Assessment & Planning Process
Call for Applications

Are you part of a culturally-specific or cross-racial organization or group that wants to build capacity for civic engagement and electoral organizing—engaging your community members to help change policies through the ballot and elected bodies? Northwest Health Foundation invites your group to apply for the Assessment & Planning process for our next initiative, Civic Health.

This Call for Applications (CFA) includes background about Civic Health, questions for your group to consider when deciding whether to apply, the application questions and a timeline.

Applications for Assessment & Planning open July 31, 2019 and close October 1, 2019 at 12pm noon PST. We will post Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the application webpage.

Once you have read the CFA, please register for the informational webinar on August 22, 2019 at 1:30pm PST. The link to register is also on the application webpage.

Learn More
www.northwesthealth.org/civichealth

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Background

INTRODUCTION

Health stems from all aspects of our lives: education, economic opportunity, a sound environment, a connected community and loving family and friends. It is largely public policy that determines how we advance and protect many of these aspects of health. The ability to take part in policymaking from the ballot box to the legislative chamber is fundamental to the health of every person, but too few of us have the resources or know-how to participate. We need the tools to support strong, enduring civic engagement in all our communities, so we can elect leaders and shape policies for a quality life and good health. Northwest Health Foundation is calling our five-year initiative to do this work Civic Health.

Starting in 2020, Northwest Health Foundation will commit $5 million of our 501(c)(4) resources to the initiative, and we hope to raise additional 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) resources from other funders. These resources will support general operations for 501(c)4 organizations (no less than $50,000 per year) and their affiliated 501(c)3 organizations, as well as a robust capacity building and technical assistance program, regular skill-building and movement-building convenings, research and evaluation.

Civic Health will select groups in 2020 to do work that begins January 2021 and ends December 2024. But first, we’re inviting organizations to join an Assessment & Planning process in early 2020. We’ll select around 20 organizations to join Assessment & Planning. Each organization will receive a small grant of $3,750 to support their participation.

Joining Assessment & Planning isn’t a guarantee to participate in or receive funding from the Civic Health initiative itself. But we do expect that all organizations in Civic Health will have participated in the Assessment & Planning process.

WHAT IS CIVIC HEALTH?

To build a more equitable Pacific Northwest, organizations and the communities they represent must reimagine a political and policymaking process that elevates those closest to the problems created by bad or inadequate public policies. Civic Health values the vision and voice of organizations led by and representing these community members.

Civic Health’s strategy:

- Boldly resource and support 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 organizations led by Black people, Indigenous people and people of color (BIPOC)
- Build independent political power and infrastructure using Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE)
- Connect urban and rural communities across Oregon and Southwest Washington
- Appoint leaders, elect candidates and move important policies
Civic Health’s goals:

- Build the skills and infrastructure in BIPOC communities to elect leaders and change policies at the local and state level so everyone has access to the resources and opportunities they need
- Develop leaders and talent rooted in, and supportive of, BIPOC communities
- Establish a vibrant democratic culture that values, centers and supports BIPOC

Race/ethnicity is one of the strongest predictors of lifelong health. We don’t think this bias is right, so Civic Health places Black, Indigenous and people-of-color-led (BIPOC) organizations at the forefront of this work. We also recognize that intersecting factors like geography, disability and class compound to create even greater barriers to civic engagement and health. Civic Health will emphasize the leadership of people and organizations that work at these intersections.

We envision organizations using public education, lobbying, litigation, voter mobilization and other tactics to win candidate and ballot campaigns between 2021 and 2025. Research and evaluation will allow organizations to experiment and refine their work. If our fundraising efforts are successful, the Civic Health cohort of organizations may also help manage a discretionary fund for a joint statewide ballot measure campaign in 2024.

Civic Health will include organizations based in Northwest Health Foundation’s service region: all counties in Oregon and Clark, Cowlitz, Pacific, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties in Southwest Washington.

By the end of Civic Health, organizations will have contributed to a more reflective democracy through an increase in the number of elected leaders of color and greater participation of BIPOC communities in elections as voters and volunteers.

**What does it mean to build independent political power through Integrated Voter Engagement?**

An organization has built independent political power for its base of community members when it can change policies and/or elect candidates for office without relying primarily on the support or leadership of mainstream institutions or political parties. The organization uses elections as an opportunity to not only express a community’s power, but to expand it by activating community members in ongoing advocacy and building the skills of volunteers and staff.

For example, an organization may invite people who it first engaged in a ballot measure campaign to send a letter to their state representative to ensure the policy they passed is implemented. The organization may mobilize these same community members to attend meetings to learn about the 2020 Census. Over time, these community members will become reliable activists and leaders, perhaps even running for elected or appointed office in the future. This style of organizing is called Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE).
What do we mean by infrastructure and capacity building?

Put simply, infrastructure is the capacity and learning carried forward from a campaign that advances the next one. Instead of starting from scratch at the beginning of each new campaign, individual, organizational and community infrastructure ensures that groups are building on lessons learned to increase effectiveness, scale and impact. It also means staff and volunteers are adequately supported so they don’t burn out and leave.

To develop independent political power, culturally-specific and cross-racial organizations need the tools and skills to run electoral and legislative campaigns that foster a growing and vibrant base of place-based constituents and leaders who can be engaged year-round. This includes capacity for organizing, communications, compliance and data.

We don’t expect every organization to do everything, nor should they. Civic Health will support infrastructure for an ecosystem of organizations, meaning each organization has its own tools and skills to contribute to the greater effort. For example, one organization might coordinate canvassing, while another contributes communications expertise. Yet another might have an active base of supporters ready to volunteer their time.
What do we mean by vibrant democratic culture?

We don’t build a vibrant democratic culture through Integrated Voter Engagement alone. Organizations rarely have the time, energy and resources to get together outside of issue-based coalitions to develop and explore a common understanding. As a result, there may be shared interests among organizations to work on certain things, but few shared theories or beliefs about social change, including ideas about the economy, democracy and the role of government. Civic Health will support organizations to build a shared understanding across movements, including racial, gender, reproductive and—particularly—disability movements.

THE ASSESSMENT & PLANNING PROCESS

In early 2020, representatives from invited organizations will gather at in-person and web-based meetings to plan for Civic Health and their potential role within it. They will also hold conversations and conduct assessments about their participation within their organization’s staff, leadership and base of community members outside these meetings. This process will guide the Request for Proposals (RFP) that will be released in the summer of 2020. This RFP will determine the organizations that will receive grant funds and technical assistance through Civic Health.

Organizations selected to participate in the Civic Health Assessment & Planning process will commit to joining groups around Oregon and SW Washington to explore what it means to build power within and across communities and how that power can win campaigns and policy change. Through an interactive process of engagement, participants will be asked to examine what it means to have power, what building power for people of color requires, and how people-of-color-focused voter engagement work transforms power relationships. Come to this work prepared to learn, prepared to share and prepared to grow.

We imagine that participation in Assessment & Planning will help organizations and communities determine if Civic Health’s goals and timeline align with their own. They may not. Participation in Assessment & Planning is not a promise on your part or Northwest Health Foundation’s to become part of and receive future funding through Civic Health. But we do expect that all organizations in Civic Health will have participated in the Assessment & Planning process.

NWHF and Esperanza Tervalon-Garrett of Dancing Hearts Consulting developed the framework for Civic Health together. Dancing Hearts Consulting, LLC is a progressive political consulting firm that will facilitate the Civic Health Assessment & Planning process. Dancing Hearts Consulting and NWHF intend to continue their work together with Civic Health through 2024.
Things to Consider Before Applying

WHO SHOULD APPLY TO JOIN ASSESSMENT & PLANNING?

Eligible applicants are 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax-exempt organizations or fiscally-sponsored organizations. If your organization is not incorporated or fiscally sponsored, or if your coalition of organizations is interested in applying as a coalition, please reach out to NWHF for a conversation before applying.

We want to engage organizations that have a range of experience and capacity related to elections, from no experience to seasoned. In other words, even if your organization hasn’t participated in local or statewide elections and related work, please still consider applying.

We also want to engage organizations that work at the intersections of geography and disability. For example, this could look like organizations mobilizing BIPOC communities in rural parts of the region to influence local elections or efforts led by disabled leaders of color experimenting with new ways to engage voters.

To plan for Civic Health, we need to convene a group of organizations that:

- Have a track record of being an accountable partner
- Are ready to build and deepen relationships across organizations, geographies and identities
- Have an interest in exploring and implementing new and innovative models of organizing before, during and after elections
- Are ready to integrate racial, gender, reproductive and—particularly—disability movement frameworks in their work

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU APPLY

It is important for your organization to consider your interest and alignment in both the philosophy and the mechanics of using electoral organizing to reach your mission. Before applying, we strongly encourage you to engage your staff, leadership and trusted community members/partners in a conversation around the following questions:

- Do we want to build the power of our community to make changes in elected leadership, public policy, public practices, and how public resources are spent?
- Would we consider rethinking our approach to our current programs to better integrate civic engagement and elections?
- Do we currently, or are we ready to, integrate learning from across movements, including racial, gender, reproductive and—particularly—disability movements into our work?
- Provided we have access to the tools we need, can we see ourselves ready to contribute staff, volunteers and other resources for at least four years to engage our community members in local and statewide elections, including to support or oppose school/local/statewide ballot measures? How about to support candidates for elected office in school boards, local or statewide elections?
PARTICIPATION AND EXPECTATIONS

- Around 20 organizations or groups will receive $3,750 of 501(c)4 resources to participate in Assessment & Planning, including attending planning meetings.
- Organizations must bring two representatives to the planning meetings with decision-making authority, such as executive directors, board members and/or staff members who would hold the implementation of Civic Health’s strategies.
- The same two representatives must participate in all the meetings.
- Organizations must attend all the meetings.
- Organizations will meet up to four times during the planning process, both by webinar and in person.
- Organizations traveling more than 125 miles round trip will be reimbursed for travel costs, including lodging.

Assessment & Planning Meetings

December 4, 2019; 1-4pm PST  Welcome Webinar and First Meeting
January 2019     Meeting - in-person, half-day, near Portland
February 2019    Meeting - in-person, half-day, near Portland
March 2019       Webinar - three hours

What will we know at the end of Assessment & Planning?

During this process, organizations will assess their fit, capacity and readiness for Civic Health. That may include conversations with your executive and board leadership, staff and community members.

During the Assessment & Planning process, we will:

- Assess interest, readiness and appetite to participate in Civic Health, including capacity building needs
- Assess readiness and ability to collaborate with other groups, including shared definitions and metrics, and the strengths your group offers to other participants
- Map organizational strengths, capacities and potential for Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE)
- Assess current and desired scale of organizing and campaign efforts
- Assess willingness to be vulnerable and support one another
- Assess ability to work across organizations to build something collectively bigger than an individual organization’s interests
Application Questions

Answers to all questions below are limited to 150 words/900 characters, unless otherwise indicated.

1. Tell us why your organization wants to join Civic Health Assessment & Planning.

2. How does your organization currently build power (e.g. community organizing, policy advocacy, electoral organizing)?

3. What can your community do differently when it has power?

4. Who did you talk with in your community and organization to consider your interest and alignment with Civic Health Assessment & Planning?

5. What other organizations, if any, do you work with closely to build power in your community?

6. What specific elected office positions do you currently and/or eventually want to work on supporting candidates to campaign for? Name and number each jurisdiction and offices on a single line and note if this is current or future work. For example:

   1. Hillsboro School District - School Board members - current work
   2. City of Hillsboro - Mayor & City Council - future work
   3. Washington County - County Commissioners - future work
   4. State of Oregon - House District #29 & 30 & Senate District #15 - current work

7. Can you commit two organizational leaders to attend all the Assessment & Planning sessions in late 2019 and early 2020? (Yes/No)

8. Beginning in 2021, do you believe your organization will be ready to contribute paid staff, volunteers and other resources for at least four years to engage your community members in local and statewide elections, including to support or oppose school/local/statewide ballot measures and to support or oppose (eventually) candidates for school/local/statewide office? (Yes/No)

9. Is there anything else you want to share?

Timeline

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<td>July 31, 2019</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Planning Call for Applications opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 22, 2019</td>
<td>Informational Webinar - recording will be posted</td>
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<td>Assessment &amp; Planning CFA closes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>January 2021</td>
<td>First Civic Health grants disbursed</td>
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