

Questions & Answers from 2023 Jeffress Office Hours Session (1/11/2023)

If a community-based organization serves as the lead applicant, what would qualify as research? How loosely are we using the term “research”? It sounds very academic.

Program evaluations or outcome evaluations would be considered research. The intention is to engage community-based organizations and build their capacity to conduct research, given these organizations are often limited in terms of staff capacity.

For the Partnership/Collaborative Establishment Award, could we conduct a community needs assessment?

Yes, that would be an acceptable activity under this grant mechanism and will inform the project strategy.

Are applied research methodologies considered for the research award?

Yes, applied research is allowable.

Is a focus on addressing disparities in equity in only oral health too narrow for this opportunity?

No, this would be an appropriate focus.

Can an academic institution be the primary applicant?

Yes.

Is mental and behavioral health within the scope of interest?

Yes, this would fit the scope of interest.

Is this a limited submission opportunity - can multiple applications be submitted from one institution?

This is not a limited submission opportunity. Multiple applications may be submitted from one institution as long as the projects are led by different PIs.

Are there any restrictions on a higher education institution that received a grant in 2022, or could we apply again for a project for a different university group in 2023?

There are no restrictions around this. A different group could apply in 2023 from the same institution as an awardee in 2022.

Is that list of "Root Causes" exhaustive?

No, not necessarily.

How important is racism compared to other "root causes"? The RFP suggests that racism MUST be addressed in a proposal.

The Program is a resource to assist organizations and communities in addressing the root causes of health inequities, specifically conducting research that will provide the information necessary to act on the underlying systems and dominant culture and narratives that shape the social determinants of health, individual health behaviors, and health outcomes (see Figure 1 in the Program Guidelines). The Program is also encouraging applications that specifically address racial disparities in health in its goal to promote health equity for all Virginians.

Spearheading research can be challenging for community-based organizations who lack dedicated staff for this kind of work. Can you provide guidance on how to manage that if the lead applicant is indeed a CBO focused on policy advocacy/systems change?

The Jeffress Trust award supports awarded organizations to hire staff to conduct the work, and also includes capacity building on topics/methods needed to advance the proposed work as an allowable cost (e.g., partnership and collaboration training, health equity training, research techniques, grantsmanship, community engagement, etc.)

Can you talk about the Virginia health equity piece... how many patients and/or individuals in Virginia would need to directly be impacted within the timeline of the proposal? For example, would a rare disease be outside the scope because of the overall small sample size?

A rare disease would not necessarily be ineligible for application unless there were no focus on health equity. There is no minimum requirement regarding the number of individuals in VA that would be directly impacted by the proposal. However, the individuals involved in the project must be from VA.

Are organizations still eligible with locations within Virginia as well as within other states?

As long as the organization is based in Virginia, it is eligible.

Can there be only 1 PI or is there room for multiple PIs?

One PI should be designated as the lead applicant.

What types of methods/approaches are acceptable or not acceptable to answer questions?

Questions surrounding specific approaches and methodology should be sent to HRiA staff for evaluation if they cannot be addressed within the eligibility requirements.

Is one partnership enough or are multiple partnerships preferred? Can you expand on what is the difference between partnerships/collaboration vs. community engagement?

The Jeffress Trust is looking to support projects that are developed in partnership between multiple organizations. Partners/collaborators should contribute a significant role to the project. The review criteria speaks to the application's illustration of clear roles and responsibilities of each of the organizations such that their involvement enhances the success of the project.

Please look to the guidelines that illustrate a schematic of what it means to strive toward being community-led regarding community engagement (Figure 2).

This seems like the philosophy of PCORI projects with stakeholders and co-learning principles -- do you have any suggestions / guidelines on a process for who should be at the table and how to create a research question?

Some of the questions that applicants have may be similar to PCORI projects, while others may not. Regarding guidelines and suggestions on process for who should be at the table for this work, please reference our table within the guidelines that outlines community empowerment. Other places to find this information can be found in the following websites:

Community Building Through a Health Equity Framework - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ye5v-6803y4>

Engaging and Empowering Priority Communities - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqvn_4lop0c

How is the genetics research evaluated because it will engage Virginia residents but not necessarily community organizations? Is recruiting patients in the hospital considered collaborating with a community organization or a type of community engagement?

Collaborating with a hospital may constitute collaborating with a community depending on the design of the overall project team and how the patient population is engaged throughout the process of the project. Community-based organizations (CBOs) work at the local level to meet community needs. This includes social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and formal and informal community groups, like neighborhood groups or recreational or special-interest clubs. CBOs do not include municipalities, universities, quasi-governmental organizations, or for-profit companies or businesses.

For more information on community engagement, please look to the guidelines that illustrate a schematic of what it means to strive toward being community-led (Figure 2).