

Request for Proposals

# **BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER TO CREATE ORAL HEALTH EQUITY**

“Power is held in place in part by existing patterns of connection and resource flows. And power is not finite. Abundance and alternatives do not necessarily dry up, but get held up, held back, held by and/or flow between and to some and not others. Shifting and reclaiming flows through network activity can create new power arrangements and priorities.”

– Interaction Institute for Social Change, 2014

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement (DentaQuest Partnership) seeks to partner with community-based organizations and their trusted community partners that have a high stake in not only seeing the current oral health and health system evolve, but in actively participating as change agents and leaders in support of that evolution. The purpose of this initiative is to support advocacy capacity and power-building in these communities and increase their share of voice in the local, state, and national oral health systems- and policy-change conversations.

In addition to advocacy and engagement in their communities, awardee organizations will be, or become, active in the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN). Awardees will also play a strategic advisory role with the DentaQuest Partnership on how to best strengthen and prioritize community voice across initiatives within its [three focus areas](#).

## BACKGROUND

The mission of the DentaQuest Partnership (formerly the DentaQuest Foundation and the DentaQuest Institute) is to revolutionize oral health to create an effective and equitable health system that results in improved oral health and well-being for everyone. We believe that the importance of good oral health to overall health is not widely understood, that access to care across populations is inequitable and inadequate, and that the system of dental care and payment is designed around surgically treating disease rather than preventing it. Furthermore, those who are underserved by the current oral health system are frequently the same communities that have been historically marginalized in other areas of health and wellness for decades, leading to a complex web of social determinants that continue to produce poor health outcomes and in turn affect myriad other aspects of community and individual wellbeing.

Acknowledging that the current oral health system created and continues to perpetuate poor and inequitable outcomes across many underserved communities, the DentaQuest Partnership embarked on a multi-year investment strategy with three goals: to demonstrate the central role community engagement must play in impactful social change, to elevate health equity as a core value, and to position oral health as a key social justice issue. Research suggests that such an effort has not been undertaken in oral health before. We set out to learn how purposefully engaging community-based partners—ones that have little or no experience in oral health but represent communities marginalized by the current system—will fundamentally shift and enhance the national conversation around oral health systems change. Further, we have shown that oral health, like other systemic problems, is not a standalone issue, but one that should be an integral component of any effort to address disparities in health outcomes across racial, socioeconomic, and demographic lines. Truly making change requires thought and action across a variety of socioecological domains that address both explicit and implicit conditions.

### Key Dates and Deadlines

**October 21, 2019**

Release of Request for Proposals

**November 29, 2019**

Deadline for proposal submission via Fluxx

**Mid-January 2020**

Awardee notified

### Contact

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### Shifting the Conditions that Hold the Problem in Place

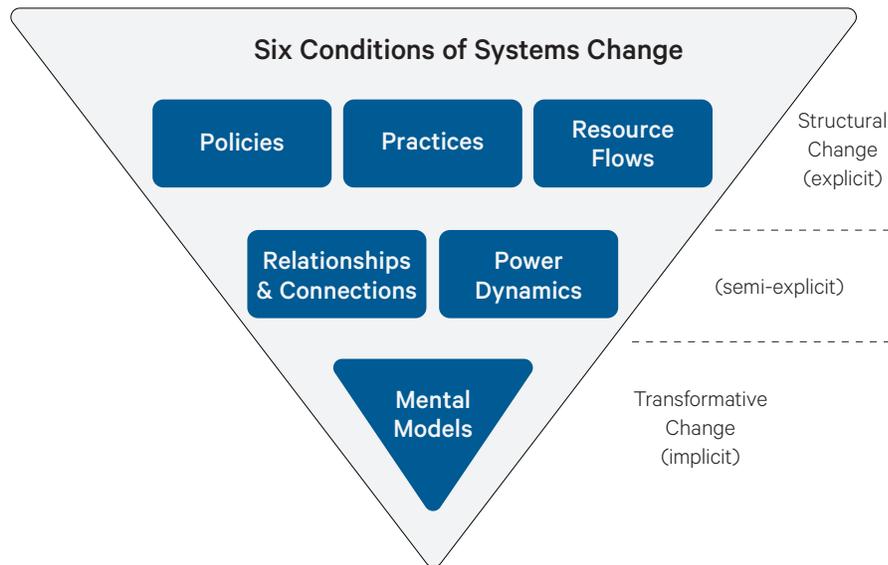


Figure from *The Water of Systems Change*, FSG, June 2018.

To achieve new outcomes, it is essential to engage new partners and perspectives—specifically those from communities negatively impacted by the current system—and to work in a new and different way. We believe that for the broader oral health movement to be successful, state and national leaders must not only make space for community voices at the table, but also be guided by the lived experiences, stories, and input of people experiencing the existing health care policy, coverage, financing, and the availability of community resources. In order to create transformative change as described in the model above, existing systems must be disrupted.

For this reason, since 2015, the DentaQuest Partnership has been investing in partners in communities across the United States, collaborating with them to raise the awareness of opportunities to improve oral health in their local environment, connecting with relevant stakeholders, and strengthening their capacity to advocate for changes that will lead to more equitable value and quality-based models of care and prevention. The cornerstone of that

effort, since 2015, has been the Grassroots Engagement Initiative, an investment strategy that has aimed to shift the conversation and traditional power dynamics that have persisted in the oral health system in order to create transformative change. As a continuation and expansion of the Grassroots Engagement Initiative, the funding for this RFP is intended to disrupt systems, redesign the ways that all types of power flow to systemically disenfranchised communities, and point our collective work towards a destination of oral health equity for all.

Statewide advocacy organizations that are working closely with community-based organizations are welcome to apply for the [Supporting Statewide Advocacy Groups to Create Oral Health Equity RFP](#).

If projects span state and community-based applicants, please describe collaboration in each proposal.

## ELIGIBILITY

We are seeking to support community-based organizations and their trusted community partners that are underserved by the current oral health system and have a stake in actively participating as change agents and leaders.

Because the main intent is to build capacity in communities that have been systematically disenfranchised, demonstrating experience in oral health is not a prerequisite for participating in this RFP. We believe that oral health is not a standalone issue, but one that should be an integral component of any efforts to address disparities in health outcomes across racial, socioeconomic, and demographic lines, and are interested in learning about factors outside of oral health (“social determinants”) that affect oral health outcomes. Community-based organizations with perspectives across different sectors are encouraged to think about how their work intersects with oral health.

Some of the characteristics that we believe demonstrate the types of organizations that align with this RFP are:



Organizations must have a demonstrated commitment to equity. This includes not just who an organization is serving, but how they are, or will be, building power.



Organizations must demonstrate willingness to engage in advocacy efforts. This can include strengthening capacity, designing campaigns, and connecting stakeholders with local, state or federal policy issues.



Organizations must be able to demonstrate a thorough connection to stakeholder communities and the ability to center the lived experience of communities that are disproportionately affected.

## EXPECTATION

The purpose of this initiative is to support advocacy capacity and power-building in historically underserved and/or marginalized communities and increase their share of voice within oral health systems- and policy-change conversations. In addition to advocacy and engagement in their communities, awardee organizations will be, or become, active in the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN). Awardees will also play a strategic advisory role with the DentaQuest Partnership to help inform how best to strengthen and prioritize community voice across initiatives within its three focus areas.

The specific activities that awardee organizations undertake as part of this initiative should be directed by their deep connection to, and understanding of, the unique needs and strengths in the communities they serve, with an eye toward systems change, shifting power dynamics, and/or policy advocacy in the oral health space. If possible and where applicable, proposals may highlight the coalition(s), networks, advocacy organizations, or other community partnerships that support or inform the work.

Proposals will be evaluated based on :

- The contribution of the project to oral health and health systems change and shifting the power dynamics within oral health policy change debates.
- Demonstrated interest, understanding, and experience in—or willingness to build capacity for—policy analysis and advocacy.
- A specific, well-conceived workplan that incorporates the following key capacities:
  - Centering community voice
  - Coalition-building
  - Strategic communications
  - Grassroots organizing/engagement
- A detailed plan to incorporate racial justice and healthy equity into the project.
- Consideration of sustainability and the possibility of engaging other funding partners in the work moving forward.
- Willingness to engage in OPEN and serve as an advisor to the DentaQuest Partnership.

## USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, subgrants to coalition member organizations, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, activities related to fundraising and development, project-related travel, and other direct project expenses. Grant funds, including subgrants, may not be used for direct service.

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

**RFP released:**

October 21, 2019

**Deadline for proposal submission via Fluxx:**

November 29, 2019

**Awardees notified:**

Mid-January 2020

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FAQs

**Are applicants eligible that were not a part of the 2015-2020 DentaQuest Grassroots Engagement Initiative?**

Yes, any community-based or community-centered organization can apply regardless of whether you participated in the 2015-2020 DentaQuest Grassroots Engagement Initiative.

**What is the funding level for this grant program?**

The funding for this grant program is approximately \$100,000 per organization, but individual amounts will vary based on the proposed scope of work.

**What is the geographic scope for this RFP?**

We expect that the work will have a local or state-based strategy, but we are also interested in thinking about how to apply learnings and findings from this work to national-level policy change, and we will welcome our grantee partners to engage in that conversation.

**This kind of work takes more than a year. How long is the award/relationship for?**

The award is for one year with the potential of renewal for multiple years.

**What types of organizations are eligible to apply?**

All community-based or community-centered organizations located in the United States are eligible. Organizations must have 501c3 nonprofit status, or a fiscal agent.

# QUESTIONS TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANTS

## Description of Opportunity

Provide an overview of the geographic, demographic, and/or community landscape that exists in your community (or the community you serve) relative to health, oral health, and oral health inequities. Specifically speak to the policies and structures that are enabling these circumstances to exist. What are the circumstances that make this timely and/or critical to happen now (in other words, what is the window of opportunity)?  
*(750 word limit)*

## Advocacy

Please describe your organization's capacity and/or experience in engaging in policy advocacy. Describe experiences from when your organization has engaged in policy advocacy work and/or the policy change process and include what the key advocacy strategies or tactics that were used. Examples do not have to be specific to oral health, but should speak to a specific policy, whether at the local or state level. If there are no examples of policy advocacy, please describe how you plan to strengthen your capacity to, and engage in, policy advocacy. *(750 word limit)*

## Health Equity and Community Voice

Please describe how you've used a health equity and/or racial justice lens in the development of your workplan. Detail how equity and/or racial justice exists within the outcomes of your proposed work, including both the populations impacted by the current lack of equity and how those populations are, or will be, represented in the work activities themselves. Please include "who", but also how they are engaged and in what ways these partners are informing and/or contributing to the work.  
*(750 word limit)*

## Workplan Narrative

Please provide a detailed description of your proposed work. How does it build on previous work or existing expertise, infrastructure, or partnerships? Are there any potential impacts on, or learnings from your work that could inform, the DentaQuest Partnership areas of focus? If so, please describe them. *(1,500 word limit)*

## Outcomes & Impact

Identify the changes that will result from successful implementation of your proposed work. What results do you hope to see within the short term (one year) and the longer term (three or more years), especially at the systems- and policy-change levels? How will you know/measure whether you have reached these results? Who will be impacted by these results and in what way will they be impacted? *(750 word limit)*

## Sustainability and Longevity

Besides DentaQuest Partnership funding, what other resources do you anticipate seeking to complete the workplan or related work? (This could include other sources of funding, technical assistance, other partnerships, etc.) How will this work, or the results from this work, lead to developing/accumulating additional resources or support? This section should speak to your organization's efforts to sustain this work over time.  
*(750 word limit)*

## HOW TO APPLY

- 1. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A FLUXX ACCOUNT:**  
Using the **Google Chrome, Safari, or Microsoft** web-browser, create an account with the online grants management system, Fluxx:  
<http://dentaquestpartnership.fluxx.io>
- 2.** Please allow for 2-3 days for registration to be approved. Once approved, you will receive an automated email with login instructions.
- 3. ONCE LOGGED INTO YOUR ACCOUNT,**  
click on the “Apply Now” button in the bottom left hand corner.
- 4.** In the Program Area field, select “2020 Requests for Proposals”
- 5.** In the Sub Program field, select “Building Community Power”
- 6.** Complete Project Title and questions. You may click “Save” at anytime and return later.
- 7.** When you have completed the proposal, you have the option to “Submit Draft” and schedule a Draft Proposal call with the Grants Team. To schedule call, contact Grants Team member below.
- 8.** If you have a Draft Proposal call, the proposal will be made available again following the call for any potential edits to be made. Once finalized, click “Submit Final.” If you choose not to have a Draft Proposal call, once the proposal is complete, click “Submit Final.”

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