

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES – INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH, EDUCATION,
AND FAMILIES’ CITY COHORT INITIATIVE:

Cities of Opportunity Action Cohort: Accelerating Real, Transformative Progress across City Issues and Resources to Advance Health and Equity

GOAL

Provide city leaders tailored support aligning needed resources to ensure the well-being of all their city residents, encompassing housing/community development, economic opportunity, and city planning and design.

The Action Cohort will equip up to eight teams of city leaders and community partners with a proven, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to reducing health disparities through policy, practice, and systems change across these and related areas.

Proposal Due: October 21, 2022

Selection January 2023

Announcement:

Project Dates: February 2023 – April 2024

Submission Information: Please submit your application through the online form.

Questions? Contact Cities of Opportunity at coo@nlc.org, subject line “Action Cohort.”



THE OPPORTUNITY

The National League of Cities (NLC), through its Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) invites city teams from across the country to participate in the **2023 Action Cohort**.

City leaders have the power to bring about transformative change and reduce health disparities in their cities that are impacting how well and how long their residents live. Acting on these disparities requires recognizing that their root causes lie in social, economic, and racial inequities. Yet, while city leaders have the will, they may need additional capacity, support, and sharing of best practices to tackle these inequities.

The Cities of Opportunity (CoO) Action Cohort supports local leaders in their goal to ensure *all* residents have the opportunity to be as healthy as possible by building their capacity to identify and address the root causes – past and present – that have shaped current disparities. It empowers city leaders and their community partners to advance equitable policies, practices, systems, and structures by working across key issues that impact health through a proven, comprehensive, and coordinated approach that:

- ◆ is community- and data-driven, and city-specific
- ◆ is anchored in economic and racial equity as well as works across the many interconnected factors that affect health, well-being and life expectancy encompassing economic opportunity, housing, city planning, and design
- ◆ gives people a way to move forward together, find common elements, partner, and engage
- ◆ results in decision-making that is informed by evidence, data, and residents' lived experience
- ◆ deepens city leaders' and partners' awareness of systemic change and increases their ability to plan, establish and sustain long-term strategies
- ◆ is action-oriented and grounded in shared accountability and continuous learning

This opportunity will position cities to leverage local and federal resources to make progress on their most

important health issues while laying the foundation for long-term changes in policies, practices, systems, and structures.

IMPETUS FOR ACTION AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

In U.S. cities there are significant and deep-rooted differences in residents' health, well-being, and life expectancy grounded in long-standing inequities including access to healthcare, and the economy. Local government leaders have the power to address these inequities and bring about transformative changes by putting community engagement at the core of decision-making and developing comprehensive approaches that address the interconnected root causes of health inequities. Unprecedented levels of federal funding and new ways to use data have created a window for action. Now is the time for innovative approaches that align resources across issues and partners to deliver long-term solutions for addressing inequities so that all city residents have fair and equitable access to opportunities for good health, well-being, and long lives.

CITY PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT

The Action Cohort brings together small teams of city leaders, staff, and community partners from up to eight cities for a 15-month immersive planning process. Together, these cross-sector teams co-design approaches to collaboratively tackle social, economic, and racial inequities specific to their city. CoO recognizes that each city is unique and has structured the Action Cohort to create customized pathways that advance each city's priorities within and across key issues that impact health – with an initial focus on economic opportunity, housing, city planning, and design. Participating cities are guided by tailored technical assistance, flexible tools, and frameworks that adjust in real-time to the uncertainties, challenges, and opportunities in their specific, complex landscape. Side-by-side with an exclusive cohort of peers, cities work in tandem through a 15-month immersive planning process beginning with an exploration of data and root causes and ultimately

Cities of Opportunity: Leveraging City Strengths to Advance Equitable Pathways to Health and Wellbeing

implementing work plans rooted in meaningful policy, practices, and systems change.

This work will be guided by NLC, in collaboration with CoO's strategic partner, Consilience Group, LLC through CoO's proven, comprehensive and coordinated approach rooted in authentic community engagement, data, financing, cross-governmental collaboration, multi-sector partnerships, and sustainability.

Support provided to selected sites will include:

- ◆ \$10,000 Grant Funding to allocate towards their CoO priorities.
- ◆ Technical Assistance (TA) tailored to support each city in crafting and implementing a comprehensive CoO Action Roadmap and Workplan that aligns with their city's key priorities.
- ◆ Workshops to accelerate learning through dialogue with subject matter experts, peer interaction, and direct application of new tools and frameworks.
- ◆ Peer Exchange with other cities in the 2023 Action Cohort through regular virtual events to discuss challenges, shared goals, and mutual interests.
- ◆ In-Person Convening of the entire cohort to facilitate peer sharing and learning, relationship building, and connection with national experts. *(Contingent upon health and safety considerations)*
- ◆ Executive Briefings facilitated with top leadership of participating cities to build champions and sustain support for each city's CoO work.
- ◆ Thought Partnership and in-depth discussions with subject matter experts, philanthropic leaders and access to cutting-edge resources, innovations, and tools.
- ◆ Dissemination and Communication of each city's work across the NLC network and with partner organizations.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

The 2023 Action Cohort is seeking city leaders who are innovators and willing to redefine their view of "progress" from one that uses economic or growth measures alone to one that defines progress as "well-being for all people."

Action Cohort leaders and their teams should be ready and willing to:

- ◆ Identify key priorities, encompassing economic opportunity, housing, city planning, and design, based on their city's unique context, opportunities, and challenges through an exploration of data and analysis of the root causes of inequity.
- ◆ Build cross-sector partnerships to leverage assets and respond to residents' needs and opportunities.
- ◆ Engage city residents in authentic and meaningful dialogue putting communities at the core of decision-making.
- ◆ Implement data frameworks for accountability in reducing health and social disparities.
- ◆ Develop work plans rooted in meaningful policy, practices, and systems change.
- ◆ Adopt equity plans, policies, and sustained structures across city departments.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ Readiness to embrace CoO's comprehensive approach towards changes in policies, practices, systems and structures to advance health, well-being and equity with a focus on the major factors that impact health - economic opportunity, housing, city planning, and design.
- ◆ Ability to assemble an effective core team representing city issue areas that includes a combination of top city executives (mayor, city manager) and/or cabinet-level city staff and senior departmental staff, other local elected officials, and principals from key partner organizations (e.g., local hospitals/health systems, community foundations, community-based organizations, business leaders, faith leaders, etc.).
- ◆ Expectation that all core team members commit up to 6 hours per month for technical assistance sessions and peer exchange.
- ◆ Participation of city's top executives (mayor, city manager) in three high-level quarterly cross-city briefings.
- ◆ Submission of one complete application per city with the full support of the mayor and/or city manager.

KEY DATES FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

What?	When?	Where?
Deadline for Applications from Interested Cities	October 21, 2022 11:59 PM local time	Application is online
Interviews of Finalist Cities	October 31, 2022 – November 11, 2022	Virtual
Final Information Due (confirmation of team composition)	November 18, 2022	Submitted electronically
Selection of cities for the 2023 Action Cohort	January 2023	Selected cities notified by email
<p>Three Executive Briefings (with mayors, city managers, key elected officials and CoO team Leads)</p> <p>Monthly Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team TA/Coaching - All-City Peer Learning Events and Subject Matter Consultations 	February 2023 – April 2024	Online, with one in-person convening in July 2023 pending COVID-19 and cities' travel guidance

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Up to eight cities will be selected for the 2023 Action Cohort. Only one application per municipality will be considered and must be submitted with the full support of the mayor and/or city manager. Interested cities should submit the online application by 11:59pm local time on October 21st, 2022. The online application asks you to respond to the following prompts and questions.

Mayor/City Manager Availability & Support:

1. Does your application have the support of your city's top executive (mayor or city manager)?
 - Yes
 - No

Applicant/City Information:

Please provide the following information about your city and application point of contact.

2. Primary contact for this application:
 - First name:
 - Last name:
 - Title:
 - Pronouns:
 - Email address:
 - Phone number:
3. City Name:
4. State:
5. What is the population of your community?
 - Below 50,000
 - 50,001-100,000
 - 100,001- 250,000
 - 250,001-500,000
 - Above 500,001
6. Geography type:
 - Rural
 - Urban
 - Suburban
 - Other
7. Area median income:
8. Area poverty rate:
9. Overall health status data. Please include life expectancy, low birthweight babies, premature deaths, as well as any relevant information on how these data points are stratified by race, gender, income and/or neighborhood.

10. If you are selected as a finalist, a one-hour phone interview is required with your team and Mayor or City Manager between October 31, 2022 – November 11, 2022. Please indicate if that is feasible.
- Yes
 - No

Applicability of the Cities of Opportunity Approach:

This section is intended to help you reflect upon how CoO's comprehensive approach toward changes in policies, practices, systems, and structures to advance health and equity across the intersection of economic opportunity, housing, city planning, and design applies to your city's needs at this time. We are not looking for grand accomplishments in these areas as much as the commitment and readiness to tackle them. Limit 800 words.

11. Describe your city's existing work to address health inequities among your communities. Your response may include, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. To what extent do you review city financing, planning, and management for equity and systemic inclusion? If this is underway, please describe how. (Examples can include contracts and grants awarded, permits, housing and retail development, and other incoming and outgoing investments.)
 - b. In what ways is the city examining municipal policies and ordinances to identify and correct for structural racism, inequities, and sustained change? (This can include economic development, contracting and hiring, zoning and planning, policing, fines and fees, parks and recreation, etc.)
12. How is this work related to three major factors that affect your residents' health – **Housing, Economic Opportunity, City Planning, and Design**? Feel free to add other factors as relevant.
13. How is the city using data to guide your work? This may include identifying priority populations, health/social disparities, understanding the sources of inequities, and/or measuring progress towards equitable outcomes.
14. Describe your city's activities to engage residents. Include examples of building trust and how you have included or plan to include communities most impacted by inequities in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.
15. How are different departments and/or functions across city government aligning their efforts to address health and other inequities? Please include the city departments/functions involved.
16. Describe the city's experience building collaboration across sectors in your community. Please include the focus area(s) for collaboration and relevant partners. Elaborate on how this collaboration(s) has been effective and share challenges.

Leveraging City Assets:

This section seeks to understand the assets and opportunities that you plan to leverage for transformative systems change towards equity as part of the 2023 CoO Action Cohort. Limit 800 words.

17. Describe any specific opportunities upon which your participation in the Action Cohort would capitalize. This could include emerging community needs and trends, new city/state/federal policies or funding, public will, interest, etc.
18. What are your city's current priorities and initiatives aimed at addressing inequities? Please describe potential policy, practices, systems or structural changes as relevant.
19. Describe your city's strengths and how you would leverage these to advance equity as part of the Action Cohort. Strengths may include community ties, people, institutions, values, culture, resources, initiatives, etc.
20. How has COVID19 modified your city's approach? Which particular approaches (policies, practices, programs or systemic changes) hold promise as you enter the endemic phase of COVID19?
21. What makes your city unique? Describe your city's history and current story as it relates to the inequities you hope to address as well as the opportunities you see for a more equitable future.

Preliminary City Team Composition:

The ideal team will include up to five individuals across local government and partners from the broader community with the ability to move priorities forward within and across housing, economic development, and city planning and design. This core team is the hub to engage others in both city government and the community to drive progress on your CoO priorities. This includes decision makers and essential staff from city departments, and external partners that might include the local health system, public health department, community-based organizations, business leaders and a funding partner or key stakeholder with access to funding partners.

22. Describe the team you have in mind for the CoO Action Cohort, including the individuals' organizational affiliation and position. *Please note: If you are selected as a finalist, we will discuss this in the finalist interview. That will help you to further solidify the team and confirm partner commitment to participate as the last step to complete your application before NLC selects the cities for the 2023 Action Cohort.*

QUESTIONS

For questions about this initiative, please contact Cities of Opportunity team at CoO@nlc.org, subject line "Action Cohort." Thank you.