

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

FOR

HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

RFA # 34301-17620

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION**STATE OF TENNESSEE****DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH****I. Background Information**

Cities and communities are the stages where residents play out their daily lives. These stages, known collectively as the “built environment,” influence how residents view and understand the world, themselves, and each other. The built environment includes all of the physical structures around community members. These are the places people live, learn, work, play, and worship. Research increasingly demonstrates that the design of built environments impacts health. Improvements to the built environment can decrease obesity, heart disease, and diabetes rates while increasing physical, mental, and social health. Health-promoting community designs include walkable neighborhoods, accessible food stores with healthy options, affordable housing located near employment and transit options, and inviting public spaces that promote a sense of community. By enhancing the built environment, residents gain both opportunities for safe physical activity and amenities that businesses value, thus strengthening their economies. Ultimately, these enhancements lead to improved quality of life for all community members.

The Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) recognizes the link between the built environment and health and supports the creation of healthy built environments to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of all Tennesseans. In 2015, TDH created the Office of Primary Prevention (OPP), to help Tennessee communities build a culture of health through livable and nurturing places and spaces so that all residents can reach their full potential. OPP envisions a Tennessee where everyone can make healthy choices wherever they live, learn, work, play, and worship.

In 2018, OPP launched a competitive built environment grant program. The Department awarded over \$1.8 in grants to 34 grantees across Tennessee, including both government and non-government entities. Two-thirds of these grant-funded projects are located in economically-distressed or at-risk counties, as defined by the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development. The grants funded a diverse set of initiatives including convening, programming, planning, and construction of built environment projects. The projects included playgrounds, walking tracks, outdoor fitness stations, greenways, trails, and other publicly-accessible spaces that promote physical activity and social interaction.

A. Call to Action

The Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) seeks to fund projects that create or support healthy built environments in Tennessee. Both government and non-government entities are eligible to apply. Competitive applicants will:

1. Clearly define a health need within their community that can be met through improvements to the built environment. Use available data to support the proposed project. Several counties have completed County Health Assessments. Work with the county health department and health council to learn more about health priorities and available demographic data and health status indicators (social determinants of health, health disparities, etc.). Also, County Health Data Packages are available through the Office of Strategic Initiatives by emailing strategy.health@tn.gov. These will help identify a target population that will benefit from the grant. Compare local data to state and national data to demonstrate disparity and need. The applicant can find more information about county health assessments, data, and county “[Vital Signs](#)” through the Tennessee Department of Health website. Information about health disparities and health equity is available on the TDH “[Healthy Places](#)” page.
2. Reference current or past built environment initiatives in their community. Develop a community engagement plan to ensure their community supports the project and deems it relevant.
3. Include one or more of the following options to address their identified health need(s):
 - a. Phase A: Convening, Assessment, and/or Planning;
 - b. Phase B; Programming; and/or
 - c. Phase C: Infrastructure Design and Construction.
4. Develop a plan for evaluating the project to determine if it is successful in addressing community need(s) (Find more information on project evaluation in Section C).

No funding match is required. However, TDH encourages applicants to include commitments of cash or in-kind services in their application.

B. Types of Projects

TDH will fund projects that are at varying stages of development for communities that have varying levels of resources. The list below describes the eligible project types in phases. Applicants can propose an idea that includes one or multiple phases. Funding awards vary depending on the phase(s) the applicant

applies for. The maximum award for any grant is \$85,000, which includes an optional \$5,000 for evaluation.

1. **Phase A – Convening, Assessment, and/or Planning**
(Maximum Amount \$50,000 - Project must be completed in 18 months.)

If the proposed project is in this phase, the application can include any one of the listed components (convening, assessment, and/or planning), or any combination of the 3 components.

- a. Convening (Maximum Amount - \$2,000): Convening includes identifying and engaging with partners, elected officials, and stakeholders, especially in communities where health has not been a topic of consideration in built environment decision-making. Explain how this grant will help the community build new partnerships or strengthen existing partnerships. Include local health leaders (including the health council and county health director) and members of the target populations (to include vulnerable and underserved populations) who will benefit from the proposed built environment improvements. Eligible activities include compensating community members of the target population for time and providing childcare and food for the meetings. Meeting participants who work for the state or local government are not eligible to be compensated for time.
- b. Assessment (Maximum Amount - \$20,000): Assessments can be either a needs assessment or an active living/physical activity policy assessment. A needs assessment identifies gaps where facilities that promote physical activity do not exist. It identifies populations that are in greatest need. Grantees will share their analysis with the general public, including members of the communities that will be impacted most by the project. This ensures consensus and alignment with community priorities. The assessment may include a density or proximity analysis of parks, open spaces, public schools, community centers, recreational centers, sidewalks, bikeways, greenways, playgrounds, and other community amenities that the public could use for physical activity.

An active living/physical activity policy assessment may include analyzing the following:

- zoning codes;
- subdivision regulations;

- comprehensive plans;
- neighborhood plans;
- subarea plans;
- planned unit developments;
- school siting policies;
- joint use agreements;
- bicycle and pedestrian plans;
- greenways and parks master plans; and
- other related plans.

Grantees can use this type of assessment to determine how the built environment and related policies are impacting active living. TDH strongly encourages walking audits and other participatory exercises. Assessments may also include looking at prior steps the community has taken (such as committees or meetings) that demonstrate the community's interest and support for built environment projects that promote physical activity. Resources to support assessments are available on [TDH Office of Primary Prevention website](#). Additional resources include:

- [The Rural Active Living Assessment Tool Codebook and Scoring](#)
- [Rural Active Living Perceived Environmental Support Scale \(RALPESS\)](#)
- [Promoting Active Living in Rural Communities Research Brief](#)
- [Urban Land Institute – Building Healthy Places Toolkit](#)
- [CDC – Healthy Community Design Checklist](#)
- [CDC Transportation and Health Tool](#)
- [AARP – Livability Index](#)
- [Assembly: Civic Design Guidelines](#)

- c. Planning (Maximum Amount - \$50,000): Planning includes developing a plan to guide health-promoting changes to the built environment. Grantees may use the plan to advance policy change or design infrastructure in their community. All plans should include measurable goals, projected timelines, and potential funding sources for future construction. Plans should demonstrate compliance with all requirements from applicable agencies that require a completed plan in order to apply for construction funding (for example: TDOT and TDEC). Plans should also document any prior steps the community has taken that demonstrate interest and support for built environment projects to increase physical activity. This phase can include site

visits to learn from successes in other communities. In this phase, TDH will consider plans and policies that include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Small-area plans focused on increasing physical activity (example: downtown redevelopment plan focusing on walkable communities);
- Comprehensive plans (with a health focus);
- Greenways, parks, sidewalks, bikeways, and/or multi-modal transportation master plans;
- Complete Streets policies; and
- Arts place-making plans that may encourage the use of public spaces, walking, social gatherings, and sense of community.

An example of a plan previously funded through a Healthy Built Environment grant was in the town of Cumberland Gap in Claiborne County. This county is designated as a Tier 4 (distressed) County by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. Cumberland Gap has higher than average unemployment and poverty rates and lower market income rates. These socio-economic conditions limit opportunities for healthy active living. The Town of Cumberland Gap used funds to perform site visits to successful towns that have created healthy, walkable, bikeable communities. They used these examples to create a Master Plan for a walkable, bikeable Cumberland Gap that connects the downtown area to a national historic site via the walkable, bikeable paths.

2. **Phase B – Programming**
(Maximum Amount \$15,000 – Project must be completed within 12 months.)

Programming includes recurring programs or educational activities that expand and encourage a diverse audience to use existing infrastructure for physical activity. One-time events are not eligible. Programming examples include walk, bike or run clubs. Programming also includes any resources needed to promote the activity, such as fliers, maps, and social media posts. These promotions should inform both residents and visitors of local opportunities for physical activity that use the community's existing public infrastructure (such as parks or walking trails). Programming projects must include a plan for sustainability after the grant is complete.

An example of a Phase B project funded through a Healthy Built Environment grant was a 15-week farmer's market walking program, "Farmacy Fit," in Washington County. The program identified a low-income community where many people were both food insecure and not getting enough physical activity. The program incentivized physical activity by giving fruit and vegetable vouchers to participants who walked a mile from the housing communities to the farmer's market. The program extended an already ongoing food voucher program that served a low-income population in the community.

3. **Phase C – Infrastructure Design/Construction**
(Maximum Amount \$80,000 – Project must be completed within 24 months.)

For this phase, grantees may use funding alone or as state-level matching funds to build publicly-accessible infrastructure that promotes physical activity such as parks, greenways, sidewalks, bikeways, playgrounds, and walking tracks. The infrastructure should provide opportunities for physical activity for a community or population that currently has limited access to these types of facilities. Recipients can use the grant funds to design or build amenities such as signage, benches, water fountains, lighting, restrooms, or other infrastructure that helps increase the use of facilities that promote physical activity. Playgrounds, active transportation rest areas (benches, shade, water access, bicycle repair stations, etc.), greenways, trailhead signs, sidewalks, bikeways, crosswalks, and pedestrian/bicycle signs are all eligible. All infrastructures must be on public property or on an easement on private property that is for public use.

Proposed projects should include a plan for long-term maintenance of the facility, including the responsible party, frequency, and documentation of appropriate funding and other resources. Projects at public school facilities are also eligible if the community has (or plans to develop) a joint-use agreement so the public can access the facilities during non-school hours. Grantees must provide documentation that shows the agreement before grant completion. They may use funds for project management and staff for engineering, environmental, right-of-way, construction document, typical roadway section plans, and construction-related cost estimates.

All infrastructure projects must include the community in the decision-making process and documentation of community involvement through committees, reports, and master plans.

An example of a Phase C project funded with this grant was the construction of a walking trail, disc golf, and restrooms for a public park in

Greeneville, Tennessee. The applicant referenced data from the local Community Health Needs Assessment that stated tobacco, obesity, and lack of physical activity were leading health-risk factors for residents. The town was already vested in the project. They had previously secured funding for a dog park and developed a plan to introduce physical-activity programming to the completed park.

4. Evaluation

(Maximum Amount \$5,000 - Included in Total Amount of \$85,000)

All applications must include an evaluation plan. In the evaluation plan outlines who will conduct the evaluation, what they will measure to determine success, and how they will collect data. The plan must also include the completed Grant Project Flow Chart (Exhibit 1) and completed Work and Evaluation Plan (Exhibit 2). Applicants can also download them on the website with this RFA. If preferred, applicants can substitute their own logic model for the flow chart template. Grantees will submit evaluation findings with the final report upon project completion. TDH has posted an [Evaluation Guide](#) on the [OPP website](#) with more information on how to conduct an evaluation of built environment projects. The tool can assist in developing a logic model and evaluation questions. It also provides examples of metrics and data collection methods.

Applicants may request up to \$5,000 to assist with staffing and equipment for project evaluation. The maximum funding award of \$85,000 includes the \$5,000 in evaluation funding. Although the Evaluation is mandatory, requesting additional funds for the Evaluation is optional.

Grantees will receive evaluation information and have the opportunity to ask questions during a mandatory grantee webinar at one of the two times listed in the Schedule of Events in Section IV.

D. Grantee Requirements

Grantees will be required to do the following:

1. Attend a mandatory Grants Management and Evaluation webinar.
2. Complete a minimum of quarterly check-ins with the TDH grant manager. The check-ins will include written summaries of progress, pictures, site visits, and budget and spending updates as necessary. The TDH grant manager can request more check-ins if deemed necessary.
3. Complete a final report including evaluation results upon completion of the contract.
4. Submit monthly invoices per the contract.
5. Inform the TDH grant manager of any progress, delays, or issues.
6. Comply with all of the requirements outlined in the contract with TDH.

II. Process

A. Letters of Intent

The initial requirement to apply for a Healthy Built Environment grant is to submit an LOI. The LOI gives TDH a first look at how the applicant's project fits the objectives of the grant. See Exhibit 1 to view the questions in the LOI. Applicants must submit the LOI online. TDH has posted the LOI link on the website with this RFA.

LOIs that include subsidies for individuals, funding for lobbying activities, or funding for replacement of existing services will be deemed non-responsive and rejected.

A team of evaluators will review all LOIs. If an applicant's project receives one of the highest scores, TDH will email the applicant an Invitation to Apply.

The Evaluators will score LOIs on the following criteria:

- **Need** – Proposed activities address a defined need (including health disparities) in the community. TDH highly encourages applicants to include applicable data specific to their targeted community. Include considerations from Section I, A.1.
- **Cost-Effectiveness** – The budget narrative exhibits thoughtful and appropriate use of dollars. The budget narrative answers three main questions:
 1. What project actions and materials will cost money?
 2. How much will the project cost?
 3. How was this estimate compiled?
- **Impact** – Proposed activities have the potential to produce changes in health outcomes for the target population.
- **Collaboration and Community Engagement** – Proposed activities do not duplicate or supplant existing services. The activities involve a genuine collaboration with stakeholders. Activities consider what the community members actually want and have public appeal.

B. Applications

TDH will email applicants with the highest-scoring LOIs an Invitation to Apply. The email will include a link for application submission.

The full application will require more detailed information about the applicant's organization and proposed project. TDH's team of evaluators will score applications based on the following sections:

1. **Project Abstract and Problem Statement** - 20 Points Maximum (750 word limit) - Briefly explain what need has been defined in the community and how the proposed project will meet that need. Include:
 - a. **The severity of need** - TDH will give priority consideration to economically distressed communities, particularly those identified as Tiers 2-4 as designated by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.
 - b. **A clearly defined target population with the need** - Provide documentation of current health status and trends and how they compare with other communities, counties or states. Address disparities among populations.
 - c. **Brief project description** - Briefly describe the project you have formed to meet the need.
 - d. **Desired outcomes** - Address how your project could meet the defined need for the defined population.
 - e. **Community support** - Demonstrate community interest and backing for this project.

2. **Project Narrative** – 20 Points Maximum (750 word limit) - Provide a project narrative detailing how you will work to achieve the goal(s) and objectives. Include:
 - a. **The phase(s) from Section I.B. included in your project.**
 - b. **Background information** - Describe why you think this project will work. Is the project evidence-based or innovative? Why will this project be a good service to the targeted communities?
 - c. **Strategies and milestones** - Describe project milestones, and provide a timeline of when you will complete them. Explain roles and responsibilities and how the organization will ensure appropriate progress throughout the project.
 - d. **Collaboration** - Describe any other plans, projects or initiatives happening in conjunction with other state agencies, non-profits, or businesses related to the proposed project. Explain how you will work with these entities.
 - e. **Acknowledgement from the appropriate elected official that the planned construction is in accordance with all applicable regulations (for Phase C Funding).** Demonstrate awareness of federal and state regulations applicable to the project and how you will ensure the project's compliance. If seeking additional funds for the project, demonstrate that the project meets the required

state and federal regulations to seek the additional funding. This could include regulations for proper installation of playground equipment and construction of greenways, sidewalks, and bikeways. Regulations also include all Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

- f. **Plans for sustainability, maintenance, and training as applicable.**
- g. **Community involvement** - Explain how your organization will involve the community throughout the project.

3. **Project Management** – 20 Points Maximum

(500 word limit) Please provide a narrative describing your organization's qualifications and ability to manage your project successfully. Please describe any collaboration with multi-jurisdictional or cross-sector partnerships. Include the answers to the following questions:

- a. Has your organization managed a similar project? If so, what objectives were met and unmet?
- b. Who will provide the key expertise for the project's success, including financial management?
- c. What barriers have you encountered in providing access to healthy built environments in the area? What measures will be taken to address these barriers?
- d. What specific plans do you have to partner with other groups or organizations to accomplish the objectives? How does this project align with the community's health priorities?

4. **Evaluation** – 20 Points Maximum

(500 word limit and two attachments: (1) Grant Project Flow Chart/self-made logic model and (2) Work and Evaluation Plan) - Please describe how you will evaluate the impact and success of the project. Include metrics, a plan for data collection, and a plan to disseminate findings.

5. **Budget** – 20 Points Maximum

(500 word limit plus Attachment 2 completed on the provided template) – Please complete the 2 budget pages for each fiscal year of the project using Attachment 2. Include a detailed budget and budget narrative, describing anticipated revenue and expenses, additional grant funding, and other sources (including in-kind, if applicable). Address sustainability and maintenance beyond the grant period. Clearly delineate funding requests, in-kind and matching resources, and total project cost.

Additionally, if the organization has received funding from TDH in the past, provide a brief history.

6. **Additional Attachments**

(The total of all additional attachments may not exceed 10 pages.)

If an elected official is not the primary applicant, you must submit a letter of endorsement from an elected official. The letter must state that the local government endorses the project, that the project is on public property, and that the local government will be responsible for ensuring the project is completed accurately, on-time, and on-budget. Letters of endorsement must also acknowledge that the output(s) from the project will be publicly available and free of charge. For planning (Phase A) projects, the letter must acknowledge that you must consider planning requirements from other applicable State agencies for plans to be eligible for construction funding. If applicable, letters of endorsement must include acknowledgement from the elected official that construction will be in accordance with regulations for proper installation of playground equipment, and any regulations for greenways, sidewalks, and bikeways, etc. Letters of endorsement must demonstrate the community's commitment to the initiative and plans for sustainability and maintenance.

- a. You may submit supplemental attachments if you choose. Supplemental attachments can include, but are not limited to:
- Letters of Support and Letters of Commitment
 - Documents that demonstrate public support
 - Pictures
 - Plans
 - Convening meeting minutes

III. **Sample Contract**

Following TDH's evaluation, TDH will prepare one of the **Sample Grant Contracts** included on the TDH Funding Opportunities page for this RFA. There are three different Sample Grant Contracts, and only one would apply for a grantee's agency or organization. They are as follows:

GG – Governmental Grant Contract (Cost reimbursement grant contract with a federal or Tennessee local governmental entity or their agents and instrumentalities)

GR – Grant Contract (Cost reimbursement grant contract with an individual, business, non-profit, or governmental entity of another state or country)

IG – Interagency Grant Agreement (Cost reimbursement grant agreement between two Tennessee state agencies, University of Tennessee, or Board of Regents colleges and universities)

If a grant is awarded to a governmental entity established pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (such as a human resource agency, a developmental district, the University of Tennessee, or a Board of Regents school), TDH will revise the standard terms and conditions of the grant accordingly; however, TDH will not revise significant performance requirements.

It is imperative that applicants review the entire Sample Contract with legal counsel prior to submitting an application for funding and notify TDH in advance if they cannot accept any terms or conditions. The Application for Healthy Built Environment grants asks applicants to list any terms or conditions that their organization cannot accept. TDH will not consider any later requests for contract changes.

IV. Schedule of Events

The following is the anticipated schedule for awarding Access to Health grants. TDH reserves the right to adjust the schedule as they deem necessary.

EVENT	TIME (Central Time)	DATE (all dates are state business days)
1. RFA Issued		September 18, 2020
2. Letter of Intent Teleconference	9:00 a.m.	September 24, 2020
3. Written "Questions & Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	October 5, 2020
4. State Responses to written "Questions and Comments"		October 12, 2020
5. Letter of Intent Deadline	2:00 p.m.	October 29, 2020
6. State issues Invitations to Apply		December 2, 2020
7. Application Teleconference	9:00 a.m.	December 4, 2020
8. Written "Questions and Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	December 11, 2020
9. State Response to Written "Questions and Comments"		December 18, 2020
10. Deadline for Applications	2:00 p.m.	January 29, 2021
11. Evaluation Notice Released		March 5, 2021
12. Effective Start Date of Contract		July 1, 2021

TDH will hold a Pre-response Teleconference prior to submission of both Letters of Intent and Applications. The information for the Letter of Intent Teleconference is as follows:

Meeting Name: RFA 34301-17620 HBE
Meeting number (access code): 171 039 8393
Meeting password: yCd6mNZWi43
Meeting Link:
<https://tngov.webex.com/tngov/j.php?MTID=m7de5cfe50ebe305145d0c405daa44a43>
Join by phone: +1-415-655-0003 US TOLL

Deadlines stated above are critical. TDH will not accept late documents. The applicant's clock-in time will be the time of online submission. No other clock or watch will have any bearing on the time of receipt.

TDH assumes no responsibility of delays in delivery of submission.

TDH will not pay any costs associated with the preparation, submittal, or presentation of any LOI or application.

V. Submission of Letter of Intent

Please submit Letters of Intent and all attachments online via the following link no later than the deadline in Section IV of this RFA:

Web Link: <https://www.tn.gov/health/funding-opportunities.html>

Please contact the Competitive Procurement Coordinator at the address below with any issues or concerns with this RFA.

Melissa Painter
Competitive Procurement Coordinator
Service Procurement Program
Division of Administrative Services
Andrew Johnson Tower, 5th Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
Phone: (615) 741-0285
Email: Competitive.Health@tn.gov

Healthy Built Environment Grant Project Flow Chart

Please fill out the boxes below to show the process and expected results for your proposed project

<p>What resources will you use to implement your project?</p>	<p>What activities will you do with these resources?</p>	<p>What will you produce through these activities?</p>	<p>What changes will result from your project?</p>	<p>What long term impacts will your project have?</p>
<p>Examples: staff, funding, partnerships, volunteer labor</p>	<p>Examples: build a new playground, hold community meetings</p>	<p>Examples: a greenways plan, a new park, new partnerships</p>	<p>Examples: change in physical activity, greater access to parks</p>	<p>Examples: reduce obesity, improve mental health</p>

Section 3 of 4: Project Changes/Barriers

Have there been any noteworthy changes made to the project? If so, please describe below.

This may include budget alterations, limiting/expanding scope of activities, adding/cancelling activities, and any other relevant changes.

Are there any barriers to timely project completion? Please explain below.

