

# Kansas Advocates for Equity, Education and Health

## Request for Proposals – February 2021

Initiative Contact: Chan Brown, KHF Program Officer, [cbrown@khf.org](mailto:cbrown@khf.org)

### **What is the purpose of this initiative?**

All Kansas families should live in communities of opportunity, where good schools, healthy environments, safe homes, quality jobs and access health care, high-quality goods and services are the norm. We believe education, health care, and children being ready to learn, are critical pieces of creating and supporting communities of opportunity. This request for proposals (RFP) focuses on the systems impacting young children's health, early learning, and high-quality education, to shift those in ways that create more opportunities for school readiness and educational success for more Kansas children. In particular, this initiative will support work that benefits Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income families experiencing the greatest barriers.

We also recognize that the foundation for learning is the physical, mental and emotional health of the child and the family, with the building blocks being established before birth. Research has shown that when children are healthy and ready to learn before they enter kindergarten, it increases their chances of success once they enter the school system. We need to address the environment into which children are being born, particularly for children facing challenges, such as high poverty, chronic stress and lack of resources/supports, to increase their long-term odds for success.

**To this end, the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) and the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund (UMHMF) are partnering to engage three organizations to co-create and implement a shared advocacy agenda focused on children 0-8 that reduce barriers to academic success and improve educational outcomes.** Because no single policy can effectively increase equity in school readiness or educational outcomes, we want to work with these grantee organizations to advance a multi-prong agenda that recognizes the many issues and systems that impact children and families, including health access and high-quality early care. The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have presented an opportunity to examine the places in our educational system where inequities thrive so that we can challenge longstanding barriers for BIPOC children, families experiencing poverty and others. We believe that by engaging community voice and leadership and supporting grassroots organizations with technical expertise and strong intersectional partnerships, we can impact Kansas public policies in ways that reduce barriers to academic success, improve educational outcomes and positively impact health.

We anticipate funding three organizations who will each receive up to \$300,000 (\$100,000 annually). The grant period spans three years, beginning May 1, 2021 and ending April 30, 2024.

### **Who can apply to participate?**

KHF is interested in reaching organizations who have authentic connections to families with prenatal to age eight BIPOC children and those experiencing poverty to ensure these organizations have the opportunity to apply. Nonprofits who identify as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code can apply. Eligible applicants are tax-exempt organizations qualified under Sections 509(a)(1) or (a)(2) of the Code.

If your organization has relevant experience and expertise, but you question whether or how you should apply, please reach out to KHF Program Officer Chan Brown to discuss at [cbrown@khf.org](mailto:cbrown@khf.org).

### **What will the work look like?**

We are asking the three organizations funded through this initiative to engage in advocacy efforts that will result in policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes that address three fundamental questions:

- 1- How can we support BIPOC families in ways that create environments for young children that result in increased social, emotional and academic preparedness for entering school?
- 2- How can we help our early care and education providers and school districts reimagine their work so that more birth to eight age children are reaching their educational potential?
- 3- How can we support access to healthcare and support services for families so children have the healthiest start in life possible?

The grantees selected will support PSE improvements to answer the above questions by:

- Creating more supportive environments that reduce barriers and prepare all Kansas children for a successful learning experience (i.e., increasing school readiness; access to mental health providers in school); and/or
- Aiding Kansas schools and early care and education providers in designing and delivering equitable education opportunities for children and caregivers using a whole child, two-generation approach to improve educational outcomes (supporting schools in their efforts to increase greater achievement for students of culturally and racially diverse backgrounds). Click here to see how we define a two-generation approach: <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/two-generation/what-is-2gen/> .

Both approaches are intended to lead to PSE changes resulting in more students experiencing success in the classroom.

We are asking selected grantees to dedicate one staff member (or the equivalent of 1.0 FTE) to the work of this initiative; this person will serve as the primary point of contact. The staff member will be required to attend all meetings related to the initiative, such as learning community activities, grantee calls to share lessons learned and emerging issues and trainings to build advocacy capacity.

In addition to the grant award, KHF and UMHMF will work with grantees (individually and as a cohort) to provide technical assistance to build the organization's capacity and support policy and programmatic efforts. Technical assistance (TA) will include skill building in these areas:

- Coalition management
- Health equity, bias, social justice
- Community engagement
- Strategic planning or community needs assessments
- Utilizing and applying data to inform policy changes
- Policy development and research
- Communications
- Grassroots organizing/civic engagement, including virtual organizing
- Campaign development
- Coaching around the centering of community voice
- Others identified by grantee cohorts

While it is essential that applicants gather input from those they serve about what specific policies would be most impactful, KHF's and UMHMF's initial data collection efforts have highlighted four key areas as most important to making progress on increasing educational equity, as identified by parents and family members, nonprofits, businesses and education representatives:

- **Family/Community Impact Drivers:** Policies focused on a two-generational support system, to improve the socio-economic, wealth and health status of families so children have a greater chance of growing up in families equipped to provide for their financial, physical, emotional and educational needs.
  - Supporting organizations and promoting policies that connect low-income Kansans to inclusive economies, job training and employment with family-sustaining wages and advancement opportunities.
  - Increasing access to the internet and to devices, and improving digital technology literacy, so families have the tools they need to access services and resources. Examples could include expanding efforts and funding to assist Kansans to participate in technology programs and in using the technology.
- **Social Emotional Learning:** Behavioral Health and Wellness Policies focused on promoting protective factors with support networks for both children and parents and improving trauma-informed care.
  - Expanding home visiting programs by piloting promising practices, such as, incorporating pediatric navigators/care coordinators/community health workers (to help ensure children and mothers get treatment and services by providing screening and linkages to connect health providers and human services). Examples could include incorporating pediatric navigators/care coordinators/community health workers into the care team.
  - Investing in strategies that address behavioral and mental health of children and adult care givers and expand school mental health services. For example, including caregivers in wellness checks on mental health; incorporating social determinants of health screening or trauma screening into well visits.
- **Healthy Families:** Policies focused on increased capacity of state/local governments and other organizations to build and deliver high-quality systems of care.
  - Maximizing use of existing benefits and expanding Medicaid supports for children 0-5 -- for example, by paying for parenting programs to support social-emotional-learning (SEL), including screening and home-visiting/parent supports, holistic care coordination, maternal depression screenings, referral to treatment/interventions, etc.
  - Reducing barriers to participate in public benefit programs, such as, Medicaid, public health and social services by supporting greater consumer assistance, outreach and enrollment efforts, and extending post-partum coverage for new mothers to 12 months for eligible programs.
- **Early Childhood Education (with supports from prenatal - age 8):** Policies designed to reimagine early care and educational experiences with transitions to Pre-K through age eight, engaging children in learning experiences that foster well-being, language/literacy and healthy development.
  - Improving the quality, affordability and access to early childcare and education programs for low-income families. For example, expanding eligibility and reimbursement of childcare subsidies.
  - Addressing workforce development to better recruit, retain and advance a diverse workforce that is prepared and qualified to meet the needs of young children and families.

The above strategies are offered as general guidance. Applicants are required to articulate their vision for crafting a policy agenda and identifying targeted strategies based on centering the voices of students, families and other stakeholders closest to the issues the community identifies.

### **Application Process**

Proposals must be submitted online through the KHF Grant Portal, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#). If you have applied for a grant from KHF in 2018 or after, you should already have a user account. If you do not have an existing account, follow the instructions found in the portal to create one (if you have any issues,

please contact Gina Hess, KHF grants associate, at [ghess@khf.org](mailto:ghess@khf.org) for help). Once you are logged in, click on “Open Grant Opportunities” to start an application for this initiative.

After starting an application, you can save and come back to it by clicking on the “Applications” tab, which is where you will find all in-progress or previously submitted applications.

#### **How can I learn more about this initiative?**

- We invite you to attend an informational webinar, on **Tuesday February 9, 2021 2:00 PM CST**, which will provide an opportunity to learn more and ask questions about this initiative and the application process. It will also be recorded and posted to KHF’s RFP webpage for viewing after the event. **To participate in the webinar, please RSVP by providing the name(s), organization/affiliation, and email(s) of those who will attend to Candace Malone at [cmalone@khf.org](mailto:cmalone@khf.org).** We encourage all prospective applicants to attend the webinar; however, attendance is not required to apply or be considered for funding. Applicants will be sent the Zoom link upon receipt of RSVP.
- Applicants will find a webpage dedicated to information about this RFP at <http://kansashealth.org/grant-opportunities/AEEH/>. In addition to basic details about the RFP, this site will also include the recorded informational webinar once available, links to required attachments, a list of *Frequently Asked Questions* about the initiative and other tools we hope will be helpful as applicants prepare their proposal.

#### **What are the meeting and reporting expectations?**

At the beginning of the grant term, grantees will be expected to participate in a virtual, two-day cohort retreat. Two staff members from each grantee organization are expected to attend. Applicants should plan for this time as sessions will be spread over two days.

Every six months, grantees will describe the activities in which they are engaged to make progress toward their proposed advocacy efforts. In addition, applicants should plan and budget for one in-person meeting per year to be held in Wichita in addition to the virtual cohort retreat at the beginning of the grant term (In person meetings in years two and three will depend on the COVID-19 health and safety recommendations at that time and may be virtual. If this is the case, budgeted travel funds may be designated for another category). Grantees will be asked to submit grant and financial status reports according to the schedule outlined in the grant agreement. Grantees will also be asked to participate in evaluation activities as requested by KHF and UMHMF.

#### **What kind of information is being requested in the online proposal?**

Applicants will be asked to provide the following information either through the online application form or as an attachment on the appropriate tab:

- Organization information (name, address, phone, email, etc.)
  - Contact information for:
  - Person authorized to sign the grant agreement
  - Person responsible for completing the proposal
- Project title and grant term
- Applicant organization’s mission and how this proposal is related to that mission. (Please include a description of the organization’s existing efforts in championing policies and issues that impact families and children and current relationships with other active stakeholder/coalitions as well as data being tracked related the organization’s relevant key outcomes.)
- Briefly, when you think about educational outcomes for Kansas children, what concerns you the most?
- How did the events that occurred in 2020 (the COVID-19 pandemic, recession, election results and racial justice movements) shape your organization’s thinking regarding addressing the root cause of inequitable outcomes for Kansas students and families? What new policy approaches do you consider to be important

that may not have been considered previously?

- What equity issue area related to educational outcomes do you intend to advance through this initiative when considering the pre-natal to age eight phases in a child's life? How will it increase long-term educational equity? Please include in your answer a description of the communities prioritized by your organization's efforts and provide the data/sources regarding the disparities they face. Please also include your connection/relationship to those communities as well as how you propose implementing a two-generation approach (parents/caregivers and children).
- What bold policies would your organization promote to reduce education gaps for BIPOC children and those experiencing the greatest barriers to academic success? What policies would you envision that would accomplish the following?
  - Support BIPOC families and those experiencing the greatest barriers in ways that create environments for young children that result in increased social, emotional and academic preparedness for entering school.
  - Help school districts and early care and education providers reimagine their work so that more children birth to age eight are reaching their educational potential.
  - Increase access to healthcare and support services for families so children have the healthiest possible start in life.
- Describe your planned approach and potential activities for developing a collective policy agenda that advances policy, systems and environmental changes for improved educational equity that is driven by community input. If applying on behalf of an existing partnership or coalition, identify those key partners and what their role will be in advancing this work.
- Provide a clear, three-year, budget for all potential costs associated with this grant for a total of up to \$300,000. KHF asks for an annual breakdown of Personnel Salary, Consultants, Project Costs and Indirect Costs as described below. Ensure all necessary costs are identified for each category, along with a description of how you arrived at your total for each category.
  - **Personnel Salary**: Document each position employed (indicating if the position is existing or new) to support the proposed work - to include %FTE, accompanying salary and fringe benefits (maximum 25% of salary). This category does not include consultants or contract workers not considered regular employees of the organization. Annual salary increases are limited to 3%.
  - **Consultants**: Document costs for contract workers who are not regular employees, such as a board development, communication or evaluation consultants brought in for a specific, time-limited purpose.
  - **Project Costs**: Document costs directly associated with implementing initiative (travel, supplies, meetings, etc.). Break-out subcategories to support total dollars requested.
  - **Indirect Costs** (if applicable): KHF allows indirect costs up to a maximum of ten percent of the total of all budget categories. Indirects are not project-specific but support organization's overhead and necessary to the operation of the project. Examples: postage, telephone bills, printer ink, facility rent or lease, utilities.
- Required attachments:
  - Acknowledgement of agreement review
  - IRS Form 990
  - Most recent unaudited financial statement (balance sheet)
  - Audit (if available)
  - Financial Statement of Activity
  - Statement of Cash Flow

**What is the timeline for next steps?**

RFP Released	February 1, 2021
Optional Informational Webinar	February 9, 2021, 2:00 – 3:00 PM CST
Proposals Due	March 5, 2021 by 5:00 PM CST
Grant Awards Announced	By April 17, 2021
Grant Term Begins	May 1, 2021
Final Grant Term Ends	April 30, 2024

Please note this timeline is subject to minor changes but will be updated on the RFP website.

**How are proposals being scored?**

In reviewing proposals submitted, consideration will be given to the extent to which applicants describe:

- Their organization's readiness to effectively implement high-quality advocacy work
- A clear equity issue area important to improving educational outcomes
- An authentic working relationship with the BIPOC or other low-income communities prioritized in this proposal and reasonable strategies to center their voice in this work
- A clear and thoughtful plan on how to engage in the proposed advocacy efforts
- A compelling vision for bold policy advocacy that will address barriers to educational equity and promote greater student success