



# Request for Proposals

## Health Equity Institute

### 2021 Crush COVID Mini-Grant Program

## Opportunity for Community-Based Organizations to Help Crush COVID

**Mini-grants ranging from \$1,500 to \$4,975 are now available**

- **Eligibility:**
  - Rhode Island community-based organizations serving populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19
  - Faith-based organizations in Rhode Island
  - Organizations Serving High-Density Communities in Rhode Island (Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls)
  - Individuals and for-profit institutions are not eligible for funding
- **Deadline for applications: Thursday, March 04, 2021, 4:30 p.m. EST**
  - Applications will be reviewed as they are received

## Purpose

**Overview.** To successfully Crush COVID, we recognize that a **community full of dedicated and empowered allies** will go a long way toward reaching the people in Rhode Island who:

- ✓ Are **hesitant about getting the COVID-19 vaccine** when they become eligible
- ✓ Are **not getting tested for COVID-19 as frequently or as quickly as recommended**
- ✓ Are **not isolating or quarantining as instructed**, and may not know about **available resources** to support isolation and quarantine
- ✓ Have **COVID-19 symptoms but are not seeking medical treatment** that could reduce the risk of serious illness or hospitalization
- ✓ **Do not regularly wear masks in public places or at social gatherings**, or may not have masks to wear
- ✓ Are **not physically distancing from those they don't live with**, and may not understand why physical distancing is important
- ✓ Are **not washing or sanitizing their hands** as often as they should, and may not understand why hand washing is important
- ✓ May not understand that to lower the risks for everyone in Rhode Island, we all need to do these things—together.

**Scope of Work.** The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is soliciting your organization's help to Crush COVID. Specifically, you are invited to apply for a mini-grant (request up to \$4,975) to help keep your community safe by coming up with effective ways to encourage your community to:

- ✓ **Vaccinate:**
  - **Get vaccinated against COVID-19** when eligible
  - **Reduce fears or concerns** about vaccination
  - **Collect information about vaccine hesitancy** and provide feedback to RIDOH
- ✓ **Test and quarantine:**

- **Learn how to get tested for COVID-19** periodically to reduce COVID-19 spread
- **Get tested for COVID-19** when exposed or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- **Learn what quarantine is**, and when it is needed
- **Find help getting temporary wellness housing** for families whose members did not test positive and need to quarantine
- ✓ **Seek treatment:**
  - Teach those who have tested positive for COVID-19 **how to get treatment** to avoid serious illness
  - Teach about isolation for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and refer to helpful resources (such as housing, food, and other basic needs)
- ✓ **Wear Masks:**
  - **Encourage mask wearing**—give out masks that RIDOH supplies to your community
  - **Proper mask wearing and storage**
  - **Protection levels:** What types of masks work, and what types don't
- ✓ **Physically/Socially Distance:**
  - **Promote physical distancing**—on your premises, in your neighborhood, and among the individuals and families you already serve.
- ✓ **Use the Crush COVID RI app:**
  - How to get and use the **Crush COVID RI app**
- ✓ **Cleaning and Hand Sanitizing:**
  - **Sanitize and wash hands frequently** to prevent infection
  - **Clean frequently touched surfaces** to prevent infection
  - **What cleaning supplies to use**, and what to avoid
- ✓ **Understand that we're all in this together:**
  - Encourage your community to **care about and protect each other**—we're all in this together.

**RIDOH will provide training, masks, educational materials, and technical assistance** for all funded projects to help do this work.

Please propose activities that will appeal to your own stakeholders, members, or communities, as long as you do these things. RIDOH will provide the training and technical assistance about why these activities are so important, and how to share that information with others. RIDOH will also provide adult sized masks to all who receive funding, so there is no need to budget for those.

## Project Design

Each 12-week project must be designed by the applicants to effectively reach the cultural or affinity populations that they currently serve. Applicants must identify the specific cultural, affinity, or faith-based populations they will reach via their projects and demonstrate that they have existing relationships with these populations.

RIDOH will fund well-designed projects that improve the health and wellness of families and communities, particularly projects serving high-risk populations and high-density communities (HDC) such as Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. Three categories of organizations are eligible to apply:

- ✓ **Faith-based community organizations or places of worship:** includes churches, temples, mosques, congregations, meeting houses, religious societies or alliances, charitable organizations with religious affiliations, and other types of faith-based communities
- ✓ **Cultural communities:** includes, but is not limited to, communities advocating for the

differently-abled, indigenous communities, ethnic cultural communities, interfaith communities, and sexual and gender minority communities

- ✓ **Affinity-based communities**: includes, but is not limited to, public housing authorities and their residents' councils, recreation groups, scouting, advocacy-focused entities, arts organizations, professional associations, neighborhood associations, and community gardens

**Applicants may propose any reasonable, safe, culturally affirming strategy to perform the required scope of work that they feel will best reach and empower the communities that they serve. Creativity and innovation are encouraged. Successful applicants must include all the required public health strategies listed in the Scope of Work, above, into their projects.**

Projects that do not include all the required public health strategies will not be considered.

## Project Period

The project period is projected to be **April 5, 2021 through June 28, 2021** (12 weeks). RIDOH reserves the right to extend or shorten the project period as needed to achieve its goals. Projects will officially begin on either April 5, 2021 or on the date when a purchase order is issued to authorize the work. Successful applicants will be notified. Applicants agree to be flexible about project implementation date.

## Selection and Scoring Criteria (see also Review Criteria, below)

1. **Organization's demonstrated ability to reach and engage the specific cultural population(s) it serves, and its capacity to do the project it proposes. (25 points)**
  - How well do your proposed program activities align with mini-grant requirements for funded projects?
  - Do you have enough staff or volunteers to succeed? Who will do the necessary work? Who will supervise the work? Who will report progress to RIDOH each week?
  - Who will you reach through your project? How likely is your proposed project to reach your intended audience?
    - Ability to reach your community can be demonstrated by furnishing membership lists; describing past events and average attendance, including the populations it served; sharing photos or links to videos of the organization's events or meetings; and/or briefly describing the organization's history of success with similar past projects.
  - Will you be able to complete the work you propose?
    - Capacity to complete this project can be demonstrated by describing similar successfully completed projects you have done in the past or by describing your plans and the people in your organization who have agreed to do the work. We will consider scale and available human resources in awarding points.
  - How will you know you've succeeded?
    - Tell us what you envision changing in your community as a result of your project.
  - How supportive is your community likely to be in helping you reach your goals?
    - How strong is your relationship with community leaders and others who influence the people who you propose to serve?
  - Does your budget seem to cover all the necessary expenses?

1a. **Bonus Points**: Tell us about your past success with similar projects (up to 10 bonus points): If your organization has received funding to conduct similar activities in the past, how successful were you in achieving your goals and in reaching the intended community

members? Tell us about your prior successes. You can provide links to stories or online accounts of the project or attach clippings (**note:** If you received funding for a Crush COVID mini-grant during the Fall of 2020, you can mention that here, but you don't need to describe it—we have your final report on file, and we will check that).

2. **Organization's ability to employ required public health strategies rapidly and well** (up to 25 points)

Plans for speed in starting your project, and setting weekly goals counts for up to 10 of the 25 points. The other 15 points will be given for projects that use of all the required public health strategies in the Scope of Work.

- Do your Crush COVID activities use **all** the required public health COVID-19 mitigation strategies **and** show us your plans to begin your activities within one week of receiving your purchase order?
- How quickly will you be ready to start your project? (You must begin within one week of receiving your Crush COVID Mini-Grant purchase order)
- Did you provide a timeline, with project goals using the format below?
  - We strongly encourage **simple project designs** that are time-limited and have clearly identified outcomes for each phase of your project.
  - **Projects do not need to be complex or create new initiatives.** They can be added to activities you already do and can be reinforced over time.
  - We will ask you to **report your outcomes using a simple weekly reporting form.** You should budget 30 minutes per week for reporting. You may bill for this time.

3. **Creativity or cultural appropriateness of proposed approach** (up to 25 points)
  - How culturally appropriate, creative or innovative is your proposed project?
  - How is your project woven into your regular work in the communities you already serve?
  - What will make it enjoyable, comfortable, or familiar for participants?
  - How will you use community traditions or values to reinforce the messaging or to increase your population's engagement?
  - How well have you demonstrated the cultural appropriateness of your project?
4. **Overall program impact/merit** (up to 25 points)
  - What is the likely overall impact of your program on the communities you serve?
  - How much do the communities you wish to serve need the help?
  - How likely is it that your program will achieve the goals you set?

## Timeline

- ✓ **Deadline for applications is 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 04, 2021, 2021.**
  - **Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.**
- ✓ Successful applicants notified prior to purchase order issuance: March 8-12, 2021
- ✓ Purchase orders issued/ project starts: projected by April 5, 2021 (after RIDOH sends the purchase order)
- ✓ Project close date: June 28, 2021
- ✓ Final reports and invoices due to RIDOH: by July 9, 2021

## Reporting

Successful applicants agree to submit their weekly activities report online to RIDOH using a simple reporting form at a link supplied by RIDOH. Final project reports are due by July 9, 2021. An online link will be provided.

## Number of Awards

45-50 mini grants will be awarded, depending on available funding and amount of funding requested. Approximately \$223,000 will be awarded via this initiative.

## Other Considerations

Organizations that successfully completed one or more Crush COVID mini-grant projects in 2020 **are eligible to apply for new projects.**

### Budgeting:

- Indirect costs are **not allowed**. This includes fiscal sponsor fees, rent, and utilities.
- Food, beverage, alcohol, and tobacco purchases are **not permitted**.
- If your organization requests reimbursement for local travel, you must submit requests for mileage reimbursement at the federal rate (\$0.56 cents per mile). Fuel receipts are not eligible for reimbursement.

- In-kind match is strongly encouraged but not required.
- You don't need to budget for masks if you wish to use the masks that RIDOH will provide.
- Stipends or honoraria for volunteers are permitted, within reason.
- Direct administrative costs (personnel and fringe) are permitted for project management, project activities, and reporting.
- Purchase of supplies (hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, etc.) are allowed, as is printing and copying.
- You must use the line items on the budget you submit with your application to request reimbursement, unless you receive permission to change it during your project.
- Please email any specific questions on budgeting to [CKelly.Smith@health.ri.gov](mailto:CKelly.Smith@health.ri.gov) before you submit your application.
- We will hold a **Zoom Technical Assistance Conference** on **Friday, February 12 from 11 a.m. – 12p.m.** to answer any questions you may have.
  - Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://riema.zoom.us/j/98951032240>

Meeting ID: 989 5103 2240

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 989 5103 2240

Find your local number: <https://riema.zoom.us/j/98951032240>

### **Service to High-Density Communities:**

- 70% of these mini-grants will be awarded to organizations with projects providing substantial support to residents of Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket.
- Priority will be given to projects deemed likely to successfully reach populations with disproportionate levels of COVID-19 risk (such as people with disabilities, immigrant or refugee families, Latinx communities, faith-based communities that are still meeting in person, sexual and gender minorities, homeless and housing insecure individuals and families, food insecure individuals and families, the uninsured and underinsured, etc.).
- HDC applicants must certify their willingness to work with HEZs (Health Equity Zones)
  - [health.ri.gov/hez](http://health.ri.gov/hez)

### **Mandatory Orientation Meeting for Successful Applicants**

- All funded projects must agree to send appropriate personnel to a one-hour mandatory orientation meeting. Non-attendance may result in cancellation of your project. Applicants will be given three dates to choose from.

**These instructions do not count toward the page limit. You do not need to include these in your application submission.**



## Health Equity Institute 2021 Crush COVID Mini-Grant Program More Detailed Review Criteria

This document will be used by RIDOH to review mini-grant proposals. You may use this as a guide as you prepare your application; however, it is not part of the application form.

### Agency capacity and compliance (up to 25 points)

Applicants will be awarded up to 25 points for demonstrating their ability to succeed in completing their proposed project and reaching their intended audiences.

- General: How is your organization well suited to carry out the project?
- Staff: Do you have enough paid or volunteer staff to carry out your proposed activities? What is the experience of the organization's staff/volunteers to carry out the program activities successfully, and the availability to be trained by RIDOH?
- Approach: What is intent of the project and what is the overall strategy and methods to accomplish the specific aims of the program? Are weekly benchmarks for success presented (how will the organization know that the project is working)? Does the organization agree to report its progress weekly, using a form supplied by RIDOH?
- Environment: How will the community/setting in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? What organizational support, equipment, and any other physical resources available and adequate for the proposed program activities? What kind of resources/circumstances does the organization have access to such as community participation that would improve the work proposed in this project?
- Partnerships: How the work be carried out with the assistance of other organizations/community collaboration? If so, how will these parties contribute to the proposed program/activity?
- Alignment with Requirements: How well do the proposed program activities align with mini- grant specifications/requirements for funded activities?
- Budget: Does the proposed budget make acceptable use of funding? How will your organization leverage mini grant funding with other agency resources?
- Types of things you **can pay for** with your mini-grant: hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, stipends for volunteers, sewing materials and cloth for making masks, supplies for decorating masks, mileage reimbursement or public transportation vouchers for people who are helping to distribute the masks or other personal protection equipment (PPE), salary for staff who oversee volunteers, stipends for cultural storytellers to teach people how masks are culturally relevant, other items or services that will support your ability to succeed.
- Things you **cannot pay for** with your mini-grant: indirect costs like management fees to your fiscal sponsor, food, tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs; operational costs such as space, heating, electricity, building repair or maintenance, equipment or salaries not related to the execution of program activities; organizational costs such as out-of-state travel, or personal costs.

## Ability to use required public health strategies well and rapidly (up to 25 points)

Applicants will be awarded up to 25 points for their plans to implement the required activities, as described below. Plans for speed in deploying your strategies after you receive your purchase order counts for up to 10 of these points.

- Applicants must propose activities that use **all** the following public health COVID-19 mitigation strategies and demonstrate their plans to begin their activities within one week of receiving their notice of award:
  - **Promote the availability and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines**, and teach your community how, where, and why to get them, using RIDOH and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) communications materials.
    - Examples: Teach your community how vaccination will help to Crush COVID. Help RIDOH understand why some members of your community don't want to get a vaccine.
  - Teach your community about the **benefits of testing and rapid treatment for COVID-19** to reduce the need for hospitalization, and avoid serious illness, using RIDOH and CDC communication materials.
    - Examples: Teach them **how to get tested and how to get treatment quickly**.
  - **Hand out as many masks to community members as possible (at least 150 per week, and at least 1,800 over the course of the project)** and encourage mask wearing as a form of protecting all members of your community.
    - Examples: distribute masks at local events or at community-based small businesses, faith-based communities, and to individuals or families receiving services; teach them how to properly and safely use, care for, clean, store, and reuse their masks
  - Teach your community about the **importance of hand sanitizing** and keeping physical distance from others outside of those they live with.
    - Examples: Create new non-touch greeting rituals; find culturally meaningful ways to explain how to avoid touching public high-touch surfaces
  - Educate community members about **how physical distancing can prevent infections** and save lives.
    - Examples: How to have fun with others while six feet or more apart; create demarcated physical distance spaces within your organization's space, or help local businesses and community centers do this; make physical distancing fun and understandable to children
  - Teach people why they need to **limit the number of people at social gatherings**, and how to limit their close contacts to lower their risks of infection.
    - Example: Show how limiting time spent with others to a very small number of close contacts or immediate family members can prevent infection
  - Help to distribute cleaning supplies and coach people on the **proper use of cleaning and disinfecting supplies**.
    - Example: Give out cleaning supplies, disinfectant wipes, disposable gloves, soap and water—and teach people which surfaces to clean, and how frequently, to cut down on community spread

RIDOH will provide training, technical assistance with implementation, and enough reusable cloth masks to

all funded applicants.

**Bonus points:** Tell us about your previous success with similar program(s) and funding (up to 10 bonus points): If your organization has received funding to conduct similar activities in the past, how successful were they in achieving their goals and in reaching their intended community members? Organization provides evidence of prior successes.

- **Note:** If you successfully completed a 2020 Crush COVID Mini-Grant Project, you do not need to tell us about that. Just say that you did, and we will review your final report.

**Creativity or appropriateness of cultural context of proposed approach, and ability to reach your intended audience (up to 25 points)**

- How creative or innovative is your proposed approach?
- How culturally appropriate are your Crush COVID project activities, and are they likely to succeed?
- How is your proposed Crush COVID work woven into your regular work in the communities you already serve?
- How strong are your current relationships with leaders and influencers in the communities you will serve through this project?
- What will make your project enjoyable and comfortable for participants?
- How will you use community traditions or values in your Crush COVID messaging or to increase your population's participation?
- How well have you demonstrated the cultural appropriateness of your project?

**Overall program impact/ merit (up to 25 points)**

- How likely is it that your project will accomplish the required scope of work?
- To what degree will your project reach populations with higher than average burdens of COVID-19?

**[Download the Application Here](#)**

**By downloading the application you certify that you have read all the instructions.**