Connecticut Health FOUNDATION
Changing Systems, Improving Lives.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Maternal Health Equity Implementation Plan and Grantmaking Strategy

DUE: JANUARY 26, 2026, 5 P.M. (EST)

Applicants must submit proposals by January 26, 2026. Responses received after this deadline will not be eligible for consideration. Incomplete responses will also be ineligible for consideration.

Questions concerning the request for proposals should be directed to Sabrina Selk at sabrina@cthealth.org.

Contact person: Sabrina Selk
Director of Policy
Connecticut Health Foundation
100 Pearl Street
Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: 860.724.1580
E-mail: sabrina@cthealth.org

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.

Overview of current maternal health efforts

Maternal health equity for people of color is one of the goal areas in our 2024 - 2028 strategic plan. Our long-term vision is that all pregnant people of color have the opportunity for a healthy pregnancy, birth, and start to parenthood, with the elimination of associated preventable mortality and severe morbidity. While maternal health is a new strategic area for CT Health, we know there is significant momentum both in the state and nationally to address the severe disparities.

We developed a blueprint for maternal health equity in Connecticut in collaboration with a team of researchers and an advisory committee representing a range of sectors in the state. The blueprint focuses on eliminating the racial gap in severe maternal morbidity. It articulates the changes those in the maternal health field recommend and identifies how the foundation and other state stakeholders can contribute unique skills to the goal of reducing severe maternal morbidity. The blueprint is intended to be implemented by a range of actors in Connecticut, not just the foundation.

Here's more information about the blueprint and advisory committee.

Scope of service

We have learned a great deal about potential maternal health interventions and promising policy practices. The published maternal health blueprint focuses on reducing severe maternal morbidity among Black Connecticut residents. This is a broad area of impact, and the foundation will not be able to invest in every strategy that may improve outcomes for pregnant people of color in our state. Our next step is to determine where we have the greatest momentum, skills alignment, and opportunity to work toward the shared maternal health equity goal.

We are seeking support from a consultant with expertise in maternal health equity and specific expertise in working with philanthropy to advance the next steps of our maternal health work. The scope will include several work streams. First, develop an implementation strategy for the blueprint that a broad group of stakeholders could adopt. Next, create a grantmaking strategy that builds on CT Health's system change focus and recommends investments aligned with the blueprint. The grantmaking strategy should recommend where to invest grant funding and prioritize maternal health strategies within the broader implementation strategy.

The scope of work for the chosen consultant will occur in two stages, with the first phase – developing an implementation strategy – starting in the first quarter of 2026. The second phase – creating a grantmaking strategy – will begin after the initial scan of maternal health initiatives has been completed at the end of the first quarter of 2026. The work will conclude with the creation of a 'state of the state' document that provides a brief summary of the implementation plan and can be used as an introduction to the implementation strategy and the landscape scan of maternal health in Connecticut.

Implementation strategy

The consultant should build on the blueprint's recommendations to develop an implementation strategy. The implementation strategy should create a landscape scan of existing maternal health programs in Connecticut and develop a plan to align the blueprint recommendations with these efforts.

The implementation strategy should include:

- Landscape scan of existing maternal health programmatic and policy efforts happening across the state
- An update of our list of key stakeholders and tables where maternal health decision-making and advocacy occurs
- A crosswalk of the maternal health equity blueprint recommendations across existing maternal health efforts to support next steps and implementation
- Identification of system gaps where there is no clear owner or multiple potential owners for blueprint recommendations
- Identification of discrete strategies related to the recommendations that could be accomplished with minimal expenditure of resources
- Identification of strategies that are likely to require specific policy advocacy and legislative action to accomplish
- Prioritization of recommendations based on feasibility, current resources and necessary investments, to create an implementation timeline and strategy with named owners/champions and next steps

- Development of a 'state of the state' for maternal health in Connecticut to provide an overview of the Connecticut maternal health context, an introduction to the implementation plan and recommended first steps
- All activities will be conducted in collaboration and with shared decision-making with local experts in the field of maternal health in the state of Connecticut

Grantmaking strategy

The consultant should build off the existing blueprint research, which included community conversations and advisory committee insights, to support CT Health staff in developing a three-year maternal health grantmaking strategy. The strategy should be tailored to the Connecticut landscape and current opportunities for action. In all areas of our work, we focus on changing systems that influence people's health. In our grantmaking, we prioritize projects that focus on changing the structures, policies, and practices that create racial and ethnic disparities. This system change focus will continue through our maternal health efforts.

The grantmaking strategy should include:

- Recommendations on the priority areas of focus for grantmaking in maternal health
- Rationale for how investing in these areas will reduce severe maternal morbidity for people of color in Connecticut
    - Research on what has worked for foundations engaged in maternal health equity in other states
- Recommendations on the kinds of investment to pursue (research, piloting new interventions, funding existing programs at scale, support for policy advocacy, etc.)
- Potential grant investments or grantees
- Potential policy and advocacy strategies
- Outline of preliminary outcomes and timeline for seeing results

Convening facilitation

The consultant, in partnership with CT Health, will reconvene maternal health blueprint advisory committee members who have expressed interest in supporting the development of an implementation strategy.

Convening activities will include:

- Working closely with CT Health to develop agendas, organizational structure and a charter for a time-bound and outcome-focused advisory committee to inform the implementation plan development
- Coordinate meetings, including scheduling, agenda setting, and facilitation to ensure that meeting touchpoints make the best use of the time of the advisory committee members
- Identify potential need for one-time or subcommittee meetings that may be necessary to move forward with deliverable creation between full advisory committee meetings
- Ensure that the right experts are at meetings based on the needs and purpose of each meeting's agenda

- Meetings should conclude with a recap of next steps, including timeframe and owner for each task
- Between meetings, a regular cadence of follow-up should ensure that all members know what to expect, how work is progressing and can anticipate upcoming asks
- The objective of these meetings is to develop high-quality deliverables that are informed by and have buy-in from maternal health leaders and experts across the state

Proposal process and timeline

RFP announced	December 19, 2025
Informational meetings	January 5 – 16, 2026
Proposal due	January 26, 2026
Proposal presentations	February 2, 2026
Consultant notification	February 20, 2026

Project timeline

Phase	Activity	Date
Phase 1	Kickoff meeting	February
	Convenings	March – November
	Landscape scan	March – April
Phase 2	Create and socialize the implementation strategy	May – September
	Begin to develop and finalize the grantmaking strategy	July – September
	Develop and finalize a State of the State	August – November

Project budget

Up to $125,000 for all three streams of work (convening facilitation, implementation strategy and grantmaking strategy). If you would like to apply for only one portion of the work, please schedule an informational meeting to discuss the proposal before submitting your proposal.

Consultant qualifications and expectations

CT Health seeks a consultant(s) who will collaborate with our staff and leadership. We seek to engage a consultant with the following qualifications:

Understanding of maternal health issues and the policy landscape

- Strong experience in and understanding of maternal health equity for people of color, including data on the issues and emerging approaches and strategies in the field
- Demonstrated commitment to advancing racial equity
- Preference for experience in Connecticut and knowledge of the Connecticut policy and nonprofit landscape related to maternal health

Research and communication skills

- Strong research and analysis skills, with experience in maternal health, health equity, health policy, and systems change
- Ability to synthesize complex information for a variety of audiences to facilitate shared learning and decision making
- Ability to communicate findings in plain language
- Superior project management ability
- Expertise in meeting facilitation and synthesis of ideas into next steps and action items
- Commitment to open, candid, and frequent communication with foundation staff
- Willingness to co-design deliverables with foundation staff and partners

Proposal

Applicants should submit responses and appropriate supporting documentation for each of the criteria/questions listed below. The foundation values the ability to convey information clearly and succinctly. We expect that any project deliverables are accessible to a broad audience and free from jargon. Please use this proposal to showcase your ability to communicate effectively.

1) State the applicant organization's name and contact information.
2) Identify the organization's status with the Internal Revenue Service.
3) What is your experience working in maternal health and on health equity issues?
4) Provide an overview of the approach the consultant/team might employ to complete the scope of services by November 1, 2026.
5) What type of work does the consultant/team members generally perform?
6) What is your organizational structure? Describe your ability to provide necessary supervision, direction, administrative support, and technical capacity to complete the project.
7) 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.
8) Provide examples of experience consulting on projects of similar scale and scope.

a. Provide specific examples of the consulting team members' experience with developing a grantmaking strategy.

9) Describe the team's philosophy, skills, and strategies for engaging clients. How do you approach projects and navigate a shared understanding of outcomes?
10) Submit a draft budget and budget narrative.

Submission, review, and selection process

The foundation welcomes interested parties to contact staff with questions before submitting a proposal. Please email Nordia Savage at nordia@cthealth.org to set up an informational meeting with the CT Health team.

Proposals from applicants are due January 26, 2026. Please e-mail proposals to Sabrina Selk at sabrina@cthealth.org. The foundation will conduct a two-stage review process. We will select applicants to participate in interviews with the CT Health team; interviews will take place the week of February 2, 2026.

All consultants who submit responses to this request for proposals will receive notification of the selection process results by February 20, 2026.