



DESERT HEALTHCARE
DISTRICT & FOUNDATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

RFP # 20241001

RELEASE DATE: January 8, 2024

**BUILDING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES: IMPROVING COMMUNITY
SUPPORTS TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS**

RFP SUBMISSION DATE: February 16, 2024

Proposal Contact: info@dhcd.org

DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT AND FOUNDATION
Building Connected Communities: Improving Community Supports to Reduce
Social Isolation and Loneliness

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
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I. TIMELINE

The RFP process will operate along the following timeline: [Note: The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation (District and Foundation) reserves the right to modify the stated schedule of events at any time.]

Date	Activity
January 8, 2024	Release Request for Proposals.
January 23, 2024	Mandatory Bidder's Conference via Zoom RSVP to Join. Register here .
February 16, 2024	Applications due to the Desert Healthcare District via electronic submission in Foundant by 11:59pm. Please reference <i>Start Application</i> section for links to apply.
February 19 – March 7, 2024	Internal review of submitted applications.
March 12, 2024	Program Committee reviews staff recommendations.
March 26, 2024	Board of Directors approve applicant(s) at the March Board Meeting.
April 1, 2024	Contract begins.

Desert Healthcare District staff will be available for technical assistance and questions at info@dhcd.org. The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation reserves the sole right to determine the timing and content of the responses to all questions and requests for additional information.

Questions and information requests can be submitted to:

Desert Healthcare District and Foundation Staff
E-mail: info@dhcd.org

II. BACKGROUND

A. Desert Healthcare District and Foundation

The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation (District and Foundation) includes more than 400,000 residents and encompasses the entire Coachella Valley. The mission and vision of the District and Foundation focus on the advancement of community wellness in the Coachella Valley:

MISSION: To achieve optimal health at all stages of life for all District residents.

VISION: Equitably connecting Coachella Valley residents to health and wellness services and programs through philanthropy, health facilities, information and community education, and public policy.

Currently, the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation seek to achieve their mission and vision by following its 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. Within the Strategic Plan, are goals and strategies focused on expanding access to primary and specialty care services, expanding access to behavioral/mental health services, enhancing economic stability, supporting initiatives that enhance the environment, and supporting the expansion of general health education. The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation's grant program supports collaborative processes and invests in the services and programs of local nonprofits, health service providers, and public agencies that align with and advance the District and Foundation's mission, vision, and the implementation of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. The District and Foundation is actively pursuing improving community access to behavioral/mental health for Coachella Valley residents across various prioritized focus areas. This request for proposals focuses on mitigating behavioral health issues by targeting funding to address the impact of isolation and loneliness.

B. Prioritization of Isolation and Loneliness

The National Institute on Aging defines loneliness as the feeling of being alone or separated and isolation as a lack of social connection and frequent interactions. Isolation and loneliness impact individuals in varying degrees across one's lifespan. Studies indicate persistent social isolation is associated with higher risks for cardiovascular problems, behavioral and mental health challenges, and increased mortality rates.¹ Therefore, it is important to identify and address the numerous ways in which isolation and loneliness can manifest and better understand how organizations can foster connection as a protective factor against the negative outcomes that can develop.

Earlier this year the 2023 Surgeon General's Advisory report was released, and it centered around the public health issues of loneliness and isolation. The report called attention to the benefits and consequences of social connection on one's overall health. The report details out how social connection is not only shaped by our encounters and connections to family, friends, neighbors, coworkers but our connections to our surrounding environments of schools, businesses, digital surroundings, etc. The quality, structure, and purpose of our

¹ Brown, V., Morgan, T., & Fralick, A. (2021). Isolation and mental health: thinking outside the box. *General psychiatry*, 34(3), e100461. <https://doi.org/10.1136/gpsych-2020-100461>

relationships is an essential and often overlooked factor contributing to individual health, population health, community safety and resilience, and prosperity.² This advisory report examines and explores the cultural, social, and community factors that influence social connection and disconnection, as well as providing recommendations on how to create, foster, and strengthen social connections across a community.³

With the heightened prioritization of the health impact of isolation and loneliness from the 2023 Surgeon General Report, the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation sought to understand the impact isolation and loneliness was having on Coachella Valley residents. The District and Foundation embarked on hosting an interactive, community data walk to engage in conversation with local organizations, service providers, community residents, and other stakeholders around local community data findings specific to isolation and loneliness. During the data walk, participants reviewed gathered community data around isolation and loneliness, provided their interpretation on what the data means, and collaborated to identify challenges and opportunities, based on their knowledge and expertise, to advance community change within this area. After significant dialogue, District and Foundation staff were provided with a more thorough understanding of isolation and loneliness, within the Coachella Valley. This was achieved by contextualizing the data findings to include input from a diverse group of stakeholders who offered a new or different interpretation of the current data, challenges faced by organizations and residents, and opportunities that could be put into place for meaningful impact. Overall, several themes to mitigate the impact of isolation and loneliness, emerged from the conversation including improved access to transportation, increased availability of extracurricular activities for all ages, improved availability of respite care for caregivers, expanded access to resource education, targeted training for trusted messengers, and expanded capacity of community health workers/promotores/peer specialists/etc.

III. PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

In response to the uplifted and prioritized needs expressed by the convening of local community stakeholders, the District and Foundation is seeking proposals from organizations to build connected communities by improving community supports to reduce social isolation and loneliness. Specifically, the District and Foundation is seeking projects that address isolation and loneliness through the recruitment, retainment, and training of community navigators to improve connectedness. For clarity, the District and Foundation are defining Community Navigators and connectedness as follows:

Community Navigator: facilitates access to and utilization of direct and supportive services by building individual connections and trust (I.E. Community Health Workers, Peer Support Specialists, Promotores, Parent Navigator, Community Outreach Coordinator, etc.).

Connectedness: A continuum of the size and diversity of one's social network and roles, the functions these relationships serve, and their positive or negative qualities.⁴

² United States. Public Health Service. Office of the Surgeon General. (2023). Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: A report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Funded projects can include, but is not limited to:

- Fund established programmatic and operational infrastructure of existing community services/programs targeting social connectedness to reduce isolation and loneliness.
- Create new programs targeting social connectedness to reduce isolation and loneliness.
- Embed social connectedness interventions within organizations providing other services.

The District and Foundation support the utilization of subcontractors to fulfill components of proposed projects. If applying with subcontractors, a Memorandum of Understanding and an aligned budget are required.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation is accepting applications from qualified organizations. To be eligible for this funding opportunity, applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit and tax-exempt organization, a governmental, tribal, or public entity, including, healthcare service providers such as federally qualified health centers, and local clinics.
- Directly serve Coachella Valley residents living within the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation boundaries.
- Have current audited financial statements.
- Attend the mandatory Bidder's Meeting on **Tuesday, January 23, 2024, from 10:00am - 11:00am via Zoom.**
- Support one or more of the strategies identified in the Results-Based Accountability Strategies (Section V)
- Submit an application with a project budget not to exceed \$200,000 over a two-year grant term.

Preference will be given to organizations that demonstrate a collaborative approach to accomplishing one or more of the stated project strategies listed in Section V.

V. RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY STRATEGIES

Organizations applying for the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation's request for proposals are required to support Strategy 1 and either Strategy 2 and/or Strategy 3 as listed below.

Goal: All Coachella Valley residents are socially connected and have access to community supportive services.

Headline Indicator: Increase the number of Coachella Valley residents that improved their perception of community belonging.

Result: Increase the number of Coachella Valley residents that have access to community support services through Community Navigators.

Target Population: All Coachella Valley residents located within the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation’s boundaries.

Strategy 1: increase the number of community navigators serving Coachella Valley residents

- **Performance Measures:**
 - # of Community Navigators trained
 - # of Community Navigator positions retained
 - # of Community Navigators hired

Strategy 2: Increase awareness and access to behavioral/mental health resources

- **Performance Measures:**
 - # of clients provided service in their native language
 - # of cultural competency resources disseminated
 - # of community engagement/awareness activities
 - # of clients/potential clients reached through awareness efforts
 - # of clients who were directly connected to behavioral/mental health services
 - # of clients/potential clients who increased their knowledge of behavioral/mental health resources
 - % of clients/potential clients who increased their knowledge of behavioral/mental health resources

Strategy 3: Improve access to community support services through systems and environments that build connectedness

- **Performance Measures:**
 - # of clients reached
 - # of clients connected to community groups/organizations for practical and emotional support
 - # of clients who report reduced levels of isolation and/or loneliness as a result of improved access to supportive services
 - % of clients who report reduced levels of isolation and/or loneliness as a result of improved access to supportive services

VI. APPLICATION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The link to submit a grant application can be found on the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation’s website under the *Request for Proposals* tab on the side Menu:

<https://dhcd.org/Request-for-Proposals>. All applicants submit applications in an online grant portal. To access the application, organizations must have an active account with the Desert Healthcare District’s grant portal, Foundant.

- If your organization already has an account, please click the link in Section IX to submit an application for this request for proposals.
- If your organization already has an account, but needs a password reset, please select the “Forgot your Password” button following the link in Section IX.
- If your organization does not have an account, you can create one by clicking on the link in Section IX and select the “Create New Account” button.

In order to submit a complete application in Foundant, all organizations are required to include the following supportive documentation:

- 501(c)3 determination letter
- Project budget using the DHCD [budget template](#)
- Most recent Fiscal Year End Financial Statements that have been audited by an independent certified public accountant (CPA). Submitted audited financials must cover a time period within the last 18 months.
- Most Recent Year-To-Date Financial Statement that includes a Profit and Loss Statement (P&L) and Balance Sheet covering a time period within the last three months.
- Current Organizational FY budget
- Minutes from Board Meeting when Audited Financials were approved
- Current Strategic Plan
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) if applicable
- List of Board of Directors and Terms
- [Board and Staff Demographic Matrix](#)

The total funding available for this request for proposals is \$1,000,000. The awarded applicants will have budgets that do not exceed a maximum amount of \$200,000 over two years. The project contract will be two-years beginning April 1, 2024, and ending March 31, 2026. This is a competitive process, which means not all qualifying proposals will be funded.

VII. REPORTING GUIDELINES

The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation utilizes Foundant for progress and final report submissions during the grant contract term. For the two-year grant term, selected applicants will be required to submit progress reports every six months and a final report at the end of the project. Progress reports include narrative highlighting progress towards achieving deliverables, challenges faced during the project, success stories, etc. and metrics as they relate to the identified results-based accountability performance measures numbers (as noted in Section V). Additionally, for the financial aspect of the project, the District and Foundation require submission of a budget report, payroll documentation, invoices and proof of payment, receipts, and other supporting expense documentation during each progress report period. Final reports include narrative questions about the entirety of the project. Additional details, timelines, and instructions will be provided in the grant contract and during post award meetings.

VIII. PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCESS

Grants awarded through this request for proposal process will focus on addressing loneliness and isolation through the recruitment, retainment, and training of community navigators to improve connectedness. To apply for a grant, organizations must submit an application online by 11:59pm on February 16, 2024 using Foundant, Desert Healthcare

District and Foundation's grant portal. Organizations are limited to submitting one application. Detailed steps to the proposal selection process are as follows:

1. Submit an application with all required documents to the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation by 11:59pm on February 16, 2024. Applications are submitted online using Foundant.
2. Applications and documents will be reviewed by the grants team and then presented to the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation's Program Committee for discussion and recommendations on March 12, 2024, at 5:00pm.
 - a. Applicants being recommended for funding to the Program Committee will be sent an email inviting them to join the meeting, via Zoom.
3. The applications will then be presented to the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation Board of Directors who will review and vote on the approval of applicants on March 26, 2024, at 5:30pm.
 - a. Applicants being recommended for funding to the Board of Directors Meetings will be sent an email inviting them to join the meeting in person or via Zoom.
4. All applicants will be notified of their advancement. If approved for funding, selected applicants will be notified of the award and sent out a contract for signature. The contract will begin April 1, 2024, and end March 31, 2026.

IX. START APPLICATION

If you are new to applying to the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, click here to create an account: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=dhcd>

If your organization already has an account with the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, but needs a password reset, please select the "Forgot your Password" button from the following link: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=dhcd>

If you already have a grant portal account with the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, click here to apply: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=dhcd>

Do not submit your application until you have attended the mandatory bidder's meeting on **January 23, 2024 from 10:00am – 11:00am**. Click [here](#) to register for the bidder's meeting. Should you have any questions regarding this Request for Proposals or need technical assistance with the District's grant portal, please email info@dhcd.org.