



Request for Proposals

Highmark BluePrints for the Community -- Large Grants

The Delaware Community Foundation (DCF) and Highmark Delaware are pleased to announce this Request for Proposals for the Highmark BluePrints for the Community Large Grant cycle. The goal of this funding is to support work that increases access to healthcare and/or reduces health disparities for Delaware’s uninsured and underserved populations.

Background

In 2007, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware established BluePrints for the Community, a grant program to help address the issues faced by Delaware's uninsured and underserved populations. The program was established as a donor-advised fund at the Delaware Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization that manages and administers charitable funds throughout Delaware. From inception through 2025, over 325 grants totaling more than \$40 million have been awarded.

Proposal Goals: Increasing Access to Care and Reducing Health Disparities

Proposed projects should demonstrate a clear mission to improve access to healthcare services and/or reduce health disparities among underserved populations.

Access to Care: Access to care refers to an individual's ability to obtain necessary healthcare services when needed. Proposals may address barriers such as:

- Geographic location
- Lack of insurance coverage or underinsurance
- Limited provider availability and workforce shortages
- Financial constraints and affordability of care

Health Disparities: Health disparities are largely preventable differences in health outcomes that adversely affect populations facing greater challenges to achieving optimal health. These

disparities are closely linked to social, economic, and environmental factors that can persist across generations. Disparities are often experienced by racial and ethnic minority populations, low-income individuals, and other historically underserved groups. Health disparities can be observed in:

- Risks, prevalence, or problems resulting from specific behaviors
- Incidence, prevalence, and mortality from conditions, diseases, and/or disorders

Proposals should describe how the proposed intervention will improve healthcare access, address underlying factors contributing to health disparities, and produce measurable improvements in health outcomes for the target population.

Proposal Focus Areas:

Proposals should aim to increase access to care and/or reduce health disparities through a program/project that falls within one of these five areas:

Focus Areas	Examples:
Health Care Access	Preventative care, disease specific, health literacy, research, etc.
Economic Stability for Families and Individuals	Financial resources strains, food insecurity, housing stability, etc.
Social and Community Context	Mental health, physical activities, social connections, etc.
Neighborhood and Built Environment	Safety, transportation, environmental health, infrastructure, etc.
Health Workforce	Training, upskilling, further education, provider practice improvements, etc.

Funding and Timeline:

Large Grant Cycle

Grant Period:	January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027
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Award Amount Range:	\$50,000 - \$200,000
Application Opens:	June 15, 2026
Application Closes:	August 14, 2026
Review Period:	August 14 - November, 2026
Notice:	Mid-December, 2026

Eligibility:

To be eligible for funding, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- The applying organization must be an incorporated not-for-profit 501c3 or a community-benefit government agency, such as a library, park system, or public school district.
- Grants are awarded only to eligible organizations. Individuals are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants must disclose any conflict of interest due to representation by their organization on the BCBSD Advisory Council or Board of Directors or the Delaware Community Foundation Board of Directors.
- ***Organizations with an active Highmark grant are not eligible to apply for additional funding until their grant cycle is complete.***
- While there are no restrictions on the number of applications or awards received, funding and performance history are taken into consideration.

What We Do Not Fund:

- Non-501(c)3 organizations
- Purchase of office equipment, furniture or standard office expenses
- Sports clubs, leagues or facilities
- Endowments
- Religious organizations for sectarian purposes
- Annual fundraising campaigns
- Projects completed before the grant period begins
- Individuals
- Special events
- Debt reduction

Key Factors Considered:

Applications will be evaluated based on the following factors:

- **Alignment with Program Goals and Focus Areas** – the extent to which the proposed project supports the program's stated priorities and objectives.
- **Demonstrated Need** – evidence of a significant community need or gap that the proposed project is designed to address.
- **Cost-Benefit Considerations** – the anticipated impact and value of the project relative to the requested funding amount.
- **Geographic Distribution** – consideration of equitable funding distribution across communities and regions served.
- **Strength of Evidence** – use of data, research, best practices, or proven approaches that support the proposed intervention.
- **Proposed Outcomes** – clearly defined, measurable outcomes and a realistic plan for evaluating project success.
- **Target Population** – The extent to which the project serves populations experiencing barriers to care, health disparities, or other significant health-related challenges.

The Application Process:

Application Process:

- Must be submitted using the online DCF application
- Only one application per organization
- Other formats will not be accepted

Application Outline:

- Organization Information:
 - Organization Name
 - EIN
 - Years of Operation
 - Mission Statement
 - History of the Organization
 - Geography Served
 - Contact Information
- Details:
 - BluePrints Priority Area

- Project Name
- Project Summary
- Measuring Success / Proposed Timeline
- Population Served (Target Population) / Geography Served
- Amount Requested
- Partners / Collaboration
- Project Budget & Estimates / Quotes
- Substantiate Need (Budget Narrative)
- Required Attachments:
 - Most Recent Audited Financials and Form 990
 - Operating Budget for Organization
 - Project Budget
 - Board of Directors List
 - IRS Determination Letter
 - Additional Upload (Photos or Collateral)
- Payment Processing:
 - Authorization of Payment
 - Voided Check or Letter from Bank

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 DCF Team.

Question Topic	DCF Team Member:	Contact Information:
Process or Grant Portal	Kelly Sheridan	KSheridan@delcf.org
Content / Strategy / Fit	Kate Dupont Phillips	KDupontPhillips@delcf.org Schedule a 20-min discussion with Kate via Calendly .

The Review Process:

The Rubric

Organization / Financial	Project / Program Need	Project / Program Impact
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Sustainability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organization Overview ● Experience ● Funding History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Align with guidelines / Priority Areas ● Use of Funds ● Project Design ● Data Supporting Need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Population ● Impact ● Measurable Outcomes ● Project Budget

Review Process:

- DCF staff reviews for completeness and fit.
- Proposals are individually reviewed and scored by a review committee.
- Once review is complete, the committee meets to recommend organizations for funding.
- List of recommended awards are submitted to the Highmark and DCF Boards for approval.
- Once approved, DCF staff notifies all applicants of grant decisions.

Notification:

- **If You Receive a Highmark BluePrints Grant**
 - Spread the word! Highmark provides media kits to share.
- **If You Do NOT Receive a Grant**
 - You may apply for the following cycle.

Reporting:

Grant recipients are expected to provide timely updates on project implementation and outcomes throughout the grant period.

Schedule

- Six-Month Progress Report – *Required for recipients of large grants.*
- Twelve-Month Final Report – *Required for all grant recipients.*

Future Funding Considerations

Successful completion of the proposed project, achievement of stated outcomes, and fulfillment of reporting requirements will be considered during the review of future funding requests.

Communication

Open and ongoing communication is encouraged throughout the grant period. Grant recipients should promptly notify the funder of significant project changes, challenges, delays, or other circumstances that may affect project implementation or outcomes.

Informational Webinar:

An informational webinar will be held on this grant opportunity on June 24th at 11am via Zoom. The information provided will be the same information provided in this RFP. There will be an opportunity for questions at the end of the presentation. [REGISTER HERE](#).