

2022-2023 Vitalyst Systems Change Grants FAQ

Updated 9/2/22

General Information

- Recording: <https://youtu.be/D5yZNW2GrGU>
- WiseHive (online submission portal): if you have any questions, please email help@vitalysthealth.org.
- The “Specific Points” provided on each slide of the information session slide deck are the guiding questions Vitalyst uses to review Letters of Intent (LOIs).
- “Six Conditions of Systems Change”: https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/
- “Elements of a Healthy Community”: <http://vitalysthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/EOHC-Handout-Jan2018.pdf>
- “Elements of a Healthy Tribal Community”: <http://vitalysthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/TribalComm-FULL.pdf>
- To schedule a conversation, complete the Discovery process at <http://vitalysthealth.org/partnering-with-vitalyst/> & select interest in the “Systems Change Grant”
- LOIs are to be submitted by Fri., 10/28 at 5pm (MST-AZ) at <https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/vitalyst-systemschange>
- Online Application Process – How to Guide: <http://vitalysthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/How-to-Submit-a-LOI-Guide-092022.pdf>
- General questions: Grants@VitalystHealth.org

Q: Should a specific systems change be identified in the beginning of the proposal, or can it be determined at the end of a research project?

A: Yes, the systems change should be identified at the beginning of the proposal, or at least the proposal should indicate what systems change issue you’re trying to tackle through the research project. The specific intervention/solution towards systems change for the Systems Change Grant should be identified and ready to be implemented. Vitalyst’s two-tiered grants program was built specifically this way. The Systems Change Grant are three-year grants for those collaboratives ready to go, have their intervention/solution identified, and just need multi-year funding to help get it done. If you’re still in the research phase, you might be better suited for the Spark Grant, but keep in mind the Spark Grant isn’t meant for research just for research’s sake. It should be specifically tied to a policy, systems, or environmental change; but we can certainly walk-through specific opportunities in a one-on-one conversation.

Q: Can local government be the lead? If not, can we be part of the collaborative?

A: Yes, local government can be the lead, and part of the collaborative. We encourage the lead applicant to be a community-based organization to especially hold a health equity lens and have those closest to the problem be the ones closest to the solutions. We encourage collaboratives to work more closely with community partners to put them in the lead position.

Q: Can you provide some examples of prior Systems Change Grant-funded projects?

A: Previous grant partners can be found at <http://vitalysthealth.org/grants/>.

Q: Can a portion of the funds be used for C4 or policy and legislative work.

A: 501c4s are eligible to be partners, but the lead applicant cannot be a c4. Still, please discuss with Vitalyst staff to review. Funding can support policy and legislative work, including direct and grassroots lobbying, but discuss with staff to review so we may ensure the proper regulations are followed when it comes to nonprofits engaging in these types of activities.

Q: Where can we download this PowerPoint if we need to review it again?

A: The slides and recording will be uploaded here: <http://vitalysthealth.org/grants/>.

Q: Can you provide more guidance and clarity on what we mean by collaboratives?

A: Systems change is hard work, and it takes a lot to make it happen. Collaborative should be two or more organizations and there is no “red line” about the length of the collaborative partnership. If it’s only a year old, maybe it’s too soon, and the Spark Grant might be a better option for you to provide the year for the collaborative to form and plan a bit more. The Specific Points and characters as described in the slide deck is how we assess the strength of collaboratives. In the Systems Change Grant full application, Vitalyst uses the Wilder Assessment (<https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/collaboration-factors-inventory>) to assess collaborative strength, and this requires each one of the collaborative partners to answer and gauge the strength of the partnership. So, the collaborative should be firm with clearly identified partners and roles.

Q: How specific or general should the health outcomes be?

A: The health outcomes should be as specific as possible and clearly identified, and intersections should be made with more than one of the Elements of a Healthy Community. Having specific data that shows disparities in a specific health outcome is helpful. We recognize and hope that systems change can impact a specific population or community, but that the broader system or population can be impacted so it may be wise for the LOI to specifically focus on a clearly identified health outcome while noting the broader population health outcome potential in a sort of public health model. Vitalyst does not expect the level of detail for an exact degree of impact on a community’s specific health. Rather, we would like to see evidence-based connection between the systems change you’re looking for and health outcomes. Evidence-based could mean secondary literature or community insight, but we do not need to see the exact specific degree of health impact to be had.

Q: Can you clarify if the grant can be for programs or direct support?

A: The collaborative and partners can certainly work programmatically or in direct support, but the Systems Change Grant is not meant for programmatic or direct service. The systems change should be project-oriented, not beginning or continuing programmatic efforts.

Q: How final or specific does the budget have to be with the LOI, especially with the long-time between the LOI and full application?

A: The budget can be general but should include enough information to show how the funds will be used. The budget should be consistent with the grant amount and proposed scope of work. The budget narrative can help describe specific budget line items. Still, Vitalyst recognizes that systems change work evolves, so we work collaboratively with applicants and partners to address any changes needed in the budget as submitted.

Q: Do you suggest that money from this grant be shared with community partners?

A: The funding can certainly go through the community partners to account for their work in your effort. We have seen this in previous proposals and encourage their meaningful engagement to be compensated, especially when it comes to holding an equity lens and accounting for stipends or

honorariums of community members. Funds can also be leveraged for consultants/contractors who then subcontract to implement solutions.

Q: Can universities lead or be part of these collaborations?

A: Yes, very similarly to local governments, institutions of higher education can be the lead applicant or be part of the collaborative. We encourage the lead applicant to be a community-based organization to especially hold a health equity lens and have those closest to the problem be the ones closest to the solutions. We encourage collaboratives to work more closely with community partners to put them in the lead position in an authentic way.

Q: As a smaller organization, we are not prepared to enter into a 3-year \$175k system change effort at this time. Would Vitalyst consider much smaller proposal to generate a plan on a small corner leading to systems change efforts?

A: Vitalyst's two-tiered grant program includes the Spark Grant which invests through one-year planning grants to support collaborations in the journey to address systems change. Spark Grants are discovered throughout the year, along with other Vitalyst resources, with Vitalyst staff and can be explored through <http://vitalysthealth.org/partnering-with-vitalyst/>.

Q: Would establishing an affordable/transitional housing forum for our county qualify as systems change opportunity?

A: This housing forum may be a Systems Change Grant opportunity depending on how the effort may be covered through the criteria and specific points as covered in the information session and slide deck. It would be best to discover the potential by completing the Discovery process (<http://vitalysthealth.org/partnering-with-vitalyst/>) and selecting interest in "Systems Change Grant" to discuss with a Vitalyst team member.