net system, ensure the equitable use of resources, and support the well-being of safety net providers.
3. **Accessibility:** Improve accessibility of safety net services, including proximity, cultural competence, language access, and technology.
4. **Data:** Improve the use of data to inform safety net strategies and operations.
5. **Collaboration:** Encourage collaborations and connections among safety net providers, consumers, funders, and the community.
6. **Leadership:** Nurture effective safety net leadership.

This RFP focuses on opportunities to support organizations or specific projects that address one or more of the above six goals and embed any of the following:

- **A commitment to racial and social justice:** While the first goal is to build the safety net system's capacity to advance racial and social justice, the work is not limited to that one goal. A commitment to advancing racial and social justice should be reflected in every grant project submitted.
- **Link Organizational and System Capacity building:** HealthSpark encourages organizations to assess their capacity needs to improve the functioning of both the organization and its impact on or role within the safety net system.
- **Collaboration:** The pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of knowing where to seek help. Communities that invested in building sustainable partnerships fared much better than those that attempted to work in isolation. Systems change approach is typically enhanced through collaborations, and historically HealthSpark has required collaborations among at least two organizations. While it is not a requirement in this RFP, HealthSpark anticipates that successful applicants will show how their role, programs, services, and presence contributes to the strength of Montgomery County's safety net system. Collaborative proposals are still welcome.
- **Scaling and replication:** HealthSpark Foundation is interested in projects that can be replicated by others or scaled-up to make a broader impact.
- **Learning:** HealthSpark seeks to learn from every project and partner. HealthSpark will prioritize projects that have the potential to teach HealthSpark and other community partners about what we can do differently to improve Montgomery County's safety net services and outcomes, and even prevent the need for safety net services.

For more information on our approach to grantmaking, please visit [www.healthspark.org/grantmaking](http://www.healthspark.org/grantmaking).

This round of grants is funded with approximately \$400,000. HealthSpark anticipates:

- Awarding 10-12 grants with an average size of \$30,000 and a maximum size of \$50,000 covering a one-year period beginning January 1, 2023. Current grantees are eligible to apply to this RFP.
- Most grants will be awarded in the form of general operating support grants.
- Announcing award decisions by early December 2022.

Successful applicants will be able to clearly answer the following questions:

- **Goals:** Which of the six goal(s) will your project address and what are your expected outcomes?
- **Justice:** How will your commitment to racial and social justice show up in the proposal for grant support? What steps has your organization taken to build its capacity to integrate racial and social justice in its work?
- **Capacity building:** How will this proposed effort strengthen your organization and the safety net system over the long-term?
- **Systems:** How will your organization or project include a systems change approach? What systems improvements does it expect to achieve?
- **Collaborations:** How does your organization support and leverage collaborations and partnerships to improve your work and the safety net system?
- **Scaling:** Does the project have the potential to be scaled-up or replicated by others? If so, how?
- **Learning:** If funded, what do you expect to learn, and how will you share the learning with HealthSpark and other safety net system stakeholders?

HealthSpark Foundation is investing in racial equity/social justice training through a partnership with the three county nonprofit collaboratives that host the [Racial Equity Learning Community](#), and is not accepting applications to support organizational-specific racial equity/social justice trainings. Nonetheless, HealthSpark welcomes applications for projects that seek to implement strategies and interventions that will advance system racial equity opportunities (e.g., community engagement, changes in services to improve responsiveness and inclusion).

Further grant specifications:

- The projects must align with the current [Safety Net Initiative](#) and the priorities outlined above. Project ideas that were brainstormed by community partners are listed in the framework. Projects are not limited to those, but may provide your organization with ideas and HealthSpark staff is available to help explore and refine competitive ideas.
- HealthSpark anticipates awarding most grants in the form of general operating support. Still, applicants seeking project-specific support may include anticipated expenses and activities in their budget request. These expenses could include research, partner convenings, project planning, technical assistance, consumer engagement stipends, community engagement materials. Program and administrative costs may be included in the project provided they relate to the project itself (for example, Executive Director or other staff time associated with managing the project, and proportionate overhead).
- Applicants are encouraged to engage intended beneficiaries in meaningful ways and to describe how beneficiaries will be involved in planning, decision-making, project design, and evaluation activities.
- Projects must serve Montgomery County residents; applicants must have a 501(c)(3), or have a fiscal intermediary/sponsorship relationship, or be a religious organization, or part of Montgomery County government.

- Organizations that are not Montgomery County-based (i.e., statewide or national organizations) should clearly demonstrate their connections and work to Montgomery County, the relationships to organizations in Montgomery County, and the connection to and understanding of Montgomery County residents and their needs. Grants awarded to these regional, statewide, or national groups will be in the form of a restricted grant and grant funds must be used to support Montgomery County-based activities.
- HealthSpark frames its grantmaking work as a partnership between the foundation, the applicant organization, and the community. It seeks an open, transparent, and mutually supportive relationship where learning, creativity, exploration of new ideas and partnerships, and potentially new ideas can flourish.
- All grantees and their partners are expected to participate in up to four, group-learning convenings to share lessons learned. These meetings are scheduled in advance for 90 minutes, and most are anticipated to be virtual.
- All applicants and grantee partners are invited and strongly encouraged to respond to HealthSpark's Annual State of the Safety Net Survey. The next survey will be announced in Spring 2023. Survey participants need about 15 minutes to complete the survey and survey results are widely shared annually in May/June.

### **Applicant Information Session**

HealthSpark will host a virtual grant information session for interested applicants. The session is not mandatory, but participation is encouraged, especially for first time applicants. We also encourage you to get in touch to discuss your idea before applying.

**Thursday, September 8, 2022**

9:00 am- 10: 00 am

Virtual session

[Register for the information session](#)

*A recording of the session will be posted on our website on or around September 20, 2022.*

### **Proposal Submission**

Grants are submitted through the Foundation's grant portal, Foundant. Press [here](#) to apply.

Organizations that have not applied to HealthSpark Foundation before will need to set up their account in our system first (one account per organization, please). If you are unsure if your organization already has an account established, or need assistance with log in credentials, please email [info@healthspark.org](mailto:info@healthspark.org) or call us at 215-716-5400.

**The deadline to apply is Friday, October 28, 2022, by 5pm.**

HealthSpark's Grant Committee, comprised of staff, board and community volunteers, will review each proposal on November 16<sup>th</sup> and successful applicants can expect to receive an

electronic grant agreement that must be signed and returned to HealthSpark no later than December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. HealthSpark staff may contact applicants during the review process and will also be available to answer any questions or to offer future guidance to organizations that do not receive a grant award.