



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

October 3, 2019

Funding Opportunity for Advancing Proactive Local-Level Policies and Initiatives

The National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) recognizes the critical role that cities and counties play in protecting and improving the reproductive and sexual health of the people who live, work and travel there. NIRH is now accepting proposals from 501(c)(3) organizations to support proactive policies and initiatives that advance reproductive freedom on the local level.

About 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 form strategic partnerships with a wide range of organizations to directly impact the reproductive health and lives of women and communities across the country. Since 2008, NIRH has provided direct grants and hands-on support to 175 reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations in 43 states, including 64 localities, across the country.

About NIRH's Local Reproductive Freedom Index & Tools for Advocates and Elected Officials

To demonstrate how cities can meet their potential to protect and improve reproductive and sexual health – and show where they have room to grow – NIRH publishes the *Local Reproductive Freedom Index: Evaluating U.S. Cities (Local Index)*. This bi-annual report assesses 50 cities across the United States on their policies affecting reproductive health, rights, and justice and calls for local-level leadership to ensure that all people have the full freedom and ability to control their reproductive and sexual lives.

The *Local Index* centers on two key resources, City Scorecards and the Model City. The City Scorecards evaluate each of the 50 cities based on 34 policy indicators related to reproductive health, rights, and justice. The Model City is broad and aspirational, putting forth a vision of a city that has fully realized reproductive freedom for all of its residents. The 2019 edition of the *Local Index* will be released on Monday, October 21, 2019.

Organizations are encouraged to use the *Local Index* as a resource in developing their proposal, and as a tool in their work, when appropriate. If the city or county where the initiative is based is not included in the *Local Index*, NIRH can work with organizations to create a City Scorecard, as needed.

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 offer our expertise and resources, learn from those working directly on the ground, and share emerging best practices with the field. To that end, and to advance a more proactive public conversation in the media and policy arenas, 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.

NIRH staff and board have committed to advancing racial equity and have been engaged in a multi-year process to adopt a racial equity lens across the organization, including how we partner with state and local advocates. As a result, our RFP process includes several places where we and our partners are asked to consider how the work we will do in partnership takes racial equity into account.

Advancing Proactive Local-Level Policies and Initiatives

NIRH is now accepting proposals to partner with organizations working to advance local-level policies that fit into one of the three streams outlined below. **Awards of up to \$20,000 per project are available, depending on the proposed project's scope and impact. The partnership cycle is January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.**

Partnership Streams

1. Responding Proactively to State or Federal Attacks on Abortion

As many states and the federal government ramp up their attacks on abortion rights and access, including a rollback of the protections established in *Roe v. Wade*, NIRH would like to support organizations in their efforts to develop a proactive response on the municipal level, including:

- Passing or strengthening a local proactive reproductive health policy or initiative
 - NIRH is particularly interested in initiatives that will establish a municipal funding stream for abortion care and/or practical support related to abortion care.*
- Mitigating the impact of a state or federal policy that restricts access to abortion
- Building or strengthening a sustainable and positive relationship between a local abortion provider(s) and the municipality where they are located, including with the local government and the community at large

2. Advancing a Proactive Policy Included in the Local Index's Model City

NIRH would like to support organizations interested in working towards the passage of a proactive policy that fits within the framework of the *Local Index's Model City*, available [here](#). Please note that NIRH will be releasing an updated edition of the Model City on October 21, 2019 and we encourage you to review it at that time; however, the basic content will be similar to that of the 2017 Model City.

NIRH is particularly interested in policies that will address challenges related to the gutting of the Title X program, including increasing access to contraception and options counseling. Both proposals that focus on policies that are likely to be passed within the partnership period and proposals for campaigns where passage is a longer-term goal are welcome and will be considered.

* A note about proposals focused on abortion 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.

3. *Training Local Officials & Advocates to Support a Proactive Local Policy Initiative*

NIRH would like to support organizations or coalitions that are interested in hosting a messaging and policy training(s) for local-level elected officials and advocates as part of a broader strategy to build support for reproductive freedom. The goal of the training(s) would be to educate participants about the local, state, and national landscape for reproductive health, rights, and justice and the role they can play in protecting reproductive freedom at the local level. Once a proposal is accepted and NIRH and the organization have created a partnership agreement, the training(s) would be designed in collaboration with NIRH, customized to the local context, and facilitated or co-facilitated by NIRH staff. Proposals should include a list of potential invitees and any specific areas of focus, including policy topics or skill sets. The training(s) should be planned to occur in the first half of the partnership period.

Proposals in this partnership stream should also lay out preferred outcomes of the training and plans for the remainder of the partnership period. This could include, but is not limited to, the development of a policy goal or reproductive freedom agenda, the creation or strengthening of a local coalition of advocates working towards a policy goal, and/or ongoing relationship-building with elected officials who will attend the training and can then act as champions for reproductive freedom.

Proposals are welcome for initiatives based in any city or town, and NIRH encourages proposals for work in communities located in states with a hostile political climate or organized anti-choice opposition.

NIRH values, supports, and encourages proposals from organizations led by people of color and/or the communities most impacted by the proposed initiative.

Finally, organizations are encouraged to collaborate with stakeholders, coalition partners, non-traditional partner organizations, and/or policymakers in planning for this initiative as appropriate.

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

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please submit a coversheet and upload your proposal (maximum seven pages, not including budget) [here](#). Include the name of your organization and your proposal title in the header of your proposal, and please use the following format to name your file: **OrganizationName_NIRHLocalProposal_Date**.

Proposal should include the following:

1. Completed Coversheet
2. Executive Summary (no more than half a page)
 - A brief summary of the initiative, including a description of the policy being pursued or proposed focus of the training(s), and the need or problem it addresses, and key goals
3. Public-Facing Description (no more than half a page)
 - A short paragraph that reflects how you would like the initiative to be described to a public audience
 - If your proposal is selected, NIRH will use this description to assist us with drafting a public announcement of our 2020 partners, including a national press release and publication on NIRH's website. If you believe it important to keep the initiative confidential, please include a brief explanation of why and submit a generic description stating that your organization will be collaborating with NIRH.
4. Organizational Background (no more than one and a half pages)
 - 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 in managing and/or implementing the initiative.
 - Brief summary of how this initiative fits into organizational priorities and mission.
 - Description of a time you have achieved a goal in partnership with another organization, including the values, practices, and systems that were critical to your successful collaboration.
5. Description and Goals of Initiative (no more than three pages)
 - **If you are submitting a proposal on “Responding Proactively to State or Federal Attacks on Abortion”:**
 - Describe the proposed initiative's goals and interim objectives. Be as specific as possible about how you will:
 - Pass or strengthen a local proactive reproductive health policy or initiative, or
 - Mitigate the impact of a state or federal policy that will restrict or harm reproductive health care, or
 - Build or strengthen a sustainable and positive relationship between a local abortion provider(s) and the municipality where they are located, including with the local government and the community at large
 - If you plan to build or strengthen a relationship between a local abortion provider and its home municipality, and you do not

work at the clinic, please include information on your existing relationship with the clinic and how you plan to work with its staff throughout the partnership period.

- **If you are submitting a proposal on “Advancing a Proactive Policy Included in the *Local Index’s Model City*”:**
 - Describe the proposed initiative’s goals and interim objectives. Be as specific as possible about the policy you are pursuing and how you will work towards passage
 - Include the anticipated timeline for passage. If you are proposing a longer-term campaign that will not include the passage of policy during the partnership, indicate any interim goals for the partnership period, and describe how you anticipate the campaign will be sustainable beyond the partnership period.
 - **If you are submitting a proposal on “Building Local Policymaker Support”:**
 - Describe the proposed training(s), including goals for the training(s) and skills or policy areas you would like to emphasize. Be as specific as possible about the policymakers and advocates you hope to have in attendance.
 - Describe your plans for the partnership period following the training(s), such as a challenge you hope to address, a policy you would like to pursue, or a coalition you would like to build or strengthen. Understanding that the plans for the remainder of the partnership period may change depending on the outcome of the training(s), be as specific as possible about your goals, interim objectives, and how this training(s) will help you meet those goals.
6. 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?
 - Describe any 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 with a subject line that includes the name of your organization and “Letter(s) of Support.”*
7. Initiative Timeline (no more than one page)
- Outline an anticipated timeline for the initiative that includes the key goals during this partnership period. If planning a training, please note that the training(s) should take place in the first half of the partnership period.
8. Strategic Guidance and Technical Support Needs and Timeline (no more than one page)
- Provide a brief summary of the technical assistance you anticipate needing from NIRH and at what steps of the partnership cycle that TA will be needed (see [Strategic Guidance and Technical Support Menu](#) at the end of this document).

- If you would like NIRH to develop a City Scorecard for your community, please include that in this section.
9. 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 up to a maximum of \$20,000; NIRH will determine the final grant 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 RFP:** The RFP will be distributed on October 3, 2019.
2. **Webinar:** NIRH will host a webinar on Wednesday, October 16 at 2:00 pm EDT to provide guidance on what a successful proposal could look like, and answer any questions about this RFP. All organizations interested in applying are encouraged to register [here](#).
3. **Proposal Feedback:** Organizations with individual questions about their proposals or proposal ideas are encouraged to set up a time to review their ideas with NIRH staff by setting up a call [here](#). Organizations that have not previously partnered with NIRH and organizations that do not typically focus on reproductive health, rights, or justice are particularly encouraged to set up an individual call.
4. **Final Proposal Submitted:** Final proposals should be submitted online via the form at [here](#). They are due no later than 8:00 pm EST on November 12, 2019. Contact Winnie Ye at 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 Decisions:** Applicants will be informed of decisions on a rolling basis; all applicants will be notified of final decisions by December 20, 2019.
7. **MOU Signed:** NIRH will outline goals and expectations with partners in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). All MOUs should be signed by January 17, 2020. 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 score for cities not included in the 2019 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