



Healthy Communities Delaware
Thriving Places. Thriving People.

Request for Proposals: Investing in Vital Conditions & Community-Level Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

Healthy Communities Delaware (HCD) is pleased to announce this Request for Proposals for work that advances community level-change and improves the [Vital Conditions](#). This funding aims to support projects that align with our mission of working with communities, investors and systems to create thriving places for thriving people.

Key Information & Timeline

Funding Period:	July 2026 - June 2027 (12 months)
Award Amount Range:	\$25,000 - \$150,000
Letter of Interest Deadline:	March 1, 2026
Application Deadline:	April 30, 2026

Table of Contents

About HCD: Our Mission, Philosophy, & Core Investment Principles	2
What's Different About HCD and this RFP?	2
Core Concepts and Definitions	3
Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria	5
What We Fund/What We Don't Fund	6
Application Process & Timeline	11
Budget and Action Plan Guidelines	12
Accountability, Collaboration, and Continuous Engagement	13
Contact and Inquiries	13
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	14

About HCD: Our Mission, Philosophy, & Core Investment Principles

Our Mission: We work with communities, investors and systems to create thriving places for thriving people.

Our Philosophy: We recognize that access to the vital conditions in every community is essential for well-being. We collaborate with communities with the greatest opportunities to improve health, well-being, and equity. We view our partners not as grant recipients, but as shared stewards of limited resources. We work together to advance community-driven transformation through our investments, which support communities by:

1. **Building Capacity for Change:** We fund the essential planning, coordination, and collaborative structures (like steering committees) needed to create and sustain complex community transformation.
2. **Driving Lasting Systemic Change:** We support projects that create lasting changes in local policies, systems, and environments.

Core Investment Principles: Successful proposals will embody the following core principles. If your community or project concept cannot meet all of these criteria, the opportunity is likely not a good fit.

1. **Advance Equity & Prioritize Place:** We commit to investing in communities with the highest vulnerability and the greatest opportunities for improving equity.
2. **Guided by the Community:** Projects must be informed by an existing Community Revitalization or Comprehensive Plan or a collaborative planning process that involves residents and community partners.
3. **Advance Vital Conditions Through Systemic Community Change:** We improve community vital conditions by investing in upstream interventions. This includes transforming local policies, systems, and environments. Proposals focused on urgent services or downstream interventions are not aligned with this opportunity.
4. **Guided by Evidence & Logic:** Projects must be supported by a compelling case, ideally using best-practice or evidence-based strategies that can be adapted to local contexts.

What's Different About HCD and this RFP?

To maximize our impact, HCD employs a unique partnership model that offers benefits and expectations beyond typical grants.

- **Long-term Commitment to Change:** We recognize that meaningful community change takes time. While this specific proposal is for a 1-year project cycle, we are committed to working with communities over the long term to sustain momentum and provide ongoing investment.
- **Commitment to Community, not Organizations:** While HCD is committed to sustained investment in partnering communities, the funding is intended to support community-level

environmental and systems change interventions that strengthen community Vital Conditions, rather than provide continuous operational support to any single organization.

- **Co-Funding Opportunities:** HCD shares proposals with public and private investors for co-funding, meaning the total funding available is variable and not predetermined.
- **Support Beyond the Grant:** In addition to funding, we provide or connect partners with support tailored to the community's needs (e.g., resources on best practices, evaluation support, storytelling and communication support, professional development opportunities, support accessing funds from other sources, and other community capacity building opportunities and resources).

Core Concepts and Definitions

The Vital Conditions for Well-Being: The fundamental resources and the structural drivers of well-being that all people need to thrive (see table below). The Vital Conditions define the overarching goals that HCD seeks to achieve. HCD funds projects that strengthen these conditions strictly at the community-level via policy, systems, and environmental change. While services like tutoring or job placement support the Vital Conditions, HCD funding is not intended to support individual-level programs and services. Learn more about Vital Conditions [here](#).

Community-Level Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change or “Upstream”

Interventions: These are the transformative interventions that HCD funds. They target the root causes of problems by creating lasting changes in the laws, ordinances, regulations; practices, processes, and power dynamics; and built, natural, and economic environments within a specific geographic area. These changes are designed to impact the community population broadly and lead to equitable, long-term improvements in the Vital Conditions.

Urgent Services or “Downstream” Interventions: HCD **does not** fund these programs or services. They target the symptoms resulting from system failures, or address immediate crises or acute needs. Examples include operating a homeless shelter, providing a food pantry, offering financial assistance, or administering acute clinical or addiction care. See the table below to learn more about Urgent Services.



Vital Conditions		Urgent Services	
Basic Needs for Health & Safety	Nutritious food, safe drinking water, fresh air; routine care for physical and mental health; routine physical activity; safe, satisfying sexuality and reproduction; freedom from crime, injury, violence, traumatic stress, and addiction	Acute Care for Illness or Injury	Acute and post-acute care for physical and mental illness; emergency medical services; acute hospitalization; trauma-informed care
Lifelong Learning	Continuous development of cognitive, social, and emotional abilities; early childhood experiences, K-12, higher education, and adult education.	Addiction Treatment	Services to stop addictive behavior and begin recovery; substance abuse treatment and support
Meaningful Work and Wealth	Rewarding work, careers, and standards of living; good-paying and fulfilling jobs; family and community wealth.	Crime Response	Efforts to fairly adjudicate alleged violations of the law; police, fire, and first responders; courts; incarceration
Humane Housing	Adequate space per person; safe structures; affordable costs; diverse neighborhoods.	Homeless Services	Short-term housing for people experiencing homelessness; emergency shelters
Thriving Natural World	Clean air, water, soil; healthy ecosystems; accessible natural spaces; freedom from extreme heat, flooding, wind, radiation, earthquakes, and pathogens	Environmental Clean-Up	Efforts to clean up hazards in air, water, soil, homes, workplaces, and communities; lead abatement; water treatment; brownfield contamination; disaster response and recovery
Reliable Transportation	Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation; close to work, school, food, leisure; active transport; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards	Unemployment and Food Assistance	Assistance for those who are disadvantaged, out of work, or disabled; federally supported programs for disadvantaged families; food banks, energy assistance, childcare assistance
Belonging and Civic Muscle			
Sense of belonging and power to shape a common world; social support; civic agency, engagement, and representation (voting, volunteering, public work); arts, culture, and spiritual life; freedom from stigma, discrimination, and oppression; support for civil and human rights; collective efficacy; civic science; transparency; communications, information technology, and social networking; politics and partisan discourse			

Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Applicants must meet the Eligibility Criteria and clearly demonstrate how their proposal meets the Proposal Requirements, which will be used to evaluate all submissions.

Eligibility Checklist

Criteria	Core Question to Answer in Proposal
Equity-Focused & Place-Based	Does your community have the highest level of vulnerability or deprivation determined by either (1) the Social Vulnerability Index (census tracts in dark blue quartile) or (2) the Area Deprivation Index (census block groups in dark orange/red levels 8, 9, or 10)?
Lead Applicant Status	Is the lead applicant (or its Fiscal Agent) a 501(c)(3) or a municipality?

Proposal Requirements

Requirement	Core Question to Answer in Proposal	Examples of Evidence to Include in Proposal
Guided by the Community	Was the project idea identified, prioritized, and developed through a collaborative process that included residents and key organizational partners, rather than a single organization deciding alone?	(A) Informed by Community Revitalization or Comprehensive Plan: Direct citations and alignment with a recognized, existing community plan. (B) Creating Plan or Structure: A clear scope of work and deliverables focused on planning activities and/or creating a collaborative structure. (C) Community-Driven Project Plan: Documentation of resident and partner input (e.g., meeting minutes, focus group summaries) used to prioritize the project.
Continuous Engagement with and Accountability to Community	Does the proposal detail a plan for continuous engagement with and accountability to the community, including reporting progress and outcomes?	A summary of how residents and partners will be engaged throughout the grant period, including progress updates and project outcomes.
Community Vital	Is the project aimed at	A clear identification of the Vital Condition(s)

Conditions Focus (The Goal)	strengthening community-level Vital Conditions, as opposed to providing Urgent Services to individuals?	being addressed and a rationale linking the community's need to that focus.
Upstream / Community-Level Policy, Systems, & Environmental Change Interventions (The Strategy)	Will the project change the local policies, systems, and environments and create durable improvements for the broader community?	Description of systemic interventions (e.g., infrastructure improvements, policy changes) rather than individual-level interventions (e.g., tutoring, navigation services, workshops, training, etc.).
Guided by Logic & Evidence	Is the project supported by strong logic that clearly links the community's needs and priorities, the proposed activities, expected outputs, and the desired outcomes AND evidence that indicates the proposed approach is likely to succeed. ?	<p>(A) Logic: Narrative summary and action plan that explain the links between needs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals.</p> <p>(B) Evidence: References to national best practices, external evaluations, or documented local results</p>

What We Fund / What We Do NOT Fund

HCD funding supports Community-Level Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change interventions that advance community Vital Conditions. Applicants are highly encouraged to pursue funding for [multi-solver interventions](#), solutions that can solve multiple problems at the same time, often across vital conditions and sectors. See descriptions of projects previously funded by HCD [here](#).

We Fund These Project Categories

Project Category/Goal	Activities	Outputs Examples (achievable within 12 months)
Establishing a Community Steering Committee <i>"We are just starting out. We need to bring residents and partners together to form a structure"</i>	Planning & Facilitating Staffing for a backbone organization to facilitate meetings, build trust, and establish governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalized Governance Documents (e.g., bylaws, MOUs)
Creating a Community Revitalization Plan <i>"We need to bring residents and partners together to develop shared goals and strategies."</i>	Planning & Assessment Staffing/contracts to conduct needs assessments and facilitate the creation of a Community Revitalization Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Needs Assessment Report (i.e., data-driven report on community vital conditions) • Adopted Community Plan (i.e., finalized plan ready for future implementation)
Delivering Backbone Functions <i>"We have a collaborative structure and a plan. We need to continue to bring residents and partners together to collaboratively implement our shared plan."</i>	Coordinating & Facilitating Staffing to manage the coordinated implementation of a community revitalization plan addressing the vital conditions (i.e. facilitate strategic implementation and alignment, mobilize funds, facilitate shared measurement & reporting, cultivate support from stakeholders & residents).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Grant Proposals • Funding from other sources to support community transformation goals • Shared Measurement System (e.g. tools and processes for tracking and reporting collective implementation on PSE/vital conditions). • Completed Community Progress Report (i.e., a data-driven report that communicates collective progress on PSE/vital conditions improvements) <p>*Facilitation of meetings alone is not sufficient for funding</p>
Preparing a Specific Project for Action <i>"Our community has identified a priority project (e.g., a park or housing), but we need to get it 'shovel-ready' before we can implement it."</i>	Project Planning Staffing and technical costs for co-developing conceptual plans with residents and stakeholders; creating architectural designs; securing permits; creating a financial model; gaining site control; facilitating a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-Driven Conceptual Project Plans • Finalized "Shovel-Ready" project plan • Secured Capital Funds

	design charrette; creating a project implementation plan and budget; securing MOUs, etc.	
Implementing Community Plans to Achieve Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change <i>"We are ready to break ground on a physical asset or enact a new process/policy/system that was identified in our community plan."</i>	Implementing Staffing, contracts, or capital costs for construction, renovation, installation (green spaces, housing, lighting), implementing new processes, policies, advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created Physical Assets: e.g., 5 new housing units completed, a park renovation finished, street lighting installed). • Implemented Practice Change: (e.g., A new way of working together is established). • Achieved Policy Change: e.g., documentation of a zoning change

Examples of Projects We Fund/Do NOT Fund (This is not an all-inclusive list)

Green Light (We Fund This) <i>Upstream, Vital Conditions-focused, Community-Level Policy, Systems, & Environmental Change Interventions that create lasting change for the broader community</i>	Red Light (We Do Not Fund) <i>Downstream Interventions; Urgent Services; Individual-Level Interventions; Programs or services; Interventions that provide temporary relief for narrow segments of community</i>
Basic Needs for Health & Safety	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install lighting to increase street safety and walkability • Revitalize parks, playgrounds, greenspace • Establish shared use agreements to increase access to community spaces • Create/implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvement plan • Eliminate dilapidated properties • Clean and green/repurpose vacant lots • Establish grocery store or farmers market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate community spaces • Preventative health care • Food assistance, food pantries • Mental health services • Crime Response • Violence interruption programs • Addiction treatment • Acute care for illness or injury • Exercise classes • Resource navigation services • On-going management of farmers markets
Lifelong Learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build/renovate a community center/hub • Build/renovate a childcare center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring • Youth camps/after school programs • Childcare assistance • GED programming/classes

Meaningful Work & Wealth	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop community-owned retail marketplace and incubator ● Establish commercial kitchen and food processing hub ● Revitalize a commercial corridor ● Establish worker cooperative incubator ● Advocate for local procurement policy ● Advocate for Downtown Development District designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unemployment assistance ● On-going management of workforce development programs ● Job placement services
Humane Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repair homes ● Develop/execute strategy to improve housing or blighted streets ● Create affordable housing ● Advocate for local zoning policies to support affordable homes ● Advocate for local policies to protect renters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Homeless services or shelters ● Transitional housing programs ● Homeownership programs
Thriving Natural World	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Light construction to clear or revitalize a green space ● Rehab vacant lots ● Create Community Land Trust ● Develop/execute urban greening plan ● Reclaim land to create public green space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environmental clean-up ● Water treatment ● Disaster response and recovery ● Community trash clean-ups when not connected to a larger project
Reliable Transportation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build sidewalks and bikeways to improve connectivity ● Create community-driven design concepts for transportation improvements ● Pop-up installations to test proposed improvements ● Improvements to crosswalks, paths, bike lanes ● Advocate for sidewalk ordinances ● Advocate for improvements to transit system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Police, fire, first response ● Transportation vouchers ● Driver education programs

Belonging & Civic Muscle	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create community plans with residents and community stakeholders ● Coordinate implementation of community plan with residents and community stakeholders ● Establish formal neighborhood associations or advisory boards to support resident decision making power ● Facilitate community steering committee meetings to support collaborative and coordinated change ● Establish shared measurement system and produce community progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resident leadership training when not connected to advancing a larger project ● Civic / voter registration workshops ● Community social events (e.g., dinners, movie nights, block parties)

Funding Exclusions:

- General operating expenses
- The purchase of land
- Endowments
- Religious organizations for sectarian purposes (*However, projects that serve the entire community, regardless of religious affiliation, are eligible for support.*)
- Annual fundraising campaigns or general operating expenses
- Projects completed before the application deadline of this proposal
- Individuals
- Debt reduction
- For-profit businesses
- Purchase of office equipment, furniture or electronics (*Exceptions may occur at the Grants Committee's discretion, for projects that build and/or sustain an organization's technology infrastructure. Such projects must clearly demonstrate the impact of this investment.*)
- Direct lobbying
- Any organization or project that is inconsistent with the HCD mission, vision, values, and strategy
- Organizations or projects that unlawfully discriminate with regard to employees, volunteers, delivery of programs or services, or clients served based on age, sex, religion/creed, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, marital status, military or veteran status, pregnancy or genetic information

Application Process & Timeline

The HCD funding process is designed to support the co-development of strong proposals that effectively align HCD investment priorities with community priorities. This approach ensures that we are being shared stewards of HCD's limited resources by strategically focusing investments where they will yield the greatest impact. Proposals demonstrating the strongest alignment will be advanced to the full application phase. Action plan and budget templates are available on the HCD website.

Phase	Description and Resources	Date
RFP Release	Application materials will be available on the Delaware Community Foundation grant page .	January 12th
Informational Webinar	Intended for new applicants, but all are welcome. Learn more about this opportunity for partnership.	January 21, 12 - 1pm Register here .
Pre-application Meeting	<i>Required for new applicants only</i> to explore alignment and confirm eligibility before proceeding.	Meetings must occur by Feb 27th. Schedule here .
Letter of Interest (LOI)	Applicants submit a summary of their project using the required form via the Delaware Community Foundation's website . Find the LOI question list there as well, to prepare your answers.	LOI due March 1, 2026
Collaboration & Refinement	HCD reviews the LOI submissions and provides feedback to invited applications to help refine the project concept.	Feedback on LOI will be emailed by March 30th
Full Proposals (by invitation)	Invited applicants submit a complete proposal, including an action plan and detailed budget via the Delaware Community Foundation's website . The application question list and required Action Plan and Budget templates are on the DCF website.	Full proposals due April 30th (if invited).
Review and Refinement	HCD reviews the submissions and provides feedback to refine the final action plan or budget.	May/June 2026
Review & Agreements	HCD reviews all invited applications, notifies applicants and executes Grant Agreements with successful grantees.	June 2026
Grant Start	Funding available for work beginning July 1, 2026	July 1, 2026 (through June 30, 2027)

Budget and Action Plan Guidelines

Action Plan Guidelines

- The Action Plan is a required project planning and management tool used to describe project goals, objectives, activities, timeline, and outputs and the links.
- It must demonstrate a scope that is realistically achievable within the 12-month grant period.
- If your project is multi-year, your proposal must clearly outline the major milestone(s) and output(s) you aim to achieve within the grant timeframe.
- Applicants are encouraged to focus on one big project or a few sizable projects that yield significant outputs rather than many smaller projects.

Budget Guidelines

- **Shared Stewardship:** We ask applicants to submit well-researched and justifiable budgets. As shared stewards of these resources, we require clear demonstration that every dollar advances the systemic change outlined in the proposal.
- **Eligible Expenses:** Funding may be requested for capital, equipment, contracts, subawards, personnel and fringe, other justifiable direct project/implementation costs, and indirect costs. See restrictions above.
- **Project-Specific Staffing:** Funding must be applied toward staff time essential for achieving the scope of work outlined in the proposal; it is not for general organizational payroll.
 - For each entry, specify the title, the full time equivalent (FTE), the annual salary or hourly rate, and the total amount requested.
 - Fringe Benefits must be listed as a separate line item immediately following each salary entry.
- **Justification/Project Cost Allocation Column:** In the Justification/Project Cost Allocation column, provide a brief description for each line item that explains how the specific expense helps achieve the PSE goals of each project. If any expense in the budget supports more than one project, provide a specific breakdown.
- **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs may not exceed 15% of the total request unless the applicant has a federally negotiated rate, which will be accepted.
- **Backbone Functions & Indirect Expenses:** These are treated as separate and distinct expense types in your budget. To ensure fiscal transparency and avoid duplication of funding, please ensure that no single expense is allocated to both categories.

Accountability, Collaboration, and Continuous Engagement

HCD views reporting as a vital component of shared stewardship and accountability to the communities that we serve, as well as our investors.

- **Community Accountability and Reporting:** Grantees are expected to continuously engage with the community and maintain direct accountability regarding project progress and outcomes. Progress must be shared in accessible and meaningful ways.
 - **Reporting to Collaborative Structures:** If an existing community-wide backbone organization or collaborative structure (e.g. a revitalization steering committee) is in place, the grantee may report project progress and outcomes directly to that structure. This collaboration ensures the backbone organization can effectively track and report on the collective implementation of the community plan.
 - **Direct Community Communication:** If no formal collaborative structure exists, grantees may detail in their Action Plan how they will proactively communicate progress and outcomes with residents, organizational partners, and other community stakeholders.

In addition to community-facing engagement, grantees are required to submit formal reports and participate in check-in meetings with the HCD team to track grant progress.

- **Quarterly Check-in Meetings:** Grantees are invited to participate in quarterly virtual check-in meetings with their HCD liaison to discuss progress, challenges, and technical assistance needs.
- **Progress and Final Reports:** Grantees are expected to submit a 6 month progress report and a final report detailing activities and outputs based on the milestones outlined in the agreed-upon Action Plan.

Contact and Inquiries

If you have questions that are not addressed in the RFP or informational webinar, please feel free to reach out to the HCD Team.

New Applicants:

Kate Dupont Phillips
Executive Director, Healthy Communities Delaware
Kate@HealthyCommunitiesDE.org

Existing Community Partners:

Please reach out to your HCD liaison.

Request for Proposals FAQ

This document serves as a guide for both existing and prospective partners. It provides answers to frequently asked questions and defines the strategic concepts used in the Request for Proposals (RFP). We encourage a thorough review, as this guide clarifies key aspects of our funding, including the requirements for collaboration and focus on upstream Community-Level Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change and Vital Conditions.

Core Concepts: Vital Conditions & Multi-Solvers

Q: Why doesn't HCD fund programs or services that advance Vital Conditions for individuals (e.g., workforce training, resource navigation) even if they are part of a community plan?

HCD's focus is strictly on Community-Level Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change that creates durable improvements everyone can benefit from.

While individually-focused programs (like exercise classes or job training) are valuable and likely necessary components of a community plan, they do not improve the policies, systems or environment and typically require ongoing funding to maintain. HCD prioritizes the limited funds available for the creation of the systems that support those services but not the service delivery itself.

- Example: HCD funds the renovation or construction of a community building that is designated as a durable, shared space for local workforce development training and resource navigation. HCD would not fund the ongoing salary for the job trainer or resource navigator who runs the classes inside that building.

Q: What is a "multi-solver intervention"?

A multi-solver intervention is a project that aims to simultaneously strengthen multiple Vital Conditions or solve multiple problems with a single investment. We give preference to these because they are typically a more efficient use of funds. Learn more about multisolving [here](#).

- Example: Prioritize the existence and creation of safe, healthy, and accessible community open green (forests/fields/parks) and blue spaces (water), which improves the environment, increases physical activity, improves mental health, and can decrease community violence.

Collaboration & Readiness

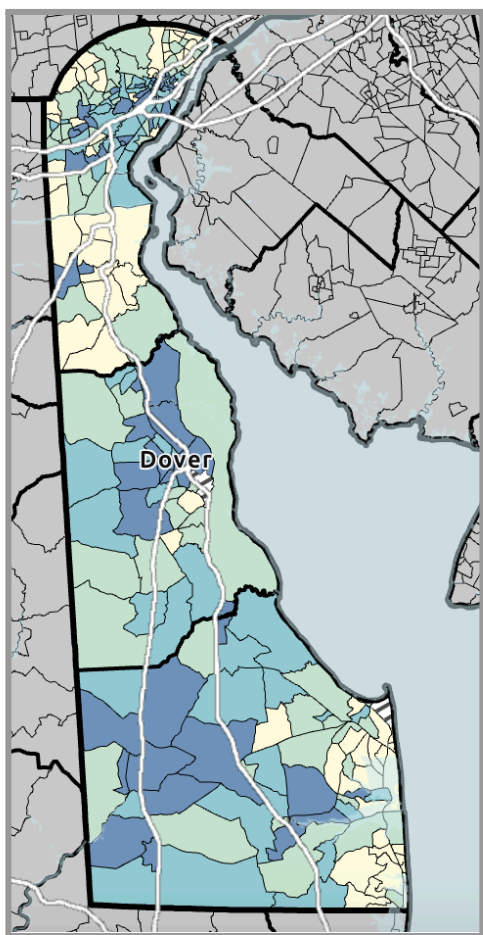
Q: How do we determine a community's SVI or ADI score and whether we are eligible for this opportunity?

This opportunity is open to self-defined communities in Delaware with borders that include census tracts or census blocks groups with the highest level of vulnerability or deprivation determined by either (1) CDC's Social Vulnerability Index or (2) HRSA's Area Deprivation Index. Proposed work may target a larger geographic area if it includes and is primarily focused on one or more of the priority census tracts or

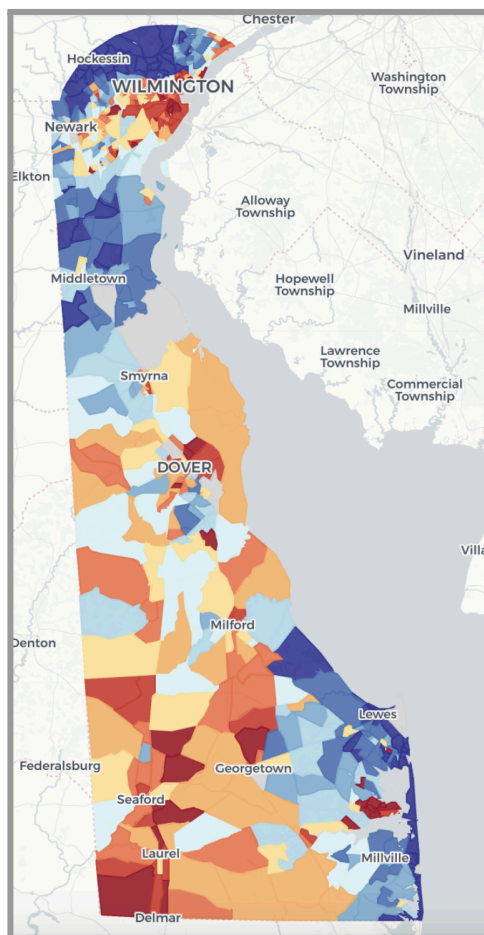
census block groups. Lead organizations or collaborating organizations should be located within, or currently working within, the eligible census tracts or census block groups. Please refer to the information below to determine whether your community is eligible:

- (1) **Social Vulnerability Index:** The SVI scores range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating greater disadvantage. Census tracts with a score above 0.75 are in the top quartile of the state and are the most vulnerable. Communities that include one or more census tracts with a score above 0.75 (dark blue) are eligible for this opportunity. To determine whether your community's score falls within the highest level of vulnerability, please look up a centralized address within your community on the [Social Vulnerability Index](#) map.
- (2) **Area Deprivation Index:** The ADI ranks neighborhoods from 1-10, with higher scores indicating greater disadvantage. Census block groups in levels 8, 9, and 10 are in the top three deciles of the state and are the most deprived. Communities that include one or more census clock groups in levels 8, 9, or 10 (dark orange-red) are eligible for this opportunity. To determine whether your community is ranked within the highest levels of deprivation, look up a centralized address within your community on the [Area Deprivation Index](#) map.

Social Vulnerability Index Map (2022)



Area Deprivation Index Map (2023)



Q: Our community is new to formalized collaboration. Are we eligible?

Yes. HCD invests in communities in all stages of community transformation, including those that are starting out and need funding for foundational work, such as conducting needs assessments, facilitating the creation of a community plan, or establishing a community steering committee.

Q: How is delivering backbone functions different from planning & assessing or implementing?

- A Backbone Function is an activity (e.g., convening, communication, data monitoring) essential for coordinating multiple organizations toward one or more collective community goals. This is often a necessary function for creation and implementation of a community revitalization plan, where many organizations and residents are working together, and each may be working on a different goal. An organization performing backbone functions in their community is serving as the administrative engine of the community's collaborative structure. Backbone functions or activities are carried out by backbone organizations and structures (e.g. non-profit organization, partnerships between nonprofits and governments, coalitions, steering committees, civic associations, etc.).
- Planning & Assessment and Implementation projects are the *substantive work* that the backbone organization is coordinating (e.g., creation of a plan, implementation of plan elements like an affordable housing project, park revitalization project, etc.).

Q: What kind of partnership structure is required for an application?

This call is designed to support place-based partnerships that bring together a diverse group of local stakeholders. Partnerships must include residents and key organizational stakeholders. Partners might include community steering committees, coalitions, civic associations, faith-based organizations, schools, local businesses, government entities, nonprofit organizations, and other local partners.

Q: Can multiple organizations from the same community submit separate proposals?

Yes. However, multiple organizations within the same community are expected to coordinate and submit proposals that are non-duplicative. Organizations interested in partnership should be willing to explore collaboration opportunities both within and across other communities. Healthy Communities DE staff will connect interested organizations within a community if they are not yet connected.

Developing Your Proposal & Action Plan

Q: What if the project our community prioritizes cannot be completed in 12 months?

Community development projects, particularly those involving implementation and capital assets, often require multiple years to reach completion. We encourage applicants to provide an overview of their multi-year plan for full project completion (e.g., Year 1: Planning and Design; Year 2: Phase 1 Implementation; Year 3: Phase 2 Implementation).

However, your proposal for this specific grant should detail the specific, significant activities and outputs that you realistically anticipate completing in the upcoming 1-year grant cycle using the requested HCD

funding. These specific deliverables must represent clear, tangible milestones (e.g., securing necessary permits, finalizing architectural drawings, completing a defined phase of construction, or achieving full collaborative formation). Any multi-year project must also include a clear sustainability or multi-phase funding plan showing how the project will reach completion beyond the current grant period.

While HCD is interested in supporting multi-year projects, we do not guarantee funding for multiple years. Future funding is contingent on HCD's funding availability, a grantee's past performance in the preceding grant cycle, and the competitive review of any subsequent proposal.

Q: How do we demonstrate that our project is community-driven in our proposal?

If your project idea meets this criteria...	...include the following in your proposal
The proposed project implements a component of an existing community revitalization plan, comprehensive plan, or similar plan.	Reference the specific goals and strategies from the existing plan that your project aligns with. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title and publication date of the Community Plan • PDF or weblink to the Community Revitalization Plan
The proposed project aims to achieve goals and implement strategies that were prioritized by a group of residents and stakeholders in the community.	Description of the process used to collaboratively assess needs and prioritize the goals and strategies in your proposal. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports, meeting summaries, or other documentation.

Funding and Stewardship

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum grant amount?

Yes. Grant awards will range from a minimum of \$25,000 up to a maximum of \$150,000. Applicants must ensure their proposed project budget falls within this range. If sufficient funds are not available to cover the full request, HCD will work with you to modify the project scope and budget.

Q: What is meant by HCD's "commitment to community, not organizations" principle?

This principle reflects our focus on the long-term success and well-being of the defined geographic community, rather than providing continuous operational funding to any single organization.

This approach is guided by the understanding that community change requires many partners working together over a long time period to produce systemic changes that support health and well-being. Therefore, our goal is to provide a steady flow of funding to help communities complete complex, collaborative, and coordinated goals over a long time period. We view our funding as a strategic investment in the long-term success of the community and its revitalization plan.

While we partner with organizations to execute the plan, our grants are intended for project-specific, implementable change. Our commitment ensures that funding is strategic, durable, and flexible, serving

the community's evolving plan rather than the static needs of individual organizations.

For example:

- Scenario: An organization submits a proposal to HCD to build and repair homes to create more affordable housing. This aligns with the community's revitalization plan and HCD funding priorities . With four years of HCD funding plus additional funding from other sources, the organization builds and/or repairs 50 homes.
- Natural Shifts in Organizational Focus: In year 5, the organization shifts its direction toward another community priority: programming to help residents prepare for homeownership. While this programming aligns with the organization's mission and the community's revitalization plan, it does not align with HCD's funding priorities (which exclude individual services/programs).
- Continued Investment in Community: HCD would not invest in this program. HCD would seek to continue its long-term funding commitment to the community via other projects that are better aligned with HCD's Environment and Systems Change priorities.

Q: If we are funded for a planning project, can we expect to receive implementation funding in the subsequent year?

While HCD is committed to the community for the long term, funding for a planning project does not guarantee subsequent implementation funding. Future funding decisions are based on the successful completion of the planning outputs and a competitive review of the next proposal.