

# State Innovations to Advance Breastfeeding and Health Equity Request for Proposals

## Frequently Asked Questions

Application Deadline: Jan. 29, 2021

**Note:** For the purposes of this document, SPAN recipients will be referred to as “states,” even though some SPAN recipients are universities. This document will continually be updated with blue text as new questions are received. This document was last updated on Dec. 11, 2020.

### **Who is eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?**

Current State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) recipients participating in ASTHO’s Breastfeeding Learning Community who are in good standing AND who have not previously received an Innovations grant from ASTHO are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Additionally, these members can work with an entity, such as a university, coalition, or a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) or local partner, community-based organizations to apply as a bona fide agent or financial designee on their behalf. However, while the designee may receive the funds on the state’s behalf, the SPAN recipient being represented is ultimately the named recipient of the award.

### **What would be an appropriate group to serve as a bona fide agent or financial designee for the state?**

Selected states may work with coalitions, universities, REACH, or local partners to apply as bona fide agents or financial designees on their behalf. The designee will be required to submit a letter of collaboration from the SPAN recipient designating the entity’s status. The applicant or designee must also be in good standing with the System for Award Management.

### **If the state agency uses a bona fide agent, would the bona fide agent complete the MOU with ASTHO using the attached templates to the RFP? What role would the state agency play?**

If the state is selected and uses a bona fide agent, the bona fide agent would complete the MOU. The bona fide agent is expected to work closely with the state to accomplish activities in the proposal. The letter of designation and proposal should describe the role the state and bona fide agent will play on the project. For example, the state may play an advisory role and provide project oversight.

### **Aside from the letter designating the community partner as the bona fide agent, does the state agency need to submit any other documents regarding this designation?**

There isn’t additional documentation needed for this designation. However, the state should describe the bona fide agent’s role in the letter of designation and proposal description to provide ASTHO with more insight into the roles and responsibilities in proposed activities.

### **How do states apply for this opportunity?**

States must submit required documents via email to [breastfeeding@astho.org](mailto:breastfeeding@astho.org) by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021. Please use the email subject “Breastfeeding Innovation Grant Opportunity.”

### **How can states learn more about eligibility and requirements for monetary, nonmonetary, and mixed support?**

ASTHO will hold an informational call on Dec. 16, 2020. Please email [breastfeeding@astho.org](mailto:breastfeeding@astho.org) if you have specific questions that are not addressed during the informational call.

### **What documentation must be included in the proposal?**

Applicants are asked to provide the following information for the proposal:

1. A cover letter that includes the names, email addresses, and telephone numbers for the team's lead programmatic and financial or contract members.
2. A brief outline of the team's approach and strategy for accomplishing the requested project activities (proposed approach). Please provide a detailed work plan that includes activities, a vision statement, a timeline, goals, and the milestones your team will reach to achieve the workplan and deliverables.
3. A description of how applicants will anticipate challenges to meeting their project goals and why the proposed project will have a high probability of success and plans that will illustrate the team's ability to sustain the project past the project period.
4. A description of the applicant's experience and quality of performance on work completed to advance breastfeeding support and promotion within the state or through participation in the ASTHO Breastfeeding Learning Community. Include successes and accomplishments for the year(s) described.
5. Information about the project team, including the team's ability and capacity to perform the tasks required within the specified timeframe. Please describe staff qualifications and provide a CV for key personnel and the staff lead.
6. A budget and budget narrative based on the type of support your state will receive (monetary, nonmonetary, and mixed). If an applicant includes an indirect cost rate of >10% in their budget, they should be prepared to submit a federally approved indirect cost rate letter upon award.

*Please refer to the official RFP for additional requirements.*

**Is the visioning Boundary Spanning Leadership tool required to build the vision statement? Where can this tool be found?**

Although the visioning tool is not required for creating a vision statement, it is highly recommended. The vision statement is required. This tool is provided by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and is an attachment in the RFP. The visioning tool can also be accessed in the [BSL digital toolkit](#) or [ASTHOConnects](#) resources. Please contact [breastfeeding@astho.org](mailto:breastfeeding@astho.org) if you need help accessing this document.

**What's the difference between monetary and non-monetary support? Is there a difference in the application process?**

Applicants may choose to apply for one of three options for support from ASTHO. (Successful applicants will be held to the same timeline and activities described in the RFP regardless of the category chosen.)

*Monetary Support:* Applicants may seek direct payment of up to \$25,000 in funds to support costs associated with this project. Applicants choosing the monetary category will establish a memorandum of understanding with ASTHO with fixed priced payment based on satisfactory completion of required deliverables. (Please refer to the RFP for details on allowable expenses.)

*Nonmonetary Support:* In this category, applicants forgo direct payment and elect to have ASTHO handle in kind or direct payment of services of up to \$25,000 in value to support activities related to this project. For example, an applicant may choose to have ASTHO lead or pay for expert consultative services, such as a CCL-trained expert(s) to facilitate the state's taskforce innovations. Other examples include travel using ASTHO's travel agency or action planning facilitation from ASTHO staff. Applicants choosing the nonmonetary category will establish a memorandum of understanding with ASTHO under which the state health agency will perform the project. (Please refer to the RFP for details on allowable expenses.)

*Mixed Support:* Applicants in this category may specify amounts or percentages to be supported by direct and indirect support. (Please refer to the RFP for details on allowable expenses.) For example, the state can request a specific amount of the award for fixed priced payment to fund a staff person and also request ASTHO as a fiduciary agent for other costs (not exceeding the total award amount). Applicants choosing the mixed category will establish a memorandum of understanding with fixed priced agreement for monetary sections supported by the monetary category based on satisfactory completion of required deliverables. Please refer to Section III of the RFP for details on allowable expenses and see the table below for more information.

	<b>Monetary category</b>	<b>Nonmonetary Category</b>	<b>Mixed Category</b>
<b>Available Support</b>	Up to \$25,000 in funds.  <i>State or state designee is the recipient of funds or fiduciary agent.</i>	Indirect support in the form of a service, such as consultative services, of up to \$25,000 in value.  <i>ASTHO is the fiduciary agent.</i>	Combination of both monetary and nonmonetary support. Total must not exceed \$25,000.  <i>For specific parts, state, state designee, or ASTHO may serve as the fiduciary agent.</i>
<b>Required Documents</b>  <i>(Please refer to the RFP for details.)</i>	Signed memorandum of understand and fixed-price agreement, which can be signed by the bona fide agent/designee.  Applicant must provide a detailed fixed price per deliverable budget, including a cost breakdown per task and a proposed payment schedule.	Signed memorandum of understanding, which can be signed by the bona fide agent/designee.  Applicant must provide a brief narrative describing the indirect nonmonetary support of choice and motivation for the selection. Include a detailed outline of costs.	Signed memorandum of understand for fixed price payment for specific tasks, which can be signed by bona fide agent/designee.  Applicant must provide both monetary and nonmonetary budget documents for the related sections of proposal.
<b>Compensation and Reporting Requirements</b>  <i>(Please refer to the RFP for details.)</i>	Reporting requirements may include periodic conference calls and Phase I and II final reports.  Compensation requirements may include monthly invoicing. A payment schedule should be linked to deliverables.  States in this category will invoice ASTHO for completed work as per the agreed, fixed-price payment schedule.	Reporting requirements may include periodic conference calls and Phase I and II final reports.  ASTHO will pay for the elected service(s) directly. The amount covered shall not exceed \$25,000 in value.	Reporting requirements may include periodic conference calls and Phase I and II final reports.  This category combines both monetary and nonmonetary services, and will use both forms of compensation for the respective sections.

**How will the value of nonmonetary support be determined?**

The value of nonmonetary support is dependent on the type of service, time involved, and rate or associated fees. For expert consultative services, the applicant must provide the name of the service provider, billing rate, and associated fees. If the applicant knows the type of expertise needed but is unsure what entity can provide the service, the applicant may work with ASTHO to identify an appropriate expert to address the technical assistance needs and calculate costs. (For example,

facilitation training costs would include speaker fees, meeting costs, and travel expenses). In some cases, such as with CCL facilitation, ASTHO may have in-house technical expertise, and costs would involve travel expenses and staff time. The amount must not exceed \$25,000.

The cost for ASTHO staff to support a three-day event (22.5 hours) is approximately \$2,000 to \$2,500 in salary expenses plus travel expenses and materials, if applicable. If an external consultant is more appropriate for the service requested, estimates can range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for one-day event plus travel expenses and materials, if applicable. Applicants who wish to use nonmonetary support and would like assistance with identifying an appropriate expert can use this range to estimate costs in their budget. It's important to note these are estimates and actual costs may vary or be different.

#### **What can be purchased under this RFP?**

Funding may be used for mini grants, stipends, materials or supplies, staff and consultant time, training, printing, and other project-related expenses. Funds **may not** be used for equipment purchases. Per HHS requirements, funds awarded under this competitive bid are prohibited from being used to pay the direct salary of an individual at a rate in excess of the federal Executive Schedule Level II (currently \$197,300). Please refer to the RFP for details on allowable expenses.

States should consider equipment as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) that has a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. Example: Breastfeeding pumps may be categorized as supplies in the budget, as they do not meet the \$5,000 threshold and have a lifespan under one year.

#### **How often are selected states expected to report project progress to ASTHO?**

The selected states will be required to attend virtual learning sessions and submit bi-monthly progress reports to describe activities and produce final deliverables for Phase I by July 31, 2021 and Phase II by Dec. 31, 2021.

#### **Are states able to change their funding support type once they have been selected? Are states allowed to revise project deliverables and outcomes after submission?**

If the state decides to revise the support type or project deliverables and outcomes, the state will need to provide written documentation to ASTHO to change the project deliverables and outcomes. ASTHO will review this information and approve changes, if applicable. Please note this may cause delays in the project start.

#### **When will states be notified of award status?**

States will be notified on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2021. Selected states will be required to participate in a kickoff call in February to discuss projects and expectations.

#### **Does the innovation project(s) need to directly relate to the strategy for which states are funded?**

States are not restricted to the strategy they selected when participating in the ASTHO Breastfeeding Learning Community. However, states should mention in their proposals whether they will be focusing their innovations on their current strategy or expanding to a different strategy and should discuss the reason for the change.

#### **Does the proposed innovation project(s) need to have statewide impact or can states work on one or more regions with increase need for capacity?**

Proposed projects do not need to have statewide impact and can focus on priority regions as identified by the state. States should discuss in their proposals what priority regions they intend to target, the defined strategy, demonstrated need, and how they intend to engage.

**What will be expected of awardees shortly after grants are awarded?**

Shortly after grants are awarded, awardees will be expected to participate in an innovation grant kick-off call, confirm roles and responsibilities, identify, and review relevant background materials, finalize the work plan and budget, and outline the final deliverables. Awardees will also submit a written logic model or roadmap for their Innovation project describing project inputs, activities, and outputs, as well as short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.