



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

October 1, 2018

### Funding Opportunity for Proactive Local-Level Policies and Initiatives

The National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) is now accepting proposals from 501(c)(3) organizations to support proactive policies and initiatives that advance reproductive freedom and advocacy at the local level. Applicants are encouraged to use NIRH's report, the [Local Reproductive Freedom Index: Evaluating U.S. Cities](#), and its newly created tools for advocates and policymakers as a resource in their campaign or initiative.

#### *About the National Institute for Reproductive Health*

The National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) builds power at the state and local level to change public policy, galvanize public support, and normalize women's decisions about abortion and contraception. Using a partnership model, we provide state and local advocates with strategic guidance, hands-on support, and funding to create national change from the ground up. We are a force multiplier – we form strategic partnerships with a wide range of organizations to directly impact the reproductive health and lives of women across the country. Since 2008, NIRH has provided direct grants and hands-on support to more than 150 reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations in 39 states and 56 localities across the country.

At the national level, NIRH goes where others don't, engaging in groundbreaking public opinion research, proactive policy initiatives, and innovative advocacy campaigns to shape a new national conversation about reproductive freedom. The Local Index is one example of this work.

#### *About NIRH's Partnership Model*

NIRH is a national advocacy organization, not a foundation; we work in close partnership with organizations on their funded initiatives to learn from those working directly on the ground, offer our expertise and resources, and share emerging best practices with the field. To that end, and to further public conversation in the media and policy worlds in a time of retrenchment, NIRH may ask partners to speak about their work and lessons learned via webinars, press opportunities, or conferences. NIRH may also convene partners on calls with each other to facilitate collaboration and learning across cities and states.

#### *About the Local Reproductive Freedom Index & Tools*

The [Local Reproductive Freedom Index: Evaluating U.S. Cities \(Local Index\)](#) is a first-of-its-kind initiative that evaluates the reproductive health, rights, and justice policies of 40 cities across the United States and calls for their leadership in ensuring that all people have the full freedom and ability to control their reproductive and sexual lives.

The Local Index centers on two key resources, the "Comprehensive Scorecard" and the "Model City." The Comprehensive Scorecard reviews existing policies across all 40 cities and establishes a baseline of data for stakeholders to evaluate their current local policy landscape. The Model City is broader and aspirational, putting forth a vision of the policies that a city could adopt to fully realize reproductive

freedom for all of its residents. To encourage cities and advocates to move closer to that vision, the Local Index includes a set of policy recommendations based on existing policies evaluated in the Comprehensive Scorecard, more expansive policy ideas reflected in the Model City, our research and interviews with local leaders about what policies would most benefit their residents, and our broader understanding of the field.

To help advocates and policymakers use the Local Index to advance reproductive health, rights, and justice in their communities through both policy change and electoral activities, **NIRH has created a set of four tools to be released on October 10, 2018:**

- *Advancing Reproductive Freedom in your City: A Tool for Advocates* provides guidance to local advocates on how to use the Local Index to establish, support, and advance educational and policy initiatives in their city.
- *Advancing Reproductive Freedom in your City: A Tool for Local Policymakers* provides guidance to local policymakers and elected officials on how to work with local advocates to use the Local Index to develop a vision and strategy to achieve reproductive freedom in their cities.
- *Advancing Reproductive Freedom through Local Elections: A Tool for Advocates* provides guidance to local advocates on how to use the Local Index in electoral work to seize the opportunities local elections offer to create change and to turn supportive local candidates into champions for reproductive freedom.
- *Campaigning for Reproductive Freedom in your Community: A Tool for Candidates* provides guidance for candidates on how to use the Local Index to incorporate reproductive freedom policies into their platform. It also provides guidance on how to talk about these issues on the campaign trail and how to connect with, and educate, constituents who care about reproductive freedom.

These four resources will be available on October 10, 2018 [here](#).

### **Supporting Proactive Local-Level Policies and Initiatives**

NIRH is now accepting proposals to partner with organizations working to advance local-level policies that support reproductive freedom, to mitigate a hostile climate for reproductive rights created by state and federal governments, or to build relationships with supportive local policymakers. Applicants are encouraged to use NIRH's report, the Local Reproductive Freedom Index: Evaluating U.S. Cities, and its newly created tools for advocates and policymakers, as a resource in their campaign or initiative.

**Funding awards will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 per project, depending on the proposed project's scope and impact. The funding cycle is January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.**

#### *Advancing Proactive Policy*

Organizations interested in advancing proactive policy on the local level may submit a proposal that fits into one of three categories:

- 1) Work towards passage or creation of a new proactive reproductive health policy or initiative included in the [Local Index](#)'s policy recommendations (p.73) or that fits within the framework established by the Model City (p. 18);
- 2) Strengthen an existing local proactive reproductive health policy or initiative to more closely align it with the values laid out in the Model City; or
- 3) Establish or strengthen a local proactive reproductive health policy or initiative in

response to existing or anticipated state and federal attacks on reproductive health, rights, and justice, including a roll-back of protections in *Roe v. Wade* or significant changes to the Title X program, and/or take action on the local level to mitigate the impact of such a policy.

### *Building Local Policymaker Support*

Amid a new wave of interest from local policymakers in supporting reproductive health, rights, and justice, advocates have an opportunity to build relationships with these leaders to advance corresponding policy goals. For potential applicants who are not yet in a position to work towards passage of a local policy, NIRH is accepting proposals from organizations seeking to build or strengthen relationships with local elected and administrative officials and their staff. Successful proposals will identify a tangible goal or goals to be achieved by the end of the funding cycle. Examples of tangible goals could include identifying a policy to pursue and sponsors to champion it, or creating a thorough power map of your city related to a specific policy and meeting benchmarks that demonstrate the establishment of strong relationships with key players. Proposals should also explain how the achievement of these goals would build towards a clear, longer-term goal for your city or county. Examples of this work could include:

- Hosting a bootcamp where policymakers and staff can learn about reproductive health, rights, and justice and build key skills, like messaging and policy analysis.
- Holding a series of community conversations in partnership with a government body, like the Department of Health or City Council, where policymakers and advocates can talk about reproductive health, rights, and justice with their community and hear about their concerns and ideas.
- Identifying key leaders in your community that your organization would like to connect with, developing a strategy to engage and build relationships with them, and putting that plan into action.

Proposals from all cities, including those not evaluated in the Local Index, are welcome. If the city or county where the initiative is based is not included in the Local Index, NIRH is available to work with organizations to create a City Scorecard. If that would be useful, organizations are asked to note this in their proposal as an anticipated technical assistance need. We welcome proposals from all cities, and encourage proposals from cities located in states with a hostile political climate or organized anti-choice opposition.

For organizations that do not typically focus on reproductive health, rights, or justice, the proposal should detail how they will directly connect their work to these principles, including how the proposed project will build and/or expand cross-movement partnerships and address the intersection between the chosen policy and reproductive freedom.

Finally, organizations are encouraged to collaborate with stakeholders, coalition partners, non-traditional partner organizations, and/or policymakers in planning for this initiative as appropriate. NIRH values, supports, and encourages proposals from organizations led by people of color and/or the communities most impacted by the proposed initiative.



If you have questions about your proposed project or idea, please contact NIRH staff by emailing Winnie Ye at [wye@nirhealth.org](mailto:wye@nirhealth.org).

\*A note about proposals focused on funding and/or insurance: NIRH has been a proud member of the All\* Above All campaign since its launch. Proposals that focus on advancing funding and/or insurance coverage of abortion will be evaluated in partnership with All\* Above All. Proposals that are selected will receive strategic guidance and technical assistance from both NIRH and All\* Above All.

*About [All\\* Above All](#)*

All\* Above All unites organizations and individuals to build support for lifting the bans that deny abortion coverage. Their vision is to restore public insurance coverage so that each of us, no matter how much we make, can get the care we need.

## PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please submit a coversheet and upload your proposal (maximum seven pages, not including budget) [here](#). Proposal should include the following:

- Completed Coversheet (available [here](#))
- Executive Summary (no more than half a page)
  - A brief summary of the initiative, including a description of the policy being pursued and the need or problem it addresses, and key goals
- Public-Facing Description (no more than half of one page)
  - A short paragraph that reflects how you would like the initiative to be described to a public audience
    - If funded, NIRH will use this description as the basis for a public announcement of 2019 partners, including a national press release and publication on NIRH’s website. If you believe it important to keep the initiative confidential, submit a generic description stating collaboration with NIRH.
- Organizational Background (no more than one page)
  - Brief summary of the organization, its mission and activities, and constituencies served
    - Please include information on how your thinking about racial equity informs how you develop and implement programs.
  - Description of key staff, indicating their role with funding management and/or implementation of the initiative.
  - Brief summary of how this initiative fits into organizational priorities and mission.
- Description and Goals of Initiative (no more than three pages)
  - **If you are submitting a proposal on “Advancing Proactive Policy”:**
    - Description of the proposed initiative’s goals and interim objectives, including initial ideas about using the Local Index and tools to further your goals. Be as specific as possible about how you will:
      - work towards passage or creation of a new policy or initiative included in the Local Index’s policy recommendations or that fits within the framework established by the Model City;
      - strengthen an existing local policy or initiative to more closely align it with the values laid out in the Model City; or
      - establish or strengthen a local policy or initiative in response to anticipated state and federal attacks on reproductive health, rights, and justice, including a roll-back of protections in *Roe v. Wade* or significant changes to the Title X program, and/or take action on the local level to mitigate the impact of such a policy.
  - **If you are submitting a proposal on “Building Local Policymaker Support”:**
    - Description of the proposed initiative’s goals and interim objectives, including initial ideas about using the Local Index and tools to further your goals. Be specific about the policymakers you plan to build with and your plans for the event(s) or partnership you want to create. Successful proposals will be as

detailed as possible about tangible goals for this initiative and your plan for this funding cycle.

- Describe your long-term goals for your organization’s work in your city or county and how this initiative will help you meet those goals.
- Anticipated Allies & Stakeholders (no more than two pages)
  - Who has the power to help the organization achieve the initiative’s goal(s)?
  - Who are your organization’s closest allies in achieving the initiative goals, if any? Please describe the nature of these relationships and existing buy-in from these and other partners for this initiative.
  - Who are the key stakeholders you will need to build relationships with to achieve your goals? What steps do you foresee as necessary to build those relationships? What challenges do you anticipate?
  - Demonstrated support of elected officials and/or administrative agencies for work on this initiative, if appropriate, or plans for developing that support. *Letters of support are welcome, but not required, and will not count towards your overall page count. You can upload letters of support as part of your proposal file, or email them separately to Winnie Ye at [wye@nirhealth.org](mailto:wye@nirhealth.org) with a subject line that includes the name of your organization and “Letter(s) of Support.”*
- Initiative Timeline (no more than one page)
  - Outline an anticipated timeline for the initiative that includes the key goals during this funding period.
- Anticipated Strategic Guidance and Technical Support Needs and Timeline (no more than one page)
  - Provide a brief summary of all anticipated technical assistance needs and at what steps of the funding cycle they will be needed (see [Strategic Guidance and Technical Support Menu](#) at the end of this document).
- Proposed Budget, including a budget narrative detailing how funds would be used and an anticipated breakdown of funding that will be spent on lobbying, if applicable. Any lobbying expenditures must be expended in compliance with both NIRH’s and the partner organization’s obligations under federal tax law. The range of funding awarded will be from \$5,000-\$20,000; NIRH will determine the final award based on the resources needed to complete the proposed activities. Possible budget lines include staffing, coalition meetings, materials development, technical costs (e.g., website), and other direct program costs.
  - *Please note that indirect costs should not exceed 15 % of your initiative’s budget and that the funding awarded should not be the exclusive source of funding for any staff person. Indirect costs include overhead expenses or ongoing operational costs and administrative or other expenses that are not directly allocable to a particular activity or initiative.*

## THE SELECTION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

1. **Distribution of Request for Proposal:** The Request for Proposal will be distributed on October 1, 2018.

2. **Webinar:** NIRH will host a webinar on October 10, 2018 at 12:30 pm EST to discuss NIRH's new local tools for advocates and policymakers, provide guidance on what a successful proposal could look like, and answer any questions about this RFP. Register [here](#).
3. **Proposal Feedback:** Organizations with individual questions about their proposals or proposal ideas, and particularly those organizations who have not partnered with NIRH previously, are encouraged to set up a time to review their ideas with NIRH staff by setting up a call [here](#).
4. **Final Proposal Submitted:** Final proposals should be submitted online via the form at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/nirhrfp2019](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nirhrfp2019). They are due no later than 8:00 pm EST on November 12, 2018. Contact Winnie Ye at [wye@nirhealth.org](mailto:wye@nirhealth.org) with questions about proposal submission.
5. **Proposal Review and Follow-Up:** Proposals will be reviewed by NIRH staff. Additional information or clarification of the proposal may be requested of applicants following the initial review.
6. **Announcement of Funding Decisions:** Applicants will be informed of funding decisions on a rolling basis; all applicants will be notified of final decisions by December 21, 2018.
7. **MOU Signed:** NIRH will outline goals and expectations with partners in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). All MOUs should be signed by January 16, 2019. Funding will be disbursed to partners upon receipt of the signed MOU.

## **Strategic Guidance and Technical Support Menu**

NIRH can provide the following technical assistance. This list is not exhaustive, and NIRH is also able to connect partners with organizations or individuals that can provide support not available in-house.

### **Strategy Support & Campaign Planning**

- Development and implementation of strategies to achieve initiative's objectives
- Guidance in responding to obstacles or opportunities as they arise
- Development and implementation of campaign strategy
- Development and implementation of strategies that engage grassroots and grassroots power
- Development of government relations strategy, including power-mapping and lobby training
- Identification of other movement resources and opportunities to advance objectives

### **Policy Support**

- Research and development of Local Reproductive Freedom Index City Scorecard and Star Ranking for cities not included in the 2017 edition of the report
- Legal research and analysis of existing and proposed legislation or administrative action
- Development/drafting of proactive legislation, regulations, amendments, and policy briefs
- Development of talking points and testimony
- Preparation of lawmaker-friendly resources and talking points
- Connections with national policy resources
- Connections with other state and local groups working to develop similar proactive policies

### **Communications**

- Development and implementation of communications/media plans
- Creation of messaging strategy, including message development and research
- Communications and messaging training for advocates and activists
- Support with media relations, including press strategy, media pitches, and access to a national database of reporters
- Assistance with social media, including development of social media campaigns, drafting of sample posts, and support for graphics creation
- Development and writing of issue briefs
- Development of websites and microsites

### **Field Operations**

- Development and implementation of field operations, including supporter identification and data analytics
- Engagement in volunteer management and leadership development
- Support with understanding and use of voter file systems

### **Coalition Building**

- Support with coalition formation/planning and governance, including sample coalition documents (e.g. commitment letters, MOUs, membership roles)
- Engaging non-traditional partners and managing coalition dynamics
- Planning and facilitation of coalition meetings