Innovation Fund for Oral Health

Key Dates and Deadlines

January 9, 2013 (2:00-3:00pm EST)
Launch Webinar and Release of Request for Proposals

4th Thursday of Each Month
Concept papers due for review

2nd Thursday of Following Month
Full proposals invited

2nd Thursday of Following Month
Full proposals due

Inquiries

For more information about the Initiative, eligibility, and the applications process, please contact:

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Background: The DentaQuest Foundation

The mission of the DentaQuest Foundation is to improve the oral health of all. To achieve that mission, the Foundation makes strategic investments to impact the oral health of populations and support collaboration among local, state, and national partners. Through a systems approach, the Foundation invests in programs and initiatives that positively impact four key systems that influence oral health. Those interdependent systems include:

- Public policy that supports improved oral health;
- Increased public and private financing for oral health initiatives;
- Strengthening the delivery of oral health care and prevention;
- Expanded community engagement on oral health issues.

Foundation investments affect the systems at the grass roots and grass tops level by identifying, cultivating, and spreading promising models and effective approaches to pressing oral health challenges. Since 2000, the DentaQuest Foundation has worked to improve oral health with over $30 million in grants and program support. Visit the DentaQuest Foundation website at www.dentaquestfoundation.org/grants/search for a summary of grants and programs supported.
Purpose of the Innovation Fund for Oral Health

The DentaQuest Foundation envisions specific, longer-term changes, within the systems that we work to impact. Through the Innovation Fund for Oral Health, the Foundation seeks to identify and support programs that create movement toward the optimal oral health systems descriptors listed in the bullets below. Organizations across the United States that have promising, innovative solutions to improve the systems that impact oral health are invited to submit a proposal.

Systems Change Framework

Applicants will be expected to identify which of the optimal systems descriptors their proposal will address and describe the specific and measurable outcomes they plan to accomplish during the grant period that will lead to optimal oral health systems.

Our Approach to Innovation

Innovative strategies are necessary to address the many significant barriers to optimal oral health. The Foundation defines innovation as a creative process that involves rapidly developing new ideas or applying existing ideas in new ways in order to create value. The Innovation Fund for Oral Health represents a unique opportunity for inventive nonprofit organizations to leverage Foundation resources to develop and test new effective solutions to inequities in oral health and to partner with the Foundation to bring effective solutions to scale to achieve systems-level improvements that promote oral health. As such, it is important that applicants thoroughly evaluate their proposal ideas to assure that they meet the qualifying criteria of doing things differently and better. Proposals that describe ideas to do different things that maximize change towards optimal systems will have the greatest possibility of approval for funding.
Guiding Principles
The DentaQuest Foundation has developed the following guiding principles for the Innovation Fund consistent with our grantmaking strategy:

- Incorporate new ideas from planning to implementation and evaluation, and ultimately to achieve widespread impact
- Align grant goals and activities with the Innovation Model for Systems Change shown below,
  - Draw from and contribute to the national network: grantees interact with and learn from each other
  - See the whole: individual efforts contribute to something bigger
- Don’t reinvent resources that we already have (e.g. grantees working in the area of medical/dental collaboration should partner with the National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health to leverage existing resources such as the Smiles for Life Curriculum)
- Engage a broad constituency to improve oral health: diversity of experience leads to better decisions and actions
- Participate in evaluation: balance accountability and learning

Innovation Model for Systems Change
The term “Innovation” has become somewhat colloquial with various meanings. To that end, the Foundation has adopted the Innovation Model for Systems Change (adapted from Clay Christensen) that informs our thinking as we build our grant portfolio.

Proposals submitted to the Innovation Fund will be vetted through the above Innovation Model.
Areas of Interest

The Foundation has identified the following areas of interest. Prospective Innovation Fund grantees are encouraged to align their proposals with the following focus areas:

- Specific communities
- Non-Traditional partners
- Interprofessional collaboration
- Financing of care
- Technology

The Foundation seeks proposals for activities that address the questions of what now, what’s next, and what if? The Foundation is committed to supporting a diverse group of stakeholders engaged in the development of innovative solutions that impact optimal systems for specific communities, engage non-traditional partners to impact a broad range of determinants of oral health, promote new cost-effective models of cross-sector collaboration and financing to improve public health. The effective use of new technologies is a key element of innovation, both as a component of change programs and as the focus of proposal. While the above tracts are of interest to the Foundation, we also invite proposals that may fall outside of those areas.

Additionally, the Foundation will make a series of strategic investments in programs and initiatives that have demonstrated positive outcomes toward systems change, and that have the potential for sustainable, replicable growth.

Awards Process

Proposals to the Innovation Fund will be accepted on a rolling basis. There are three stages in the competitive proposal process for the Innovation Fund. Interested applicants should first submit a concept paper describing the proposed project. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to contact Foundation staff to discuss potential partnership opportunities. Following a review of the concept paper and subsequent conversations, the Foundation will invite a group of applicants each month to submit a full proposal (see detailed instructions on page 5).

Funding will be awarded as follows:

- A total of up to $4.45 million will be awarded from the Innovation Fund in 2013. The size of individual awards will be determined based on the scope and scale of the proposal.
- Grants made through the Innovation Fund will be for one (1) year. Recipients may be eligible to submit requests for renewed funding, contingent on successful implementation and demonstrated achievement of proposed goals.
- In addition to financial support, grantees may be eligible to receive technical assistance to facilitate shared learning among Innovation Fund grantees, grantees in the larger DentaQuest Foundation portfolio, and other partners in the Foundation’s national network.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Applicants must be based in the United States or its territories and may be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. The Foundation will select and develop a portfolio of promising programs and initiatives that successfully address the following criteria:

- Fit of proposed project with DentaQuest Foundation’s Systems Change Framework, with a clear understanding and explanation of which system and systems outcomes will be impacted and promoted by the project
- Clear alignment with one (1) component of the Innovation Model for Systems Change
- The proposed project meets and fulfills an identified need
- Clarity and practicality of the proposed project activities including anticipated outcomes
- The proposed project has the potential to be spread to other communities, regions, or states, and the ability to become sustainable beyond Foundation funding
- Capacity of the organization to implement the proposed project and manage grant funds
- Alignment of proposed timeline, scope of activities, and budget

**Use of Grant Funds**

Grant funds may be used for related staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, related travel, and other program or initiative expenses, including a limited amount of equipment essential to the project. In keeping with the Foundation’s grantmaking policy, grant funds should not be used solely for general operating expenses. Foundation funds may not be used for capital expenditures, lobbying, endowments, scholarships, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

**How to Apply**

As a first step, please submit a brief, 1-2 page concept paper to Andrea Forsht, Grants and Programs Associate, DentaQuest Foundation. In preparing the concept paper, prospective applicants should address the following areas:

1. Briefly describe your proposed program or initiative; explain how it positively impacts one (1) or more of the Foundation’s Systems Change Outcomes, and what specific and measurable goals you will accomplish during the grant year.

2. Identify where the proposed program or initiative falls within the Innovation Model for Systems Change.

Prospective applicants are also encouraged to: contact Foundation staff to discuss funding availability and priorities, alignment of proposed program with the Systems Change Framework, and Innovation Model for Systems Change; review timelines; and to ask any additional questions.

Following a review of the concept paper and subsequent conversations, the Foundation will invite a pool of applicants each month to submit a full proposal through the Foundation’s Online Application System.

The DentaQuest Foundation’s online application process, powered by Cybergrants, consists of easy-to-follow steps for grant seekers including online data entry, the preparation of standardized forms, adding required attachments, and saving an unfinished application to return to it later for completion and submission. An email confirmation will be sent to applicants confirming receipt of the submitted application. You may also print out a hard copy of your application for your records.

Please contact Andrea Forsht, Grants and Programs Associate, to inquire further about eligibility and the applications process at: andrea.forsht@dentaquestfoundation.org, or 617-886-1760.

**Evaluation**

In evaluating the DentaQuest Foundation’s investment in the Innovation Fund for Oral Health, we will seek to measure the impact of grantees’ activities on the four systems of Policy, Financing, Care, and/or Community. Grantees will be expected to develop metrics and monitor/measure their direct impact on one or more of these key systems through grant funds.
Addendum

Innovation Fund
Theory of Change to Achieve Optimal Oral Health

Believe

Assumptions

- Systems change that improves oral health care and community preventive resources will require complementary approaches that address different aspects of the system and the uniqueness of states and practice settings.

- Innovation is a creative process that involves developing new ideas or applying existing ideas in new ways in order to create value. It can be incremental, transformational, or disruptive.

- Innovative strategies are necessary to address the many significant barriers to optimal oral health. However, innovative solutions do not easily emerge because people and organizations often avoid risks and failure, which are inherent aspects of the innovation process.

- Foundation support for innovative change efforts and bringing effective solutions to scale can play a critical role in achieving systems-level improvements that promote optimal oral health.

Do

Strategies

- Provide funding to nonprofit organizations to support innovations that improve access to oral health care and promote community-based prevention, including:
  - Development of emerging, replicable, and sustainable solutions that consider the Innovation Model for Systems Change, and
  - Expansion of promising and proven solutions.

- Actively engage in network weaving among grantees and with other oral health peers and resources in order to enhance collective impact and facilitate learning.

Get

Results

1. Development of tested and scalable innovations that reflect the Innovation Model for Systems Change.

2. Dissemination of results and learning among grant participants and other oral health stakeholders.

3. Identification of emerging, replicable, and sustainable systems-level improvements that promote optimal oral health.