



Connecticut Health
FOUNDATION
Changing Systems, Improving Lives.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

To conduct strategic planning, engage stakeholders and create a plan for what it would take to achieve health equity in Connecticut.

Due: ~~July 29, 2022~~ August 3, 2022

Summary: The Connecticut Health Foundation (CT Health) seeks responses to this request for qualifications from an experienced consultant or consulting team to lead a research and strategic planning process. CT Health seeks to identify the circumstances or conditions necessary to achieving health equity and understanding the landscape of who is working these conditions. This research will inform strategic planning activities – including stakeholder engagement and prioritization of issues – that will result in a five-year strategic plan.

Responses must be received by **August 3, 2022**. Responses received after this deadline will not be eligible for consideration. Incomplete responses will also be ineligible for consideration.

Questions concerning the request for qualifications should be directed to Ellen Carter at ellen@cthealth.org.

Closing Date and Time: **August 3, 2022, 5:00 pm (EST)**

Contact Person: **Ellen Carter**
Vice President of Program
Connecticut Health Foundation
100 Pearl Street
Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: 860.724.1580, x17
E-mail: ellen@cthealth.org

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Overview of the Connecticut Health Foundation

The [Connecticut Health Foundation](#) (CT Health) is the state's largest health philanthropy dedicated to eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities in Connecticut. Since we were founded in 1999, the foundation has supported innovative grantmaking, health policy research, leadership development, and technical assistance to achieve our mission. After working on racial equity issues as a part of overall health equity since our inception, CT Health shifted to explicitly focusing on health equity for people of color in 2014.

Determining what it takes to achieve health equity for people of color

Racial and ethnic minorities in Connecticut are disproportionately affected by illness, disease, and lower life expectancy. People of color experience higher rates of chronic disease and are more likely to be uninsured and unable to access care compared to their white counterparts. Even when health insurance coverage and access to care are not issues, people of color often receive lower quality health care than the white population. For these reasons and many others, CT Health focuses on health equity for people of color in Connecticut.

Our current strategic plan will wrap up at the end of 2023. In preparation for this wind down, the foundation is evaluating our work over the last four years and conducting a needs assessment to better understand the current state of health equity. After nearly 25 years working on health issues in Connecticut, we desire a deeper understanding of what it takes to achieve health equity and of the growing landscape of those working on health equity issues. Our next plan must consider our strengths and the broader work on issues, as more people become aware of racial and health equity challenges and seek to become part of the solutions. The following scope of work outlines an ambitious timetable for research and planning from September 2022 – September 2023.

Scope of service

We envision two parts to this work, 1) research and 2) planning. First, a consultant will use national and local research, existing roadmaps created by other states, as well as the findings from CT Health's recent evaluation, to identify the conditions or issue areas that are part of achieving health equity. Conditions should include factors that contribute to health and outcomes including health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.¹

Creating a blueprint for health equity

The first part of the research project will be to create a blueprint for health equity based on information the foundation already has and additional research. The consultant will have access to the following information at the beginning of the project:

- Previous strategic plans and evaluations
- A health equity needs assessment (to be completed by fall 2022)
- Findings from interviews with stakeholders (grantees, state leaders, board, and staff) about CT Health's impact and opportunities to improve

¹ For more information on factors that determine health outcomes see [What Drives health? County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#). Retrieved on June 22, 2022.

- CT Health’s publications including previous reports and [guides on health disparities](#) in Connecticut
- Examples of national and state level health equity roadmaps that use a systems change approach

The work of health equity is broader than our work alone and future strategy should consider the overall field of work that contributes to a Connecticut where people of color can achieve optimal health. The blueprint should identify what is needed to achieve health equity in Connecticut and begin to identify areas of opportunity for future CT Health investment.

Determining the landscape: Who is working on health equity?

Once the conditions for health equity have been outlined, the consultant will conduct a landscape scan that provides information on who is working to address factors that determine health outcomes and how. The landscape scan should answer the following research questions:

- Who is working on the conditions that impact health outcomes in Connecticut? Are they using a racial equity approach? Are they focused on programmatic interventions or systems changes?
- For those working on systems changes, what levers are they targeting?
- Who is providing funding to address the conditions needed to achieve health equity?
- Who is working with whom? Where is there collaboration and partnership? Where are people looking for partnership?
- Do people working to address conditions such as social and economic factors or the physical environment understand the connection to health equity?
- What efforts exist that explicitly address health?
- Have there been any changes in the landscape of who is addressing conditions since the COVID-19 pandemic began – including who is working on it, who is funding, and what approaches or opportunities exist?
- Where are there gaps?

Strategic Planning

The research provided in the blueprint and landscape scan will provide a basis from which we can decide on our strategic direction from 2024 – 2028. The final part of this project will be to design and engage foundation staff, board, and stakeholders (grantees, community leaders, residents, and others) in a comprehensive planning process that results in a strategic direction that will guide our future investments. We envision a planning process that includes:

- Facilitating a strategic planning workgroup (made up of board members, community advisors, and staff) to determine the planning approach and draft strategy.
- Establishing a decision-making process that uses the needs assessment, the blueprint for health equity and landscape scan as the basis for determining our new focus areas and investment priorities.
- Engaging stakeholders and community members in generating strategy and testing

hypotheses.

- Determining what success looks, including short, medium, and long-term outcomes over the course of the strategic planning timeline.
- Supporting staff in establishing evaluation metrics that can be used to track outcomes during strategic planning implementation.

Deliverables

Deliverables that document the outcomes of research and the decision-making process are important to support the foundation’s ability to implement the plan. In addition, the consultant should prepare several documents that can be shared with our external partners at the end of strategic planning. These deliverables may include:

- A health equity blueprint and landscape scan
- A planning document that outlines the strategic plan for 2024 – 2028
- A report for stakeholders that summarizes what we learned from community engagement efforts and outlines why the foundation decided on a particular strategy or approach
- A summary of anticipated outcomes and outcome measures that can be evaluated during the strategic plan implementation

A final determination of deliverables will be discussed during the review and selection process.

Approximate Timeline of Critical Events and Steps

Date	Critical Event
July 29, 2022 August 3, 2022	RFQ submission process closes at 5:00 pm EST
August 10, 2022	Notification of interview
August 22 – 26, 2022	Remote interviews of top candidates
August 31, 2022	Final decision and notification of contract award
September 2022	Begin research (blueprint and landscape scan)
October 2022	Engage strategic planning workgroup
November 4 – 5, 2022	Facilitate a board retreat to kick off strategic planning
December – May 2023	Strategic planning
June 2023	Board adoption of proposed plan
December 2023	Board adoption of 2024 operating budget in alignment with plan

Evaluator Qualifications and Expectations

CT Health seeks a consultant(s) that will work collaboratively with our staff and leadership. The foundation seeks to engage a consultant with the following qualifications:

- Superior project management ability, including guiding all aspects of the research, planning

and decision-making process in collaboration with CT Health staff

- Ability to synthesize complex information for a variety of audiences to facilitate shared learning and decision making
- A proven record communicating with and engaging diverse stakeholders (including a high-functioning professional board, nonprofit leaders, community residents, and staff)
- Understanding of health policy, health equity, and systems change
- Demonstrated organizational commitment to racial equity
- Experience in developing philanthropic strategy
- Preference for the team to understand the Connecticut landscape and data sources (not a requirement)
- Demonstrated quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills
- Ability to represent complex ideas and concepts clearly and simply
- Flexibility and creative problem solving
- Open, candid, and frequent communication with foundation staff
- Commitment to planning team diversity and cultural competency

Reporting Structure

The consulting team will report directly to Ellen Carter, vice president of program, and Tiffany Donelson, president and CEO.

RFQ Submission Preparation and Formatting Guideline

To be considered for this evaluation contract, respondents must answer the questions outlined in *RFQ Requirements*. Responses should not exceed 10 pages. Also required is the submission of a curriculum vitae (for each team member), a work sample, and three references (names and contact information).

In addition, please submit the following statement signed by each team member:

"I understand that all intellectual property that is part of this evaluation is solely owned by the Connecticut Health Foundation. I understand that I, as a contractor, have no rights to the use of the information collected in this evaluation for purposes other than this evaluation."

RFQ Requirements

CT Health will select a consultant or consultant team based on demonstrated experience, skills, and capacity to conduct research and strategic planning, as well as ability to be customer-service oriented in working with both the foundation and its grantees/partners.

Applicants should submit responses and appropriate supporting documentation for each of the criteria/questions listed below. Please limit your responses to no more than 10 pages (excluding attachments). The foundation values the ability to convey information in a clear and succinct way. Deliverables should be accessible to a broad audience and free from jargon.

1. State the applicant organization's name and contact information.

2. Identify the organization's status with the Internal Revenue Services.
3. If applicable, identify the applicant's affiliations with institutions of higher education.
4. What type of work does the consultant/team members generally perform?
5. What is your organizational structure? Describe your ability to provide necessary supervision, direction, administrative support, and technical capacity to complete the project.
6. Identify the lead consultant and team members (if applicable) and provide a summary of their relevant experience and skills. Attach a CV for each team member.
7. Provide an overview of the approach the consultant/team might employ to complete the scope of services in the timeline outlined. Please include a description of the decision matrix or prioritization process used to establish strategy across stakeholder groups.
8. Provide examples of experience consulting on projects of similar scale and scope.
9. Demonstrate the consulting team's understanding of racial justice and power dynamics in philanthropy. Provide examples of previous work in these areas.
10. Describe the team's philosophy, skills, and strategies for engaging diverse cultures and communities in research and strategic planning, citing specific past examples.
11. What other system-focused work have the consultant/team completed in the past? Include examples of work that involved systems change approaches and examples related to equity.
12. What is your experience working in health and on health equity issues?
13. Submit a draft budget and budget narrative. The budget should not exceed \$150,000.

Submission, Review, and Selection Process

Letters of qualifications from applicants are due **August 3, 2022**. Please e-mail qualifications to Grants Manager and Program Administrator Tamisha Phillip (tamisha@cthealth.org).

All evaluation teams that submit responses to this request for qualifications will receive notification of the result of the selection process by **August 31, 2022**.