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Request for Technical Assistance Proposals: Approaches to Reducing Consumption of Sugar

In 2018, the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic (FLPC), with support from Arnold Ventures, launched an initiative to identify locally-supported policies that will reduce sugar consumption and build capacity for policy change. Now in the project's third and final year, FLPC is seeking proposals from partners who will build upon FLPC's expertise in food access and nutrition policy to advance sugar reduction policies in their respective communities.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease pandemic represents our most immediate public health concern, but diet-related chronic diseases remain among the most severe and costly threats to our long-term health. Researchers have linked excess sugar consumption to obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related chronic diseases. Reducing population-level consumption of sugar is one of the most promising strategies for addressing these pressing public health concerns.

FLPC is offering pro bono technical assistance (TA) to community organizations, food policy councils, and local, state, and tribal government entities across the United States interested in implementing innovative sugar reduction policies. This request for proposals (RFP) application will remain open until August 1, 2020. FLPC anticipates making two TA awards as a result of this RFP. TA grantees will be notified by August 20, 2020.

About FLPC

FLPC was established in 2010 to address growing concerns about the environmental, health, and economic consequences of the laws and policies that structure the food system. FLPC works with community-based organizations, governmental clients, and other food system stakeholders to understand the laws impacting the food system and propose cutting-edge policy solutions.

Overview of the Project

FLPC will provide one year of in-depth capacity-building engagement that includes:

- early-stage coalition building,
- nonpartisan research and legal consultation on a variety of sugar-reduction policies tailored to the interests of the TA grantee, and
- written policy resources and communications materials for a range of audiences.

To support the TA grantee, FLPC will help the grantee build a solid, community-based foundation for policy change. FLPC will assist the grantee in soliciting input from and facilitating dialogue among a diverse cross-section of community stakeholders to better understand shared goals and interests. Based on the information gathered and the latest evidence, FLPC will then identify and research policies that will best enable the TA grantee to address sugar consumption and related issues of health inequity within their community.

Technical Assistance Provided by FLPC

FLPC is committed to engaging with TA sites in order to empower and support community-led policy change. Please note that, in light of the measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, FLPC may be unable to conduct on-site visits or in-person meetings during the TA period. Nevertheless, FLPC will offer robust TA engagement featuring the following activities:

Building Local Capacity

- Build coalitions or enhance the capacity for action of an existing coalition or council.
- Establish or deepen relationships with key decision-makers and influencers, including legislators, agencies, private employers, health insurers, social service providers, and public health coalitions.
- Help facilitate virtual convenings or small gatherings of key stakeholders.
- Provide broad-based training of TA grantees and their community partners to deepen knowledge and understanding of policy options to reduce sugar consumption within the location's legal authority.

Soliciting and Researching Local/State Policy Priorities

- Facilitate prioritization among policy options with coalition members, ensuring selected policies have grassroots support and coalition buy-in.
- Research and provide additional support on selected priorities.
- Present strategies for pursuing policy options, based on legal feasibility, and offer available evidence to support TA grantees' potential policy ideas.

Supporting the Design and Implementation of Policy Action

- Research and write memoranda for partner organizations on the relevant legal and policy issues associated with desired policy action.
- Develop outreach materials such as template communications directed to community stakeholders, including private citizens, legislators and other government policymakers (e.g. public comment, commitment letters, fact sheets, and leave-behinds).
- Draft legislation and regulations, as appropriate.

Eligibility to Apply for Technical Assistance

Any community-based organization, local, regional, or state food policy council, or local, state, or tribal government entity is welcome to apply. FLPC will select TA sites based on readiness for policy engagement and change regarding sugar consumption policies, feasibility of policy success, potential to impact underserved populations, diversity in location/geography, and diversity of potential policy solutions of interest.

Expectations of Selected Technical Assistance Applicants

FLPC views its role as an advisor and TA provider, supplementing and supporting the work of community-based organizations and other stakeholders on the project. FLPC will work with each selected site to determine how best to assist its individual project; however, the TA grantees will lead the initiative, directing the course of policy action. TA grantees will have control over the

policies pursued and resources prepared by FLPC. The specific services provided, to whom, and for how long they will be provided will be based on the information in the applicant's RFP response, conversations between FLPC and the TA recipient, and an initial needs-assessment period. These services will then be described in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between FLPC and the TA recipient. If appropriate, TA grantees will work with FLPC to tailor work plans to respond to evolving site needs.

FLPC will look to partner agencies to provide on-the-ground expertise about the proposed policy interventions and relevant cultural, political and socio-economic factors that may influence a policy's success. FLPC will also expect TA grantees to have a demonstrated history or willingness of working with community members to address health inequity and other socio-economic disparities through grassroots engagement. For the partnership to be successful, FLPC will also ask partner agencies to identify a point of contact who will be in regular contact with FLPC, help schedule conference calls; review draft materials and provide feedback; and connect FLPC to other key stakeholders on the project.

Timeline

Applications are due on August 1, 2020. TFLPC will announce final decisions by August 20, 2020.

RFP for Technical Assistance Application

Please send a copy of the application in PDF format to flpc@law.harvard.edu. Applications should be typed, single-spaced, and answer all relevant questions. Complete applications should not exceed 3 pages.

Part A: Applicant Information

Provide bullet points with the following information:

- agency or organization name
- agency or organization location (city, county, and state)
- type of applicant (local government, state government, non-profit, local food council)
- applicant primary point of contact, including name, title, agency or organization (must be same as applicant), phone number, and e-mail address

Part B: Applicant Mission and Goals

Please provide a summary of your agency's or organization's mission, goals, history, structure, scope of work, and geographic reach. Please also include examples of your organization's previous or current policy or legislative initiatives.

Part C: Readiness for Policy Change

Describe your current level of engagement with the community on issues regarding sugar consumption and related policy change. As part of your response, please identify at least 3

community partners with whom you have built a coalition to pursue this change and who will help to champion sugar reduction policies in your community.

Please also discuss any previous sugar-reduction policies that have been explored by your organization, steps taken to implement policies, community evaluations and needs-assessments, educational efforts around the health consequences of sugar, and commitments from or relationships with legislators, local leaders, community partners, and diverse coalitions.

Part D: Potential Community Impact

Describe the impact you hope your project will have on the community, including any known health and demographic information about the proposed community. FLPC is particularly interested in the project's potential positive impact on vulnerable populations. Include information on who the project will benefit and how it will benefit them. Please also describe the organization's history of working with communities that have been disproportionately impacted by health inequities and barriers to healthy food access.

Part E: Policy Areas of Interest and Desired Services

Describe the services or kinds of support you would like to receive from FLPC, using the categories and bullet points on page 2 of this document as a starting point. Describe how these services could address existing needs and barriers. If any specific sugar reduction policies are of interest to the organization, please let us know. Provide as much detail as possible in one page or less. Please include any desired deadlines or dates FLPC should be aware of (e.g., goal of introducing proposed legislation by fall 2021).

Part F: Expected Challenges Arising from and Strategies for Adapting to COVID-19 Response Measures

FLPC recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic may have altered the methods through which you communicate with others in your organization and with the greater community. FLPC is confident that the TA provided under this grant can be adjusted to effectively respond to these changes, but would like to better understand the impacts of the pandemic on your operations and outreach practices. Please provide any information regarding the impacts (e.g., cancellation of in-person public meetings, prioritization of pandemic responses, etc.) and strategies that you have implemented or may implement to guarantee community engagement during the TA period (e.g., virtual convenings, socially-distant outreach, etc.).