REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

EMPOWERMENT EVALUATION CONTRACTOR
FOR
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH EQUITY
Release date: Jan. 16, 2018

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:
Letters of qualifications are due at 5 p.m. MST on Feb. 23, 2018. Submission should be sent electronically to Courtney Ricci, PhD in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) format.

Please submit all materials together in one file. Submissions missing any of the required sections will not be considered.

For questions prior to submission, please contact Courtney Ricci, Head of Evaluation & Learning for Community Change, at courtney@coloradotrust.org or (303) 539-3111.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH EQUITY
EMPOWERMENT EVALUATION

Purpose
The Colorado Trust seeks a qualified empowerment evaluation contractor to work closely with funded communities and their local evaluators to coach and empower them to design and conduct local-level evaluation of their health equity plans. Empowerment evaluation is a specific evaluation approach intended to support communities in designing, implementing and monitoring their own local evaluations, with contractors expected to adhere to 10 empowerment evaluation principles in this work (see list of principles on next page). The empowerment evaluation contractor will NOT be expected to design or conduct health equity evaluations; rather, they will be expected to build capacity of communities to conduct their own local evaluations.

About The Colorado Trust
The Colorado Trust (The Trust) is a private, statewide health foundation that was created in 1985 with the proceeds from the sale of the PSL Healthcare Corporation. Dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of the people of Colorado, The Trust’s long-term vision is that all Coloradans have fair and equal opportunities to lead healthy, productive lives regardless of race, ethnicity, income or where we live.

Overview of the Community Partnerships Strategy and Principles
Community Partnerships for Health Equity is one of The Trust’s primary strategic directions. Through Community Partnerships, The Trust partners with residents in cities, towns or neighborhoods across the state to build power in communities to promote health equity. Our guideposts for Community Partnerships are that this work:

- Be authentically resident-led
- Meaningfully involve affected individuals and groups in the leadership, planning, implementation and evaluation of the work
- Address one or more social determinants of health
- Seek to narrow or eliminate a health equity gap
- Address an important, established need in the community (based on both quantitative and qualitative data)
- Require a deep understanding of an issue by community members, so that root causes and solutions can be identified
- Resonate broadly across diverse groups of people in the community (“community” in this case being a self-defined sense of place)
- Simultaneously build resources, capacity and a team to do the work—both short- and long-term.

The Trust defines health equity as ending inequalities that affect racial, ethnic, low-income and other vulnerable populations, so that every Coloradan can have fair and equal opportunities to achieve good health. The Trust is deeply committed to equity and fairness both as an outcome of this work and as a means of building power within communities to address inequities. The Trust is dedicated to inclusion and social justice, inviting community voices that are often marginalized and most affected by inequities. By listening to, trusting and empowering the people who are most affected by the issues, we believe the solutions will be locally relevant, effective and long lasting.

Evaluation plays a crucial role in supporting this vision. This request for qualifications (RFQ) seeks applications from experienced evaluation contractors committed to empowering communities in support of their evaluation goals.
Description of Currently Funded Communities
The first eight communities funded through Community Partnerships are currently planning for the Implementation Phase of the work (the last of five phases in the Community Partnerships work). The goal of the Implementation Phase is for funded communities, through financial and other support, to implement their resident-driven solutions that promote health equity. During this final phase, resident teams will be supported to identify and secure diverse funding for long-term sustainability; receive ongoing capacity building focused on specific needs to achieve their plans (e.g., advocacy, policy change, grant writing, fundraising); and conduct local evaluation to determine their success in achieving their community goals and objectives.

Although these initial eight communities are currently in the planning stage (i.e., have not completed their health equity plans), they have identified a number of important health equity issues (“upstream” social determinants of health) identified through in-depth root-cause analyses. These include poverty and social disconnection, depressed economic conditions, lack of educational opportunities, and lack of power to influence greater economic and social opportunity. Resident teams are currently in the process of identifying potential solutions and partners for helping them implement their plans—as well as local evaluators who will work alongside them to support the design of a meaningful and realistic evaluation plan. Resident teams are racially and ethnically diverse, and speak multiple languages. The empowerment evaluation contractor is expected to build capacity of resident teams and local evaluators, so that they have the knowledge and skills needed for this and other future work the community undertakes.

While there are currently eight communities moving into the Implementation Phase, there are more communities in Colorado in earlier stages of this work. Over time, additional communities (up to 26) will eventually be ready for evaluation coaching, capacity building and technical assistance. These future communities will be included in this contract. Concurrently, it is expected that Implementation Phase communities will need less evaluation support over time.

A description of the philosophy and approach of The Trust’s Community Partnerships funding strategy and selected Colorado communities where this work is underway can be found on our website.

Proposed Scope of Work and Deliverables
Through this RFQ process, our goal is to select an experienced empowerment evaluation contractor with expertise and commitment to the 10 empowerment evaluation principles with a focus on responsive community capacity-building, technical assistance and coaching to meet evaluation needs of local communities. These 10 principles include:

- Community ownership
- Inclusion
- Demographic participation
- Community knowledge
- Evidence-based strategies
- Accountability
- Improvement
- Organizational learning
- Social justice
- Capacity building
For a more detailed description of empowerment evaluation and its principles, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Although we expect to work with the selected evaluation contractor to co-create the final scope of work and deliverables for this empowerment evaluation contract, we anticipate contractors will:

- Conduct an assessment of local evaluation needs and resources
- Conduct or facilitate delivery of trainings on designing and executing local evaluation plans
- Develop a “toolkit” to build local capacity for evaluation
- Provide ongoing coaching and technical assistance to local evaluators, resident teams and implementation partners (who may be collecting data on behalf of a resident team) on evaluation plan design and implementation, data collection, analysis and reporting, as well as on strategic use of data to facilitate learning and improvement
- Support resident teams and their local evaluators in designing methods and processes for monitoring solution implementation
- Convene local evaluators across the state for shared capacity building and cross-community learning
- Maintain regular communication with funded communities and their local evaluators, along with The Trust and evaluation firm(s) hired by The Trust
- Travel to communities across the state and to Trust offices for meetings and periodic trainings.

Because of the importance of establishing community relationships and the travel required within Colorado, it is strongly preferred that the evaluator be located in-state, or have a local presence in Colorado.

**It is important to note that the empowerment evaluation contractor will NOT be expected to design or conduct health equity evaluations; rather, they will be expected to build capacity of communities for conducting their own local evaluations of health equity plans and evaluating the success of these efforts.**

**Budget**
The overall budget for this proposed scope of work is up to $1.5 million for 5 years.

**Briefing Webinar**
To provide more detailed information and answer questions from prospective applicants, The Trust will hold a webinar on Jan. 24, 2018 from 11 a.m. to noon MST. During this webinar, we will provide an overview of the strategy, discuss the evaluation RFQ and answer any questions. [Click here to register](#) to register for the webinar. If unable to attend at this time, the webinar will be recorded and can be viewed later by potential applicants.

**In-Person Interview**
As part of the selection process, finalists will be required to participate in an in-person interview with Trust staff. Finalists are expected to bring the lead evaluator and other key staff who will be directly involved in this work. Associated expenses for travel, food and lodging related to the interview, for up to 4 individuals per finalist, will be paid for by The Trust. The Trust anticipates that interviews will take place in late February to early March.

**Key Dates and Deadlines**
- RFQ release: Jan. 16, 2018
- RFQ webinar: Jan. 24, 2018, 11 a.m. to noon
- RFQ proposal deadline: Feb. 23, 2018 by 5 p.m. MST
- Target dates for in-person finalist interviews: March 8-9, 2018
- Anticipated award date: March 31, 2018

**Request for Qualification Submission Format**
Interested contractors should submit structured responses of qualifications using the following format. Your submission should be no more than 10 pages (excluding samples of community empowerment evaluation products, resumes or references) and use either Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) format. Please submit all materials together in one file.

1. **Organizational mission and description** (1 page)
   Please provide a description of your organization, its history, its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and major areas of expertise.

2. **Empowerment evaluation expertise and experience** (4 pages)
   Please provide a description of your philosophy and approach to empowerment evaluation. Please include a description of up to two past projects where you have used empowerment evaluation, including project goals, approaches, methods, collaborators and budgets. How did you work with community residents in these efforts? Please feel free to include samples of products that resulted from your empowerment work with communities.

3. **Health equity evaluation expertise and experience** (2 pages)
   We are interested in learning more about your understanding of and experience with health equity evaluation. Please include a description of past equity or social justice evaluations, including project goals, methods, focus populations and budgets.

4. **Experience designing and facilitating opportunities for learning** (1 page)
   Please describe specific examples of your evaluation team’s strategic use of data for learning, decision-making and improvement.

5. **Indicators of success** (1 page)
   Given your experience, please describe how you will know that you are succeeding in empowering Community Partnerships communities to evaluate their own health equity plans. What indicators and methods will you use to track your progress and identify areas for improvement?

6. **Evaluation team roles, responsibilities, qualifications and diversity** (1 page)
   Please describe specific roles and responsibilities of each member of your evaluation team who will be involved in this work (including identifying the team lead), and describe how these individuals have successfully served these roles in similar past empowerment evaluation projects. Tell us about how your evaluation team will reflect the diversity of Colorado, and any experience your team has in delivering trainings to non-English speakers. Include a brief resume for all personnel listed.

7. **Three references**
   References should be able to speak to your program evaluation knowledge and skills, particularly your ability to work well with residents and their local evaluators. These references should also reflect on your experience and capacity related to empowerment evaluation and health equity evaluation, and to the diversity of your evaluation team.