

**July 10 Innovation Fund Webinar**  
**Questions Sent in through the Chat Function**

**Definitions of Terms**

**Q:** Please define a low-income community.

**A:** Target communities are defined by poverty rates at or greater than 30 percent, the existence of food deserts, and an abundance of vacant land. You may also choose to define a population as a community—for example, African Americans across the state—in which case you would show poverty rates for African Americans in the state and describe how your initiative will target benefits for the population across the state.

**Q:** How do you define rural?

**A:** The Convergence Partnership utilizes the definition of rural provided by the Office of Rural Health Policy ([http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/policy/definition\\_of\\_rural.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/policy/definition_of_rural.html)) for the purposes of the Innovation Fund. If you have any specific questions about the definition or your particular community, please let us know.

**Eligibility**

**Q:** Are there population requirements in terms of size of community? What are the chances for a small community/town with significant need?

**A:** There are no size requirements for places that receive funding. The Convergence Partnership is interested in achieving a mix of urban- and rural-focused foundation partners; as well as ensuring geographic representation from all regions of the country. The Innovation Fund is specifically targeted for communities of greatest need – those with greater than 30 percent poverty, food deserts, and an abundance of vacant land.

**Q:** Does the foundation need to have a certain annual giving dollar amount?

**A:** No. The foundation does not need to meet certain financial threshold requirements.

**Q:** It was mentioned that no major capital construction costs are eligible. However, we are interested in partnering with our local parks/recreation department & parks foundation to pursue built environment strategies, e.g. playgrounds, walking trails, etc. Would such an initiative with significant capital costs be eligible?

**A:** Major capital construction costs are ineligible. If there are activities related to the planning of, or community participation in, the process of developing the constructions plans in a low-income community, those would be eligible uses for the funds. If there are small portions of the funds that would be used to contribute to smaller scale environmental changes, such as a small community garden or pocket green space development, as part of a larger planning, community engagement, advocacy or community change effort, they would be considered.

**Q:** Would transportation equity be funded?

**A:** Yes. Initiatives to improve transportation equity are eligible within the Innovation Fund.

**Q:** Can a foundation use the funds to supplement/expand ongoing grantmaking activities around food access serving public housing residents?

**A:** Addressing food access for public housing residents would be an eligible activity of the Innovation Fund. However, the Fund is designed to catalyze a shift in the foundation's grantmaking strategy to incorporate new activities or create a deeper and larger commitment to healthy food access, improving the built environment, fostering multi-field collaboration and achieving equity outcomes. You would need to clearly describe how the foundation would be broadening its existing scope of work to meet these criteria. If the foundation already has a robust portfolio in all of these areas, it would likely not be eligible for funding.

### **Funding**

**Q:** Can the matching funds be used to match funds already obtained by my organization or do we need to go out and get new funding to match?

**A:** Existing funds may be used towards the match if they can be directed towards the new Innovation Fund initiative. The lead foundation must demonstrate that they are making a strong commitment to this initiative at the time of submission as well as an indication of sustaining the commitment.

**Q:** Can you clarify the matching amounts of \$200k for three years. Is that a total of \$200k over three years or \$600,000

**A:** The Convergence Innovation Fund will provide a maximum of \$200,000 over three years - coupled with a match of \$400,000 provided by the foundation applicant, this would create a total initiative budget of \$600,000 over three years.

**Q:** Is the \$200,000 grant to be extended over a three-year period in 2012, i.e., \$67,000 per year?

**A:** Theoretically this would be the breakdown if the grant was evenly distributed across all three years. However, we don't require the budget to be evenly distributed. So the split could be 100,000 in the first year and 50,000 in the following two years; or any other combination of how the funding rolls out.

**Q:** How detailed should the foundation application be about how the funds will be used programmatically?

**A:** The application should provide a sense of the types of activities the foundation would support through the fund. It should offer more specificity than the broad categories outlined in the RFP, but may be flexible enough to respond to innovative proposals developed by the community. For example, one of the 2010 cohort partners submitted an application focused on a new regional funding collaborative that work together to implement a new initiative, releasing an RFP using the same requirements as the Innovation Fund. There was some more specificity of course, but no indication of who would be receiving the funds.

### **Partnering**

**Q:** Can we get involved as a non-foundation institution? We are a university, and are curious how we can get involved, whether directly or through a partnership with a local organization?

**A:** A local or regional foundation must serve as the lead applicant for the Innovation Fund. However, other philanthropic institutions as well as non-grantmaking organizations – including nonprofits, community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, etc. – are encouraged to apply in partnership with the lead foundation.

**Q:** What if we already received funding from some of the foundations that are part of the National Convergence Partnership; can we still partner with them to apply for this?

**A:** The National Convergence foundations are not eligible applicants.

**Q:** If community partners have identified projects of interest and a foundation expresses interest, does the application need to be a partnership between community and foundation, or can it be applied for by the foundation alone, with support letters from community partners?

**A:** The foundation is not required to apply in official partnership with community-based organizations, although applications that include community partners are encouraged. Letters of support from community partners are encouraged whether the foundation technically applies in partnership with a community organization or not,

**Q:** In the past cohort, how many foundations elected to use their own funds to meet the match as opposed to running a campaign to raise the matching funds?

**A:** All of the foundations made significant contributions of their own, demonstrating their commitment to the initiative. In addition to their own funding, a number of the foundations also fundraised in order to qualify for the maximum match from the Innovation Fund.

#### **Questions for The Health Trust**

**Q:** How many grants and at what level did the health trust make?

**A:** The Health Trust made four grants ranging from \$50k to \$150k.

**Q:** Did the Health Trust engage a community advisory committee? If so, how did it function?

**A:** The Health Trust followed its usual internal proposal review process and also asked two local funders to review the proposal and provide input. Each project was expected to include a CAP (Community Action Plan).

**Q:** How did the Health Trust structure its success indicators to measure impact of the foundation's Healthy Living Initiative activities as well as the impact of its grantees in that same space?

**A:** Using the Innovation Fund framework, The Trust created a theory of change for active living and healthy eating and is applying this place-based/equity approach as the guiding theory for their entire Healthy Living Initiative.