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# Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana Grant Program

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## Workshop Q & A

### Application Process

**Q: Do organizations need to have matching funds available when applications are submitted?**

A: No, but organizations need to submit Pledge Agreements from funding sources with the full application.

**Q: Do we need to identify a fiscal lead to handle budget and monetary issues?**

A: The primary applicant will be the fiscal agent and should have the capacity to manage the grant money.

**Q: Can the Letter of Intent be considered round-one of the grant competition?**

A: No; Letters of Intent are not competitive; they are not a basis for project rejection. The purpose is to help you clarify your projects, identify partners, and begin to secure funding. In addition, they will help us plan technical assistance workshops and identify grant reviewers. The Letters of Intent are a tool to aid you in developing the strongest programs possible.

**Q: When do our matching funds need to be available? Is there a timetable to follow?**

A: You will need to have your matching funds available for use to fulfill your budgetary obligations as described in your budget and budget narrative. In practice, you will likely need some portion of the matching funds by the September 2012 project start date. BCBSLAF will be making a partial funds distribution to grant recipients at the project start date in Fall 2012. The remainder of the award will be distributed over time; the schedule has not yet been determined. We recommend that you and your matching fund providers work out [and submit with your application] a “payment schedule” that corresponds to your particular project and your projected needs.

## Eligibility

**Q: Is a Louisiana chapter of a national organization eligible to apply for the grant?**

A: Yes; however, organizations MUST be incorporated with the state of Louisiana and in good standing. An example of this is the local chapter of the American Heart Association.

**Q: Is an organization that receives BCBSLAF Impact Grant funds eligible to apply for the Challenge Grant?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Are Hospitals or Hospital Foundations eligible to apply for the grant?**

A: To avoid conflicts of interest, neither hospitals nor their foundations can be the primary applicant. However, both hospitals and hospital foundations could be valuable partners to many projects. These collaborations/partnerships are encouraged.

**Q: Are universities eligible to apply for the grant?**

A: No, universities are not eligible to be the primary applicant. However, universities could be valuable partners and are encouraged to collaborate with other organizations.

## Funding

**Q: Can volunteer service hours count toward the match? If so, how does the applicant determine the value to these hours?**

A: There is a possibility that volunteer hours can be considered part of the match if volunteers make a significant contribution and work on a regular schedule. Please consult The Louisiana Serve Commission and other organizations to determine the value of volunteer hours (<http://www.volunteerlouisiana.gov/>).

**Q: Can other grant funds be counted as part of the match?**

A: Yes, if the activities funded by other grants coincide with the scope of the Challenge Grant project and have not been budgeted for other purposes. Please note, **anticipated** funding cannot be counted.

**Q: Can money received from a BCBSLAF Impact Grant be counted as part of the match?**

A: No; applicants cannot use any BCBSLAF dollars as part of the match.

**Q: Can match funding come from partnering organizations, or is the primary applicant responsible for raising match funds?**

A: Partnering organizations can certainly contribute to the match. You may also have donor organizations that are not partners (e.g. local businesses). Contributions can be cash or in-kind. Discounts for goods or services can be used toward your in-kind match.

**Q: Do organizations need to have matching funds available when applications are submitted?**

A: No, but organizations should be able to describe plans for matching funding in the letter of Intent, and will need to submit Pledge Agreements from funding sources with the full application.

**Q: When do our matching funds need to be available? Is there a timetable to follow?**

A: You will need to have your matching funds available for use to fulfill your budgetary obligations as described in your budget and budget narrative. In practice, you will likely need some portion of the matching funds by the September 2012 project start date. BCBSLAF will be making a partial funds distribution to grant recipients at the project start date in Fall 2012. The remainder of the award will be distributed over time; the schedule has not yet been determined. We recommend that you and your matching fund providers work out [and submit with your application] a “payment schedule” that corresponds to your particular project and your projected needs.

**Q: Is it possible for a project to be partially funded?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Can project funds be used for capital investments?**

A: Capital investments (e.g. infrastructure for farm-to-table type programs; developing trails or fitness/play equipment, garden/kitchen equipment, etc.) are an acceptable use of project funds.

**Q: Can BCBSLAF project money be used on an existing project?**

A: Yes, but only new aspects of an existing project. Grant funds can be used to extend or expand an ongoing project, but not to cover expenses that have already been budgeted.

**Q: How and when will grant funds be distributed? Will we use a submit-for-reimbursements system?**

A: Grant recipients will receive some funds at the project start date in Fall 2012. The remainder of the award will be distributed over time; the schedule has not yet been determined. However, it will not be a reimbursement system.

**Q: Can we use regular operations funds as part of the match?**

A: Yes, an applicant is welcome to contribute to or completely fund its match.

**Q: Can we use money from new or existing fundraising efforts as part of the match?**

A: Yes, but a funds commitment must be demonstrated at the time of application; anticipated dollars from future fundraising events is not acceptable.

**Q: Can grant money pay for staff salaries?**

A: Yes, if the position is dedicated to the project. Grant funds cannot be used to cover or supplement an existing position.

**Q: If a donor is paying a staff salary, is this considered a cash or in-kind donation?**

A: It is considered in-kind if the donor is funding a permanent/on-going position that will now be supporting this particular initiative. It is considered cash if the donor is supporting a new/project-specific position.

**Q: Do we need to identify a fiscal lead to handle budget and monetary issues?**

A: The primary applicant will be the fiscal agent and, in the grant application, should demonstrate the capacity to manage the grant money. (Also see question below.)

**Q: Can grant money be used to support an outside project administrator/fiscal agent.**

A: Yes. Grant dollars can be used to support an external project administrator. However, BCBSFLA cannot send funds directly to an agency other than the grant recipient.

**Q: Can grant money be used to fund a local, external evaluator?**

A: Yes; each project is expected to incorporate and implement an evaluation component. PBRC will be available to assist funded projects with developing their evaluation plan. However, each project is responsible for carrying out and reporting their evaluation. Salary and direct costs associated with external evaluation are an acceptable use of grant funds; however, indirect costs are not.

**Q: Is there any way that indirect costs can be covered?**

A: Yes; the donation of any cost typically categorized as an indirect cost (e.g. rent, administrative costs, etc.), can be accounted for as an in-kind match. Please note however, that indirect costs are capped at 10% of your project budget.

**Q: Will you fund more than one program within a geographic region?**

A: Possibly; we do not have restrictions on the number of grants to be awarded per region.

**Q: Can a project have multiple locations/implementation sites.**

A: yes.

**Q: Can grant funds be used to provide mini-grants for small scale projects as part of a larger Challenge Grant project?**

A: Funds can be used to support small projects as components of an umbrella project. However, each smaller project must have a definitive budget (a sub-budget) and this must be included and described in the umbrella projects' budget.

## Partners

**Q: Will partnering organizations be considered grant recipients?**

A: Only the primary grant applicant can be a grant recipient. Collaborators/partnering organizations are not grant recipients. However, they will likely receive some funds through the primary applicant.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of partners a lead applicant can have?**

A: No, however, there is likely a limit to the number of partners an applicant can work with efficiently and effectively.

**Q: Can PBRC be a partner?**

A: PBRC is playing an advisory role on every application and each of the funded projects. PBRC cannot be a formal partner. PBRC can suggest resources and identify strengths and weaknesses of your project, but they cannot participate in grant writing or receive BCBSLAF funds.

**Q: Can an organization be an applicant and a partner?**

A: Yes, a lead applicant [the applicant] can also be listed as collaborator on other projects. However, a given applicant can only submit [as lead applicant] one application.

**Q: Will you link us with other applicants if you see that a relationship would be mutually beneficial?**

A: Yes; we will make suggestions for partnerships if we identify gaps in project ideas. We are also available to facilitate connections, but we will not dictate partnerships or program strategies.

**Q: How can I network with other interested organizations? Is this what the Meetup is all about?**

A: Yes, the BCBSLAF has organized the Meetup as a resource to help you identify potential collaborators in your area. It is an online network where you can “meet up” with people attending Challenge Grant events or organize your own meeting. You can use it to reach out to other organizations, plan an event, or simply communicate with other members. You can access Meetup through the Challenge Grant Website or by clicking [here](#).

## Programming

**Q: Is safety an appropriate field for this grant program?**

A: Public health safety is an integral aspect of health in Louisiana communities (e.g. bicycle helmets, sun protection, swimming lessons, etc.) Organizations that provide resources/services in these areas are encouraged to apply or partner with applicants.

**Q: Are children the only target audience?**

A: No; projects can target any population. BCBSLAF is committed to improving the lives of all Louisiana residents, including the children, the vulnerable, and the underserved populations.

**Q: Can projects target the individual?**

A: Yes, but stronger projects will have impact beyond the individual level.

**Q: Can you provide examples of successful programs of this magnitude? What can we look to as a model?**

A: Nothing like this has been done in the state of Louisiana! However, the references listed at the end of this document provide information on best-practices that could be appropriate for your community.

**Q: How many projects will be funded?**

A: We do not have a specific number of projects to fund/grants to give. The BCBSLAF has allocated \$10 million to this program; awards will be between \$250,000 and \$1 million.

**Q: Will the current BCBSLAF programs be maintained?**

A: Yes; we are still conducting all other programs, including Smart Bodies, Impact Grants, etc. Please visit [www.ourhomelouisiana.org](http://www.ourhomelouisiana.org) for more information.

**Q: Can projects provide branding opportunities to businesses or organizations that contribute to the match?**

A: Contributors can and should be recognized. However, the BCBSLAF is the primary funding agency. The degree of recognition provided to other contributors is to be proportional to their contribution. The BCBSLAF will establish and provide branding/recognition guidelines.

## Project Planning

**Q: Does PBRC have staff that can provide assistance for organizations in rural areas that are lacking professionals needed to carry out their projects?**

A: PBRC is available to provide guidance and technical support. PBRC can identify organizations that may be able to assist (e.g. LSU AgCenter Extension agents), but cannot provide direct assistance.

**Q: Does PBRC have population/health statistics for rural areas of the state (this is often difficult to locate)?**

A: PBRC can help identify appropriate statistical resources for both urban and rural areas.

**Q: What should we look for as evaluation outcomes?**

A: Evaluation outcomes will be project-specific. Applicants are required to create a basic evaluation plan as part of the application process. This plan should include measurable indicators of project implementation and impact. PBRC will work individually with grant recipients to further develop evaluation outcomes and strategies.

**Q: What is the evaluation timeline?**

A: Your evaluation timeline will depend on your project. You will be required to submit a final report; you might also be asked to provide an annual or semi-annual progress report.

**Q: How do we define how long our project is?**

A: The applicant must determine an appropriate project timeline and project length. BCBSLAF Challenge grants will fund 1 to 3 years of project time. This period includes start-up time, evaluation, and (assuming success) planning for sustainability.

**Q: What defines a community and what is the recommended geographic size of the target area?**

A: For our purposes, there is no prescribed definition of community or geographic boundary. A community/target area can be a neighborhood, the entire state of Louisiana, or anything in between. Please keep in mind that your evaluation will look for changes at the level you define as your community (i.e. if you define your community as the state of Louisiana, you will be evaluating for change within the whole state).

**Q: Are projects required to include a policy component?**

A: No; you do not have to address *every* level of influence (i.e. individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy), but a strong proposal will include a project specific, appropriate combination of these components.

**Q: Can an applicant or collaborator use other BCBSLAF programs such as Smart Bodies or Louisiana 2Step within their Challenge Grant projects?**

A: Yes.

## Evidence-Based Summary Documents

- [CDC 2009. Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States. \*MMWR\* 58:1-26.](#)
- [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2009. Action Strategies Toolkit. A Guide for Local and State Leaders Working to Create Healthy Communities and Prevent Childhood Obesity.](#)
- [Institute of Medicine. 2009. Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity.](#)
- [White House Task Force. 2010. Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity within a Generation.](#)
- [National Prevention Council. 2011. National Prevention Strategy.](#)
- [Institute of Medicine. 2010. Bridging the Evidence Gap in Obesity Prevention: A Framework to Inform Decision Making.](#)
  - [Report Brief](#)