



— REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS —

Seeking Strategic Partner to Lead Housing Systems Change Initiative

Due: September 16, 2022 | Up to \$160,000 Total Over Two-Years

Overview

As a community health foundation, the [Partnership for Better Health](#) strives to serve as a catalyst, advocate and collaborator to establish health as a shared priority, toward ensuring that everyone has what they need for good health. The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to identify a strategic partner to staff and lead Cumberland County’s collaborative housing initiative, called Community Partners for Change. The initiative seeks to advance the group’s Strategic Plan (in Appendix B) by convening and mobilizing strategic partners to address equitable, affordable, accessible, and secure housing for all Cumberland County residents. A two-year grant of up to \$160,000 is available to support this work and proposals are due by September 16, 2022.

Background

The Partnership for Better Health’s mission is to champion and invest in ideas, initiatives and collaborations that improve the health of the people and communities in our region. We work closely with key stakeholders throughout Central and Western Cumberland County, Perry County, Northern Adams County and Greater Shippensburg.

At a meeting in the fall of 2016, the Partnership for Better Health hosted leaders from area housing and homeless service organizations for an open discussion about local challenges and opportunities related to accessing affordable/workforce housing. During this same time period, local organizations held a forum at the Penn State Dickinson School of Law to examine homelessness, and a multi-county forum held in Harrisburg explored emerging solutions to interlocking housing and health issues. In concert with these discussions and in reviewing national best practices, the Partnership for Better Health understood that there was much to be done to reduce and prevent homelessness and increase the availability of permanent, affordable housing.

In 2017, the Partnership for Better Health formed a Leadership Advisory Council on Affordable Housing. Together, the council created a shared Roadmap for Action to reduce homelessness and increase access to affordable housing in our region. The roadmap featured four main goals: 1) increase the coordination of services across housing providers; 2) engage landlords and prevent evictions; 3) increase access to employment and job training opportunities; and 4) strengthen the skills and capacities of nonprofit organizations that deliver housing and shelter services.

Concurrently, with an initial investment of \$140,000, the Partnership for Better Health engaged an expert facilitator to guide the creation of our region's first Coordinated Entry System (CES) and the Partnership provided grants to the organizations leading it. This transformative new system created a single point of entry and a shared client housing-needs assessment process, for all individuals seeking shelter services in Cumberland and Perry Counties. As additional investments, the Partnership paid for local housing professionals to attend best practice trainings offered by the National Alliance to End Homelessness. We piloted "landlord engagement grants" of up to \$5,000 to assist agencies in recruiting and retaining landlords that will accept HUD (Housing and Urban Development) vouchers for rent payment. The Partnership also offered a local training series for decision-makers and housing providers on best practices in rapid re-housing, emergency shelters, and diversion strategies.

In 2019, the foundation launched a second foundation initiative to expand upon the initial investment. The Partnership proposed a three-year plan of \$345,000 for continued funding and strategic support of local housing efforts. Efforts included the formation of a new Advisory Council to be comprised of key leaders from various fields that have a vested interest in affordable and accessible housing. At that time, the Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (CCHRA) offered to be the backbone organization for this collective impact effort. Since CCHRA already had the Local Housing Options Team, comprised of housing providers and other stakeholders, this group was re-branded as "Community Partners for Change" as a general membership arm of the Advisory Council. Overall, this initiative is serving as a broad guide to county-wide housing effort. We anticipated mid-course improvements to be made along the way, but we did not anticipate a pandemic. The pandemic impacted the kick-off of the Community Partners for Change Advisory Council, which has only ever met by Zoom.

In alignment with the new Strategic Plan spearheaded by the Advisory Council, the Partnership for Better Health is now issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a new permanent lead organization for this initiative that can best carry out the Strategic Plan to educate, advocate, and take action to meet the mission of Community Partners for Change.

Situation

According to 2020 data from the US Census Bureau, Cumberland County added 24,000 residents since 2010, reflecting a growth rate of more than 10 percent, which is the highest in Pennsylvania.

With this growth, Cumberland County faces extreme new pressures as the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania. According to the [ALICE in Pennsylvania: A Financial Hardship Study](#), 33% of households in Cumberland County are in poverty or are **A**sset Limited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mloyed. These households lack sufficient income for safe, affordable housing, and many other basic needs, such as childcare, adequate food, transportation, and health care.

In Cumberland County, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition reports that the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,074 – just below the statewide average of \$1,087. A person making minimum wage would need to work 114 hours weekly to afford this two-bedroom apartment.

<https://nlihc.org/oor>

With the growth in the county, finding available rental units is a challenge, especially for units that are offered at a fair market rate. A recent article highlighted that the Harrisburg area is the second most competitive rental market in the United States, and in Carlisle rental rates have risen 40.59% in just one year. More information is available at: <https://www.pennlive.com/data/2022/07/competition-for-rental-housing-is-fierce-in-central-pa-and-costs-are-climbing-study.html>.

To better connect people to housing and related programs, Cumberland County has a Coordinated Entry System that is managed by the Eastern PA Continuum of Care. This system is an access point for assessment, prioritization and referral to housing and essential services for person(s) experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness in 33 counties of Eastern Pennsylvania.

As of August 2, 2022, the Coordinated Entry System for Cumberland County reported the following:

- 283 households are literally homeless, representing approximately 505 people;
- 71 of the households have at least one child under 18;
- 97 households are in shelter;
- 125 are unsheltered/in places not meant for human habitation;
- 61 are in other HUD-defined places that qualify them to be Category 1 homeless;
- 123 of the households are headed by a person with a disability;
- 25 of the households are chronically homeless;
- 16 are self-identified as veterans.

Breakdown by Zip Code*												
17007	17011	17013	17015	17025	17043	17050	17055	17065	17070	17240	17241	17257
1	14	87	10	9	4	6	11	3	8	1	4	21

* Zip codes 17027, 17072, 17081, 17093, 17240, and 17266 reported 0 at the time of the report.

Note that the numbers do not add up to 283 – some households have no zip code to report in Cumberland County.

Number of Homeless Individuals - Point In Time (PIT) Survey (HUD data)										
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cumberland County	87	103	180	145	158	147	199	212	113	213

Project Focus

This Request for Proposals seeks to identify a strategic partner to staff and lead the collaborative Community Partners for Change initiative to address equitable, affordable, accessible, and secure housing for all Cumberland County residents. Specifically, the lead partner will:

- Implement the new Strategic Plan’s Goals and Objectives (in Appendix B).
- Dedicate human resources to facilitate and lead the ongoing development of the Community Partners for Change Advisory Council and general membership, to include:
 - Recruitment of new members;
 - Engagement of existing and new members of the Advisory Council and general membership, including persons with lived experience; and
 - Build the governance structure to support Strategic Plan implementation.
- Effectively sustain the current momentum for this new Strategic Plan.

- Have the capacity to think innovatively regarding solutions for housing issues and identify opportunities aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Eligibility

1. Applicants must be a legal entity. Organizations that are registered as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) are preferred but not required.
2. Applicants must have a history and/or commitment to serving under-resourced individuals and families in Cumberland County.
3. Applicants must demonstrate a strong understanding of housing issues, emerging best practices and trusted methods for bringing groups together to educate, advocate, and take action.

Timeline

Proposed Project Timeline	
Release of Request for Proposals	8/5/2022
Applications Due	9/16/2022
Finalist Q & A and Interviews (as needed)	10/7/2022
Selection Announced	10/15/2022
Anticipated Start Date	11/1/2022
Completion Date	10/31/2024

Applications are due to the Partnership for Better Health by **September 16, 2022**. A final decision about the selected lead partner to be announced in **mid-October 2022**.

Application Review & Selection Process

The Partnership for Better Health accepts all applications online. Our electronic system is used for each step in the grant process, including submission of your application and final grant report. Please review all application steps outlined in Appendix A before applying for the first time.

A review committee comprised of volunteers and staff members of the Partnership for Better Health will consider each application carefully. Their review and selection process will include the following steps.

Step 1 — Review of Qualifications: The Partnership will determine which groups are best qualified to complete the project based upon: quality of proposals, fit with *Strategic Plan* goals and expertise in housing and/or human services.

Step 2 — Follow up Q & A and Interviews with Finalists: Follow up questions will be shared with applicants, as needed.

Step 3 — For grant requests less than \$50,000, the Partnership for Better Health’s **Community Investment Committee will vote** to approve the final grant award(s). For grant requests of greater than \$50,000, the **Board of Trustees will vote** to approve the final grant award(s).

Feel free to direct preliminary grant questions to our Director of Grants & Public Policy, Carol Thornton (Carol@ForBetterHealthPA.org or 717-960-9009 x7).



APPLICATION FORM & BUDGET

I. Organizational Overview

Describe your organization to include:

- Organization history;
- Mission, goals, future challenges and long-range plans;
- Explain how this proposal relates to the organization's mission, goals and/or strategic plan, and other activities planned for this year;
- Describe the organization's capacity to carry out the project or explain the organizational limitations.

II. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be clear and compelling but need not be lengthy and may be 6 pages or less (excluding biographies and partner references). Please include the following components:

- **Qualifications:** Provide a summary explaining why your organization is well qualified for this project. Describe the length of time engaged in housing and/or other social service work, plus examples of other relevant collaborative projects. Explain how people with first-hand experience with housing challenges and homelessness will be involved in the project.
- **Project Plan:** In alignment with the Strategic Plan, describe your proposed approach to creating more effective systems that improve access to housing. Describe action steps aligned with the specific project goals and measures of success, including a proposed timeline.
- **Roles & Responsibilities:** Describe the respective roles and responsibilities of your organization, any partnering organizations, as well as any additional consultants or facilitators (if relevant) who may be joining you to assist with the project. Describe how new partners be invited to join and support the Advisory Council and/or membership.
- **Evaluation Plan:** Describe how progress will be documented and how you will know whether you're accomplishing desired goals. Describe a potentially lean but meaningful assessment plan that will document progress with goals and objectives.
- **Biographies:** Include brief bios for key individual(s) leading the project.
- **Collaborative Partner References.** Provide contact information for each organization that has agreed to partner with you on the project, including their director's phone number and email address.

III. Budget

Using the attached budget template, provide a detailed two-year budget and budget narrative confirming plans for the use of funds. Project budgets are anticipated to range between \$50,000 and \$80,000 per year. Please provide any additional information regarding the listed budget expenses and cost justification, if not stated elsewhere in the application.

If other funders will be asked to support this project, please list them as well.

Sample Budget Template

	YEAR 1 Budget	YEAR 2 Budget	Total Budget
EXPENSES (examples below may be changed & modified as needed)			
Salary for Project Coordinator			
Payroll Taxes			
Health Benefits			
Computer Software			
Training & Development			
Consultant Fees			
Evaluation/Data Collection System			
Travel			
Meeting Supplies / Facilities / Food			
Printing & Copying			
Partner Stipends			
Equipment			
Indirect Costs			
Other (Specify)			
Other			
Other			
TOTAL EXPENSES			
INCOME			
<i>Other Funding Sources</i>			
Foundation A (<i>pending</i>)			
Corporate Sponsor (<i>committed</i>)			
State Grant (<i>pending</i>)			
TOTAL INCOME			

Appendix A

Online Application Instructions

Application Steps

- Determine if your organization and the project you are proposing meet our general eligibility requirements.
 - Applicants must be a legal entity. Organizations that are registered as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) are preferred but not required.
 - Applicants must have a history and/or commitment to serving under-resourced individuals and families in Cumberland County.
 - Applicants must demonstrate a strong understanding of housing issues, emerging best practices and trusted methods for bringing groups together to educate, advocate, and take action.
- Visit our online [grants management system](#).
 - If you've never used our system before, select "Create New Account."
 - If you receive a message that your tax ID number is already in our system, please email Carol@ForBetterHealthPA.org so she can set up a new account for you.
 - If you are a returning grantee, supply your email address and password to access the system.
- Select "Apply" in the top navigation bar.
- On the next page, enter the following access code in the upper right corner – "partners"
- On the next page, select "Apply" in the Foundation Initiative box.
- Complete the Organizational Information:
 - Project Name
 - Project Description
 - Amount Requested
 - Geographic Area
 - Under **Funding Type**, select "Systems Change"
 - Under **Core Funding Area**, select "Strategic Initiatives"
- Upload your completed "**Application Form & Budget for Housing Systems Change**" (below) as a pdf document in our online system under "Project Information" and skip the "Evaluation Plan" and "Budget" sections.
- Under Attachments, only complete a W-9, scan it as PDF, and upload it where indicated.
- When you submit your application, you will receive an automatic email reply from our grants system.

Appendix B – Strategic Plan

Community Partners for Change

Mission Statement

To effect positive and sustainable change in the housing system to obtain equitable, affordable, accessible, and secure housing for all Cumberland County residents.

Core Values

- Collaboration
- Community Engagement
- Data-Driven Approaches
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)
- Shared Leadership
- Trust, Respect, And Accountability

Strategic Goals & Objectives 2022-2025

1. Educate the community about the need for more safe, equitable, and affordable housing opportunities for all Cumberland County residents.
 - Raise public awareness of the causes, severity, inequities, and socioeconomic impact of the affordable housing crisis in Cumberland County.
 - Share data, information, and best practices in affordable housing development.
 - Convene advocates, housing providers, people with lived experience of housing instability, policymakers, and the public in conversations about affordable housing.
2. Advocate for programs, policies, and funding that make housing more attainable for all Cumberland County residents.
 - Encourage more property owners and managers to rent to lower-income families and individuals, seniors, and people with disabilities.
 - Partner with housing developers, property owners, and government agencies to increase the amount of affordable rental housing and preserve the existing stock.
 - Support increased public and private funding for temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
 - Advance fair housing rights and reduce all forms of discrimination.
3. Act on new opportunities to create more affordable housing solutions for Cumberland County residents.
 - Attract new housing developers to Cumberland County.
 - Pursue innovative short-term housing strategies.
 - Explore the possibility of establishing a community land trust.