Draft Request for Proposals (RFP)

Northwest Health Foundation (NWHF) is eager to release our draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for our Civic Health Cohort. We are seeking feedback on the draft RFP by July 26, 2020.

At the beginning of 2020, Northwest Health Foundation held a series of meetings with organizations interested in our upcoming Civic Health initiative. This process, which we called Civic Health Assessment and Planning (CHAP), gave us the chance to learn more about each other and helped inform the structure and approach for the Civic Health Cohort. Thanks to what we learned through CHAP, NWHF is excited to offer multi-year general operating support, dedicated technical assistance, peer learning and convenings to organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington. We anticipate funding about 11 to 13 organizations. We will prioritize Black and Native-led groups, emerging groups, and those committed to developing a common understanding and approaches to building power.

We were a part of CHAP, but we’re not sure if we should apply for Civic Health.
We understand some groups that participated in CHAP may decide not to apply for Civic Health. It may not be the right time or fit for your organization’s priorities. We also know that it takes capacity and resources to apply for competitive funding. If you are unsure, we are happy to consult with you to discuss your alignment with Civic Health.
We were not a part of CHAP, can we still apply?
It’s possible there may be emerging groups we haven’t met yet that could be well-aligned with Civic Health. If your organization was not a part of CHAP, we are open to talking with you and learning more. Please reach out to NWHF staff (contact info below).

RFP Feedback Process
We will hold a virtual feedback session for interested applicants on **Tuesday, July 14th, 1:30 - 3:00 PM PST**. Please invite leaders from your organization, such as your executive director or board members, especially if they did not attend the CHAP meetings. Register here: [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/civic-health-rfp-feedback-session-tickets-110054114820](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/civic-health-rfp-feedback-session-tickets-110054114820)

We encourage groups to use the time before the final RFP is released to determine your interest in applying for Civic Health and whether you want to apply in collaboration with other organizations.

This draft RFP includes background about Civic Health, questions for your group to consider when deciding whether to apply, the draft application questions, selection criteria and a timeline. We will post a FAQ (frequently asked questions) and glossary on the Civic Health webpage to provide answers to the questions we receive from you.

**The final RFP will be released by August 5th, and the application will close Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:00 PM noon PST.** See the timeline at the end of this document for additional key dates.

Learn More
[www.northwesthealth.org/civichealth](http://www.northwesthealth.org/civichealth)

Contact Us
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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. The Civic Health initiative includes two programs: the Civic Health Cohort and Civic Health Culture Shifting.

Starting in 2020, Northwest Health Foundation will commit $5 million of our 501(c)(4) resources to the Civic Health Cohort, and we hope to raise additional 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) resources from other funders. These resources will provide general operating support for 501(c)(4) organizations (no less than $55,000 per year) and their affiliated 501(c)(3) organizations, as well as robust capacity building and technical assistance, regular skill-building and movement-building convenings. We will select 11 to 13 Black, Indigenous and people-of-color-led (BIPOC-led) organizations or collaboratives to do work that begins January 2021 and ends December 2024.

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 and inadequate public policies. Civic Health values the vision and voice of organizations led by and representing these community members.

NWHF and Dancing Hearts Consulting have developed the framework for Civic Health together. Dancing Hearts Consulting, LLC is a Black-woman-led progressive political consulting firm. Dancing Hearts Consulting and NWHF intend to continue their work together with Civic Health through 2024.

Learn more about Dancing Hearts Consulting at their website: www.dancingheartsconsulting.org/

Civic Health’s strategy:
• Boldly resource and support 501(c)(4) organizations and their affiliated 501(c)(3) organizations led by Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color (BIPOC)
• Build independent political power and infrastructure using Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE)
• Develop a common understanding and approaches to building power
• Connect urban and rural communities across Oregon and Southwest Washington
• Appoint leaders, elect candidates and move important policies
Civic Health’s goals:

- BIPOC communities with the skills, infrastructure and mindset to elect bold leaders and pass transformative policies
- Leaders and talent rooted in, and supportive of, BIPOC communities
- A vibrant democratic culture that values, centers and supports BIPOC people

We envision organizations using public education, lobbying, litigation, voter mobilization and other strategies to elect candidates and pass policies 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 will 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.

Why BIPOC?

Race has been and continues to be the primary way our country sorts access to health, safety and opportunity. Race also affects the experiences of immigrants and refugees, as their ethnicity is racialized through policy and treatment and predicts their access to opportunity as well.

When talking about racial justice, we intentionally use the term Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC). We use this term to reflect that although racialized policies and practices affect all people of color, Black and Native American people endured the brunt of the violence in the founding and building of America and were and are uniquely targeted by government policy.

Because of this reality, Civic Health prioritizes organizations led by Black, Indigenous and other communities of color. 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. Among all BIPOC organizations funded by Civic Health, we will invest total dollars disproportionately in favor of culturally-specific or cross-racial organizations led by and serving Black and Native communities.

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

An organization has built independent political power 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 its community’s power, but to expand its power by activating community members in ongoing advocacy and building the skills of volunteers and staff. For example, the organization may invite people who were initially 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) and centers integrated approaches to building power by layering strategies and tactics to generate a cycle of intersecting campaigns.

**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
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 may have an active base of supporters ready to volunteer their time.

**What do we mean by developing a common understanding and approaches to building power?**

We don’t build a vibrant democratic culture alone, but organizations rarely have the time, energy and resources to get together outside of issue-based coalitions to develop and explore a common understanding and approaches to building power. As a result, organizations may share interests, but few share theories or beliefs about social change, including ideas about addressing structural inequity in the economy, democracy and the role of government. Civic Health will support organizations to build a shared understanding and commitment across the movement, with an emphasis on racial, gender, reproductive and—particularly—disability justice. This includes understanding and proactively addressing anti-blackness, Native erasure and ableism in their organizations and work.

**What else is Civic Health trying to achieve?**

We know that the Civic Health Cohort alone cannot achieve the goals of Civic Health. Foundations, institutions, donors and governments must shift resources, practices and policies, too. NWHF will work alongside other funders, Cohort members and civic organizations to support and align efforts to help achieve the goals of Civic Health, particularly building a democratic culture that values, centers and supports BIPOC. This program will be called Culture Shifting, and we’ll share more about it in the future.
Cohort Program

The Civic Health Cohort program will build long-term infrastructure in Oregon and Southwest Washington to ensure that political power stays with communities for years to come, rather than coming and going with elections.

The Cohort program is at the heart of this initiative and consists of the following elements:

- General operating support
- Infrastructure development grants
- Field supplement grants
- Annual goal setting and work planning
- Coaching and technical assistance
- Movement building
- Bi-annual convenings and trainings
- Peer-to-peer exchanges
- Data access and support
- Experimentation, research and evaluation

Civic Health’s Cohort program, led by Dancing Hearts Consulting, is modeled after effective IVE teaching and training practices. This program design connects Civic Health grantees with subject-matter experts (e.g. experts on building a grassroots base, strategic voter engagement, campaign development, etc.) to help them solve complex problems with long-term results. It also ensures that grantees develop a shared methodology for organizing campaigns and tracking outcomes via personalized coaching and hard-skills training.

Groups in Civic Health are not a state-wide coalition. Rather, they are a cohort of organizations that want to build their capacity for electoral work and are committed to shared values and supporting each other’s work. To act together on state-wide or regional elections or policy change, the groups will need to engage and coordinate with groups outside of Civic Health and voters outside their base.

Funding Caveats: NWHF has committed $5M to this $10M initiative. We have possible funding partners whose boards will not make a final decision until later this year. We hope to know more when the final application is released in August, but our total funding amount may change before our board’s approval of the Civic Health Cohort in December 2020. This could possibly affect the number of groups selected.

Our current funding partners, including Group Health Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust and others, have provided annual grants to Civic Health. While they hope to support the initiative through 2024, their own boards have not approved multi-year support. This means each year we will need to make our case to them for support of Civic Health.

If these funding partners do not renew their support, we will need to make changes to the program. We can’t know these changes in advance, but we promise we will communicate any changes with ample time for organizations to respond.
Tiered General Operating Support

The Civic Health Cohort program provides two-year general operating grants to each organization or collaborative, with the intent of a second two-year renewal around Fall 2022. These grants may be a combination of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) dollars. General operating grants provide organizations or collaboratives (which collectively we’ll call “groups” in this RFP) flexible resources. NWHF will not designate or instruct, directly or indirectly, funding to influence the election of candidates.

The midpoint reapplication in 2022 provides an opportunity for NWHF and groups to evaluate their progress and commitment to Civic Health.

Please note: travel costs to attend convenings and peer-to-peer learning are your responsibility. You can use general operating funds or any other funds toward the costs of travel, lodging, meals, etc.

The CHAP process helped us understand the range of needs and goals among interested groups. Recognizing the broad range of experiences that each organization has, we’re approaching general operating support in tiers.

We’re weighting more money towards emerging groups, called Igniting Organizations, in recognition of the historical under-investment in these groups and/or their early phase in organizational development. Groups with more experience will receive less general operating support.

**Igniting Organizations.** Igniting Organizations are groups that may have been historically under-sourced and/or are still developing the organizational infrastructure for strategic programming and campaigns. They may also be emerging organizations with or without 501(c)(4) status or a fiscal sponsor. These organizations will be exploring power-building strategies and integrated voter engagement for the first time, requiring deep coaching support for organizational development and planning.

We anticipate selecting up to six Igniting Organizations to join the Civic Health Cohort. They will receive:

- General operating support - $75,000 per year (2021-2024), per group
- Additional Grant Opportunities:
  - Year One - Igniting Organizations can access a $26,000 infrastructure development grant
  - Years Two through Four - Igniting Organizations may be able to access additional field supplement grants
- 10 hours per month of coaching
- Two annual convenings
- Peer-to-peer learning

**Activating Organizations.** Activating Organizations are groups that have or are establishing both a 501(c)(3) and affiliated 501(c)(4) and are familiar with IVE. They are ready to expand their civic engagement work and need support in developing their strategy and/or infrastructure to make it happen. These groups will need comprehensive support from capacity building coaches who will offer technical assistance, training and on-the-ground support.

We anticipate selecting up to three Activating Organizations to join the Civic Health Cohort. They will receive:
• General operating support - $65,000 per year (2021-2024), per group
• Additional Grant Opportunities
  • Year One - Activating Organizations can access a $26,000 infrastructure development grant
  • Years Two through Four - Activating Organizations may be able to access additional field supplement grants
• 10 hours per month of coaching
• Two annual convenings
• Peer-to-peer learning

**Accelerating Organizations.** Accelerating Organizations are groups that have existing affiliated 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) structures in place, work in at least three counties and use at least some IVE strategies. These groups will be resourced in an effort to scale and sharpen the efficacy of their work. Capacity building, coaching and support for Accelerating Organizations will focus on fine-tuning the system, coordinating a high-quality campaign in multiple locations, and building out field experiments. These organizations have a proven track record.

We anticipate selecting up to three Accelerating Organizations to join the Civic Health Cohort. They will receive:

• General operating support - $55,000 per year (2021-2024), per group
• Additional Grant Opportunities
  • Year One - Accelerating Organizations can access a $26,000 infrastructure development grant
  • Years Two through Four - Accelerating Organizations may be able to access additional field supplement grants
• 10 hours per month of coaching
• Two annual convenings
• Peer-to-peer learning

**Collaborative Organizations.** Collaborative Organizations are a group of organizations that have existing affiliated 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) structures in place, are collectively working in at least three counties and use at least some IVE strategies. These groups will be resourced in an effort to scale and sharpen the efficacy of their work. Capacity building, coaching and support for Collaborative Organizations will focus on fine-tuning the system, coordinating a high-quality campaign in multiple locations, and building out field experiments. These organizations have a proven track record.

We anticipate selecting one Collaborative to join the Civic Health Cohort. They will receive:

• General operating support - $165,000 per year (2021-2024), per collaborative
• Additional Grant Opportunities
  • Year One - Collaboratives can access a $26,000 infrastructure development grant, one grant per Collaborative
  • Year Two - Four - Collaboratives may be able to access additional field supplement grants
• 10 hours per month of coaching
• Two annual convenings
• Peer-to-peer learning
## Funding Structure by Tiers

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<th>Igniting</th>
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<th>Accelerating</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
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* Additional grant opportunities. Groups must meet eligibility requirements.

### Infrastructure Development Grants

In addition to general operating support, in year one each group will be eligible for a one-time $26,545 infrastructure development grant that will support activities such as advancing database and/or content management systems; creating or developing a website, digital properties and email list; conducting an advisory or board retreat; testing a field program for 2021; creating a field plan and budget for 2022, etc.

To fulfill requirements for infrastructure development grants in year one:

- **Igniting Organizations** must advance their programs in the following ways: (1) advance their database and/or content management system, (2) create or develop their website, digital properties and email list; (3) conduct an advisory or board retreat
- **Activating Organizations** must complete (1) a field plan and budget for 2022, (2) test one field program for 2021, and (3) establish or strengthen their database and/or content management system OR create or develop a website, digital properties and email list OR conduct a board or advisory committee retreat.
- **Accelerating Organizations** and **Collaboratives** must complete an Integrated Voter Engagement field plan and budget for 2022 and run a field program for 2021.
Field Supplement Grants
In addition to general operating support, in years two through four each group will be eligible to apply for a supplemental grant to support their field program. NWHF will commit around $275,000 per year for these grants, which may be competitive within the Cohort, depending on need. Field supplement grants are flexible and NWHF will not designate or instruct funding to influence the election of candidates.

Annual Goal Setting and Work Planning
Working with a coach, groups will develop annual goals and work plans. These work plans may cover organizational development needs, electoral plans and other key activities related to IVE.

Coaching and Technical Assistance
Coaching is a process focused on unlocking the potential of a group so that they may maximise their existing resources as they grow towards their long-term goals. Coaching will provide tailored support to implement the learnings from their training into their everyday activities. Each group will be matched with a coach based on the group’s strengths and growing edges.

Coaches will support organizations with the everyday implementation of their programs as well as long-term planning and infrastructure development, instruct or connect them with relevant skills-building, and provide encouragement. Just as important to the coaching relationship is a commitment by the group to take ownership of their own development and growth. That includes communicating their specific needs and feedback to the coaches.

Coaches will be available for coaching on a weekly basis through phone or video conferencing, up to 10 hours per month. Additionally, coaches will also visit their organization in-person at least once a year for more in-depth planning and/or development. Coaches will also play a role during convenings and training sessions for the entire Civic Health Cohort.

Movement Building
Movement building is an essential, long-term process that helps organizations, staff and leaders build deeper interpersonal and organizational relationships and a shared understanding of the frameworks and values that anchor an ongoing commitment to one another. Through convenings, trainings and supporting each other’s work, the Cohort will develop a common understanding and approaches to building power. This includes understanding and proactively addressing anti-blackness, Native erasure and ableism in their organizations and work.

Bi-annual Convenings and Trainings
Twice a year the Cohort will join together for in-person convenings in locations across Oregon and Southwest Washington. (We will be following any health guidelines in place at the time of convening.) These convenings are meant to build skills, relationships and alignment. Each group will be expected
to send two participants to the convenings, with consistent participation from the two participants. In year one, there will be two one-week long convenings. We encourage groups to budget for up to $7,500 to cover travel costs. In future years, convenings may be shorter.

**Peer-to-Peer Exchanges**

Grantees will meet with experienced IVE organizations based in different parts of the country for peer-to-peer, hands-on learning in odd-numbered years (2021 and 2023). These exchanges will connect the region’s emerging IVE organizations with national movements to build political power. Each group will be expected to send two participants to the exchanges, with consistent participation from the two participants.

**Database Access and Support**

Oregon’s public voter file has no information about race or ethnicity. And the modeling tools used to enhance voter information have wildly inaccurate race/ethnicity information about individual voters, making it difficult for organizations to employ data-driven IVE campaigns. The Civic Health Cohort will work with voter file vendors and other experts to enhance the file’s data to reflect who lives in Oregon today.
Things to Consider Before Applying

Organizational Eligibility

1. Applicants must be a 501(c)(4) organization, or identify a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(4) tax status, based and doing work in Oregon or Southwest Washington (Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Pacific and Wahkiakum counties). Government agencies, including tribal governments, cannot apply or receive funds from this opportunity. Your organization or your fiscal sponsor must have the ability to receive 501(c)(4) funds by December 2020. You may also have an affiliated 501(c)(3) organization, but it is not required. NWHF will grant 501(c)(3) resources to 501(c)(4) organizations for 501(c)(3) purposes.

2. Applicants must identify as a culturally-specific or cross-racial organization or collaborative of organizations serving Black, Native and/or other people of color, demonstrated through organizational leadership, governance and programs. See northwesthealth.org/definitions for detailed definitions of culturally-specific and cross-racial.

Commitment and Alignment

It is important for your group to establish your commitment and alignment to both the philosophy and the mechanics of using electoral organizing to help reach your mission. Before applying you should have engaged your staff, leadership and trusted community members/partners in a conversation. You should be able to make the following statements about your group:

- We have a track record of being an accountable partner to our community members and aligned organizations.
- We are ready to build and deepen relationships across organizations, geographies and identities.
- We want to explore and implement new and innovative models of organizing before, during and after elections.
- We want to integrate racial, gender, reproductive and—particularly—disability justice frameworks to combat anti-blackness, Indigenous erasure and ableism.
- We have a commitment to movement building in partnership with the Civic Health Cohort across geography and community.
- 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 locally, regionally and/or statewide, while building our base at the same time.
- We are ready to change our approach to our current programs to better integrate civic engagement and elections.
- Provided we have access to the tools we need, we are 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 and to support candidates for elected office in school boards, local or statewide elections.
Participation and Accountability

Each organization within the Civic Health Cohort is expected to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the program outlined above. While one or two staff people in your organization may lead this work, participation in Civic Health is bigger than the activities of these staff. Participating in electoral work generally requires more engagement across your organization, including staff, board and community leaders. Your organization’s commitment and alignment to Civic Health will be regularly evaluated by NWHF, Dancing Hearts Consulting and your fellow Cohort members. In addition, you will be expected to regularly evaluate NWHF, Dancing Hearts Consulting and your fellow Cohort members.
How NWHF Will Decide

Selection Criteria
The following criteria will guide us in selecting organizations and collaboratives:
1. An honest, reflective application
2. An honest, reflective site visit with the right folks in the room, including your executive director and key board members
3. Participation and completion of CHAP activities and homework
4. Contribution towards Cohort criteria
5. Collaboratives must commit to implementing electoral plans in at least three counties (contiguous or not; urban and/or rural) and must include activities that bring all of the organizations’ bases, members, and/or volunteers together

Cohort Criteria
The following criteria will guide us in selecting groups for the Civic Health Cohort:
• Among all BIPOC organizations funded by Civic Health, we will invest total dollars disproportionately in favor of culturally-specific or cross-racial organizations led by and serving Black and Native communities.
• At least three groups in the Cohort will be culturally-specific and/or cross-racial organizations that are based in and serve primarily tribal and/or rural communities, with at least one of them based outside the I-5 corridor.
• At least two groups in the Cohort will be culturally-specific and/or cross-racial organizations that are based in Southwest Washington.
• We expect there will be at least one Black-led group, one Native-led group, one API-led group and one Latinx-led group in the Cohort.
Application Questions

Answers to all questions below are limited to 150 words/900 characters unless otherwise indicated. If you’d prefer to submit your application through audio or video, please contact Jen Matheson (contact information above).

1. Tell us why your organization (or collaborative) wants to join Civic Health.

2. Which tier do you believe your group is best suited for, and why? (See descriptions on pages 8 - 10.)

3. If you are applying as a collaborative, please describe the structure of your group. Who is the lead, how do you make decisions, etc?

4. If you are applying as a collaborative, which counties (three minimum) will you be organizing in? What is your track record organizing in these areas?

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

6. How does your group’s work help build political power for your geographic area? Is your work ever connected to statewide work? How do you consider your regional work to be connected to building local power?

7. What are the internal barriers that might keep your group from being successful?

8. What are the external barriers that might keep your group from being successful?

9. How is your group proactively addressing anti-blackness, Native erasure and ableism in your organization(s) and work? If you’re not already, what excites you about the chance to do so?

10. 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. Note: NWHF will not designate or instruct funding to influence the election of candidates. 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

11. 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)

12. Is there anything else you want to share?
Timeline

June 19 - July 26, 2020
Draft RFP open for comments

July 14, 2020, 1:30PM PST
RFP feedback session

August 5 - September 22, 2020
Final RFP open for applications

September 22, 2020, 12PM noon PST
RFP application closes

September 22 - October 20, 2020
Site visits with applicants

Mid-December, 2020
Decisions announced

Mid-January 2020
First grant payment for 2021 - 2022 grant cycle