

## Overview

To help communities build capacity and to advance evidence-based efforts to improve health in indoor home environments by reducing exposures to common indoor air contaminants including radon, mold and moisture, dust mites, environmental tobacco smoke (secondhand smoke), pests, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), combustion byproducts (e.g., CO and NO<sub>2</sub>), and other emerging IAQ issues, the [National Center for Healthy Housing](#) invites communities to apply for a bundled award of coaching and support over eighteen months that includes on-call access to technical assistance from a network of national experts, opportunities to engage in peer learning, and a \$15,000 grant.

Recognizing the potential for serious, widespread, and costly health risks from indoor environmental exposures (e.g., respiratory illnesses, heart conditions, cancers), many communities are taking action to improve indoor environments for comprehensive community health improvement. Others want to take their first steps but may be unsure of how and where to start. The health and economic burden of poor IAQ is considerable, especially for disproportionately impacted low-income communities and vulnerable populations, and there are persistent racial and economic disparities in both exposures and health outcomes. In places where disparities in IAQ exposures contribute significantly to disparities in health outcomes, the potential for improving a range of health outcomes—thereby reducing strain on healthcare, educational, and other systems—is great.

The purpose of the proposed work is to celebrate, map, and spread successful policies and systems; support new communities to take action; and encourage communities to move up the ladder of engagement, taking actions that achieve cross-sector partnerships and put sustainable, systems-level policies and programs in place. Communities that are primed for change may use this support to mobilize more effectively to improve indoor environments or expand and sustain existing efforts.

The underpinning for this effort is to advance health equity and racial justice while supporting [EPA's environmental justice](#) goals to ensure that all people enjoy “the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.”

### Who is eligible?

- Local, regional, or state non-profit and community-based organizations
- State, county, local, and tribal government agencies

Organizations must be based in the United States. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply.

Applicants will be asked to self-identify their proposal as being in the development or implementation phase, but this will not impact scoring or final selection.

- **Development phase:** Communities should identify their proposal as being in the development phase if they need assistance in identifying or prioritizing promising strategies, convening stakeholders to spark collaboration and dialogue, and/or they are in the early stages of the proposed work (e.g., corresponding to a low to moderate level on the ladder of engagement).
- **Implementation phase:** Communities should identify their proposal as being in the implementation phase if they have defined priorities (e.g., policy or practice) and objectives and/or they have some infrastructure in place to build on to achieve the proposed work (e.g., corresponding to a moderate or higher level on the ladder of engagement).

**How many communities will be selected?**

We anticipate that a minimum of three communities will be selected. This competitive solicitation is being led by the National Center for Healthy Housing, but funding is made possible through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**What is the project period and what are some of the key dates?**

<b>April 12, 2022</b>	Applications due	
<b>Mid-May 2022</b>	Applicants will be notified of their status in mid-May	
<b>Early June 2022</b>	Kickoff webinar for new grantees	
<b>September/October 2022</b>	Virtual grantee convening	
<b>June 2022 through November 2023</b>	Monthly coaching calls with coaching team and other coaching activities as needed	
<b>September/October 2023</b>	Virtual grantee final convening	
<b>November 2023</b>	Final reports due to NCHH	

## Overview

### What are the benefits of being selected?

Communities that are selected will receive support to advance their local indoor air quality efforts.

These benefits include, but may not be limited to:

- **Coaching and support:** Eighteen months of technical assistance from the [National Center for Healthy Housing](#) and other national experts who will be invited based on the needs of the selected communities.
- **Peer learning:** Opportunities to interact with and learn from other communities tackling similar issues with shared goals to improve health through improved indoor environments.
- **Grant award:** A \$15,000 grant to support activities.

### What is the coaching and support and are there related grantee expectations to note?

Coaching and support will be provided to grantees both remotely and in-person (as applicable) over the duration of the project period (June 2022-November 2023) to enable grantee access to on-demand and structured feedback, mentoring, and advice from national experts, many of whom are also IAQ professionals and leading scientists. Grantees will also have the opportunity to learn from peer communities, and to share their own successes and challenges. Grantee expectations and learning opportunities may include but are not limited to participation in:

- a project “kick-off” webinar;
- monthly coaching calls with applicable national partners;
- an on-site visit by applicable national partners;
- submission of mid- and final-project reporting documentation (including a short video “story” created with support from NCHH);
- and participation in other activities as needed (e.g., additional topic-specific, capacity building webinars [e.g., focused on legal levers, financing, training/workforce, data integration, data to drive/evaluate success, health equity, or cross-sector partnerships] or coaching calls with peer mentors).

The coaching and support will be customized to community needs, interests, and capacity. For example, coaches can help communities identify priority areas for (e.g., radon, indoor environmental asthma triggers, or comprehensive indoor air risk reduction) as well as the types of strategies a community is interested in pursuing (e.g., improved housing codes and/or local policies, data sharing initiatives, advocacy efforts, partnership with the healthcare, energy, and other sectors, developing new or innovative financing, workforce development). NCHH will work with communities to assess opportunities and develop paths to action. (Note: An example of outcomes from a previous grantee cohort in one of NCHH’s responsive, technical support initiatives can [be seen here](#).)

## Application Process

### **Can a community submit more than one application?**

A community may submit more than one application. However, a maximum of one application per community will be selected.

### **What types of activities can be supported?**

Funding should be used to build capacity within a community and help communities achieve policy, practice, or systems change. NCHH coaches will use a ladder of engagement framework to transform initial interest and sporadic action into sustained engagement and increased impact. The examples in Table 1 illustrate this concept. Communities that start lower on the ladder of engagement may not achieve systems change during the project period, but should still articulate a plan and commitment to laying the groundwork for systems change and/or putting new policies, services or programs in place. Coaches will assess each community's baseline level of engagement and track activities and movement up the ladder of engagement.

Priority will be given to applicants who articulate plans to advance policy and system changes. Implementation phase applicants will likely be in the moderate or higher levels of the above ladder of engagement, whereas developing phase applicants will likely be at the low to moderate levels; NCHH anticipates funding applicants in both phases.

Communities may apply to use funding for an initiative that is already underway if they can demonstrate how the additional funding will substantially enhance the impact or reach of the work.

Funding may NOT be used to support attempts to influence legislation through direct or grassroots lobbying. For example, funds cannot be used for signage that endorses pending legislation or an elected official.

Funding should also not be used to support the direct costs of remediation. Also, funding is not intended to support standalone awareness or outreach and education activities. However, outreach/education activities that are linked to policy, practice, or systems change may be included as part of a proposal.

### **What outcomes will successful applicants be expected to demonstrate?**

Given the relatively short project period (roughly eighteen months), communities will be expected to articulate a long-term goal and measure progress towards that goal, even if the end goal is not expected to be reached during the project period. Examples of outcomes might include:

- Stronger partnerships (e.g., as measured by new agreements, collaborative initiatives);
- New, higher-quality or more accessible data that can help target remediation, increase community engagement, or drive policy and systems change;
- Increased involvement or leadership by affected residents;
- Increase in policymaker, practitioner, and/or advocates who have evidence-based information for decision-making or mindset shifts among these groups;
- New or additional funding or financing in place with a particular focus on under-resourced communities;
- Removed barriers to eligibility for services and streamlining of access to funding across programs;

- **New or improved policies, services, or programs in place or in progress with a particular focus on under-resourced communities; and/or**
- **Increase in equitable access to services or programs.**

**Table 1. Ladder of Engagement Framework for Proposed Work**

Level and Description	Example Activity**
<b>Low:</b> Learning level, one-time, or limited-impact actions.	Convening of local tax assessor and department of public health to begin dialogue on systems to collect housing quality data; convening to discuss embedding radon risk-reduction requirements in state and local building codes; convening of healthcare payers, public health, and housing stakeholders; scholarship to visit peer learning community or attend conference.
<b>Moderate:</b> Commitment to ongoing action, identification of next steps.	Formation of coalition to address indoor air concerns across sectors holding regular meetings; development of partnership agreements to share health and housing data between healthcare systems and housing providers.
<b>High:</b> Ongoing interventions and services and adoption of best practices, such as cross-sector partnerships.	Integrated programming with housing and health services; utilization of healthy homes assessments to drive home renovation programs to improve IAQ; agreement with local managed care organization to provide home-based asthma services; CHW training program initiated;
<b>Exceptional:</b> Sustained systems change.	Adoption of over 80% of the National Healthy Housing Standard (NHHS); creation of a home repair tax credit with health criteria; approved Medicaid state plan amendment increasing role of CHWs in delivering home-based asthma services; dedicated funding for home environmental interventions to support clinically-directed care (e.g., establishment of public health funds that home services can draw on for environmental interventions.)

**\*\* NOTE:** The examples in Table 1 are a small sample of potential outcomes that illustrate each of these levels. They are not intended to present a fully comprehensive list of potential activities or represent the pinnacle of sustained systems change. Reviewers are not looking for applications containing only these specific outcomes.

Evaluation Criteria

**How will communities be selected?**

**This is a competitive grant award. Applicants will be evaluated based on need, clarity of plan, readiness, potential impact, community partnerships, commitment to equity and justice, and potential for sustained change. Applications must demonstrate the following:**

- **Demonstrated need as evidenced by available data, including lived experience and qualitative data.**
- **Clear outcomes for the work and a thoughtful plan for achieving them.**
- **Potential for policy and systems change.**
- **A demonstrated commitment to advancing equity and justice.**
- **A strong, effective plan for meaningfully involving multi-sector stakeholders, including community members and community-based organizations, private sector interests, policymakers, and other relevant agencies and groups.**

**We will seek to produce a geographically balanced cohort. Proposals will be reviewed primarily using the criteria listed above.**

**Applications will likely be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of staff from the National Center for Healthy Housing, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a national partner organization, and a former NCHH mini-grant recipient using the criteria articulated above.**

## Application Process

### What information do I need to apply?

NCHH accepts grant applications **ONLY** [through online submission](#); it does NOT accept the application in PDF format. Applicants can preview all of the application questions here ([PDF copy of full application](#)).

NCHH recommends preparation of the application responses in advance, as the [online application](#) must be completed and submitted entirely in one session. We recommend using the PDF copy of the full application ([available here](#)) to work offline with your team to pre-determine answer selections and/or draft responses for questions as appropriate. Developing full text responses in a Word document for the open response sections of the application will allow you to draft, edit, and save your responses as needed, as well as check character counts, before copying/pasting your final responses into the [application on the SurveyMonkey platform](#). NCHH also recommends printing a copy of the completed application before submitting it.

### When are applications due?

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, but are due no later than 5 p.m. ET on Tuesday April 12, 2022.

### When will the grants be announced?

We anticipate that successful applicants will be notified in mid-May.

### Where can I get more information?

Contact Laura Fudala ([lfudala@nchh.org](mailto:lfudala@nchh.org)) or Anna Plankey ([aplankey@nchh.org](mailto:aplankey@nchh.org)) or visit <https://nchh.org/build-the-movement/grants-and-scholarships/2022-building-systems-to-improve-iaq-mini-grants/> or more information. Answers to other submitted questions will also be posted on that webpage. All questions must be received by Friday April 1, 2022.

*Join the [funding announcement listserv](#) to be notified of new developments (e.g., newly posted FAQs) for this grant opportunity.*

**\* 1. Information about the primary applicant:**

**Agency/Organization Name:**

**Website (if applicable):**

**City or County:**

**State:**

**\* 2. Please identify a primary contact at your organization/agency :**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**\* 3. Will the grant be used to support an activity or event in the community listed above where the applicant is based?**

- Yes, the grant will be used to support work in the community listed above.
- No, the grant will be used to support work in a different community (please specify below).
- The grant will be used to support work in multiple communities (please specify below).

Additional details about communities that will benefit from this grant (Limit: 1500 characters or fewer, including spaces):

**\* 4. What type of organization is applying for this grant?**

- Local, regional, or state nonprofit or community-based organization
- State, county, local, or tribal government agency
- Other (please specify below and note eligibility requirements previously outlined)

Additional or clarifying comments (Limit to 1,000 characters or fewer, including spaces):

**\* 5. What is the primary focus of your organization? *Select all that apply.***

- Healthy housing
- Housing
- Health
- Environmental health
- Public health
- Healthcare
- Environmental justice
- Community or neighborhood action
- Other (please specify below)

Additional details or clarifying comments (Limit: 500 characters or fewer, including spaces):

**\* 6. What indoor air contaminant(s) will be the primary focus of the activities proposed under this project? Select all that apply.**

- Radon
- Mold and Moisture
- Dust Mites
- Environmental Tobacco Smoke (secondhand smoke)
- Pests
- Particulate Matter
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- Combustion byproducts (e.g., CO and NO<sub>2</sub>)
- Comprehensive IAQ
- Other Emerging IAQ Issues (please specify below)

Additional details or clarifying comments (Limit: 500 characters or fewer, including spaces):

**\* 7. Tell us more about the population that is being disproportionately impacted by indoor air contaminants in your community (if applicable). (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces):**

**\* 8. Tell us a little more about your organization. Be sure to include a description of how improving indoor environments is relevant or connected to your organization's mission and describe your organizational short- and long-term goals related to this issue. (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces):**

**\* 9. How does your organization reflect the population you serve? You are welcome to answer this in any way that you think is best. Some examples may be by providing information about the makeup of your leadership team, board, or staff. (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces):**

\* 10. Please indicate whether your proposal is in the development or implementation phase. This information will not affect the scoring of your application and will only be used only for reviewers to better understand your proposal and put it into context.

- Development phase:** Communities should identify their proposal as being in the development phase if they need assistance in identifying or prioritizing promising strategies, convening stakeholders to spark collaboration and dialogue, and/or they are in the early stages of the proposed work (e.g., corresponding to a low to moderate level on the ladder of engagement [see detail above in Table 1]).
- Implementation phase:** Communities should identify their proposal as being in the implementation phase if they have defined priorities (e.g., policy or practice) and objectives and/or they have some infrastructure in place to build on to achieve the proposed work (e.g., corresponding to a moderate or higher level on the ladder of engagement [see detail above in Table 1]).

\* 11. Please respond to the following statements to help us learn more about the landscape for overall indoor air quality efforts in your community. Note: The selection committee aims to provide grants to a mix of communities with different levels of experience working to improve indoor air quality, so please be candid in your rating. If you'd like to elaborate on your ratings (e.g., for instance describe a past project or initiative that failed and your lessons learned), you may use the comments box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
Local decision-makers are knowledgeable about common indoor air contaminants and the related health risks.	<input type="radio"/>					
The general public is knowledgeable about common indoor air contaminants and the related health risks.	<input type="radio"/>					
We have established coalitions and partnerships that work on indoor air quality.	<input type="radio"/>					
Our existing coalitions and partnerships are active and function effectively.	<input type="radio"/>					
We have good community resources to help residents <i>find</i> exposures to common indoor air contaminants including radon, mold and moisture, dust mites, environmental tobacco smoke (secondhand smoke), pests, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), combustion byproducts (e.g., CO and NO <sub>2</sub> ), and other emerging IAQ issues.	<input type="radio"/>					

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree      Not Sure

We have good community resources to help residents *fix* exposures to common indoor air contaminants including radon, mold and moisture, dust mites, environmental tobacco smoke (secondhand smoke), pests, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), combustion byproducts (e.g., CO and NO<sub>2</sub>), and other emerging IAQ issues.

                            

Residents report barriers to eligibility for services and/or difficulty accessing funding across programs address exposures to common indoor air contaminants.

                            

Our community looks to address common indoor air contaminants comprehensively, rather than by individual exposure pathway.

                            

Additional comments (Limit to 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces.):

**12. (OPTIONAL) Please respond to the following statements to help us learn more about the landscape for the specific project you are proposing in your community.** *Note: If you are applying to address IAQ comprehensively, you may skip this question as Question #11 above captures that information. If your project is not addressing IAQ comprehensively, please respond to the following statements to help us learn more about the landscape for your area of focus.*

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree      Not Sure

Local decision-makers are knowledgeable about the specific indoor air contaminant(s) this project addresses and the related health risks.

                            

The general public is knowledgeable about the specific indoor air contaminant(s) this project addresses and the related health risks.

                            

We have established coalitions and partnerships that work on the specific indoor air contaminant(s) this project addresses.

                            

Our existing coalitions and partnerships are active and function effectively.

                            

We have good community resources to help residents *find* exposures to the specific indoor air contaminant(s) this project addresses.

                            

We have good community resources to help residents *fix* exposures to the specific indoor air contaminant(s) this project addresses.

                            

Residents report barriers to eligibility for services and/or difficulty accessing funding across programs address exposures to the specific indoor air contaminant(s) this project addresses.

                            

Additional comments (Limit to 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces.):

\* 13. Describe what success looks like for you at the end of the 18-month project? What is your specific plan for achieving that goal? How will the technical assistance package advance your progress? (Limit: 3,000 characters or fewer, including spaces):

\* 14. Why does your community need this support? Please feel free to respond as makes sense for your community. Possible responses could include quantitative data and/or lived experiences to describe the burden of indoor air contaminants in your community, any specific populations that are disproportionately burdened, the need for services to address and prevent indoor air risks, existing political will to address the problem, how your community will be affected if you do not receive this funding, etc. (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces).

\* 15. Describe how your community will work with the TA team. Who will be the main point of contact? What existing partners will be engaged? What new partnerships will be formed? How will the affected community be included and engaged in the process? (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces):

\* 16. How does the work proposed in this grant relate to your longer term plans to taking systems-level action to reduce indoor air risks? How might it help you sustain your efforts? (Limit to 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces.)

\* 17. Previous Experience: What work has been done by your agency or organization as a foundation to create policies and systems change that achieve equitable health outcomes for all members of your community? (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces)

\* 18. Community partnerships and sustainability: Is there a strong and effective plan to meaningfully involve multi-sector stakeholders, including community members and community-based organizations, private sector interests, policymakers, and other relevant agencies and groups? Does the applicant explain how this project is integrated into their longer-term plan? Is it likely that there will be adequate capacity in the community to sustain this work after the TA period ends (e.g., adequate staff/partner capacity, political will, funding)? (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces).

\* 19. Equity and Justice: Does the proposal attempt to address the root causes of disproportionate burden of disease/health outcomes, or focus on disproportionate exposures to poor indoor air quality as an explicit equity and justice strategy? Is the proposal led by an organization representing affected residents or community members? If not, is the proposal inclusive of impacted communities in decision-making and does it communicate a clear plan of sustained and meaningful collaboration? (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces).

**\* 20. Please provide a general description/estimate of how the \$15,000 grant funding will be used; suggested categories include labor, indirect costs, and other direct costs. (Limit: 2,000 characters or fewer, including spaces.)**

*Please note that the awards will be granted in three installments: an initial \$7,500 upon contract execution; \$5,000 after nine months of TA (e.g., Feb/March 2023); and \$2,500 upon receipt of final reporting requirements (e.g., November 2023) after eighteen months of TA.*

**21. (Optional) If desired, please upload any supplemental material you'd like to provide to the selection committee to support your community's application for this grant. (Only PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG, JPG, JPEG, GIF files are supported. File size limit is 16MB.)**

Choose File

Choose File

No file chosen

**\* 22. Please confirm your understanding and agreement that communities selected for funding may not use any portion of the funds for lobbying activities, including but not limited to those described in the following statement:**

*No aspect of Awardee activities performed under this award may consist of attempts to influence legislation through direct or grassroots lobbying. For example, funds cannot be used for signage that endorses pending legislation or an elected official.*

- Yes, I certify that I understand and agree to the prohibition of using these funds for lobbying activities.
- No, I cannot certify my agreement with or understanding of this statement.