



## 2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### *Funding Opportunity for Advancing Proactive State- and Local-Level Policy and Advocacy Initiatives*

The National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) is requesting proposals for projects that will advance reproductive freedom through state-and local-level policy and advocacy initiatives. Applications are accepted for funding of up to \$40,000 for individual organizations and up to \$65,000 for partnerships led by two or more organizations. Completed applications are due on April 29, 2024.

NIRH is the first national reproductive rights and health organization to go on the offense and focus on good state and local policies that expand just and equitable access to reproductive health care, including abortion. We work hand-in-hand with reproductive health, rights, and justice partners and allies in states and cities across the country to build coalitions, launch campaigns, and successfully advocate for proactive policy change. We work together so that the fabric of reproductive freedom is harder to tear apart. Since 2008, NIRH has advanced our mission in 43 states, including more than 80 localities by working side-by-side with more than 200 organizational partners.

NIRH works on the state and local levels to advance reproductive health, rights, and justice by pulling on every policy lever possible, including legislation, budgetary advocacy, regulatory change, and executive action. **We offer wrap-around support and technical assistance to our partners, including strategic guidance and advocacy, policy, and communications support.** While the funding offered in this RFP is 501(c)(3) dollars, we will also work with partners to expand their 501(c)(4) work and with organizations that are not 501(c)(3) organizations but have fiscal sponsors.

NIRH's work centers the communities most impacted by attacks on reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, and access to reproductive health care, especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). We prioritize partnering with organizations led by and deeply connected with BIPOC communities as we work towards eliminating racial and economic disparities in access to reproductive health care and in reproductive and pregnancy-related health outcomes, so that all people can determine their own futures and all families can thrive.

NIRH staff and board have committed to racial equity, and as such have been engaged in a multi-year process to adopt and implement a racial equity lens, both internally and in how we engage with our partners. We recognize the interconnectivity of identities, such as race, socio-economic status, immigration status, ability, gender, sexuality, and how they interact with systems of oppression to shape and impact a person's freedom and ability to control their reproductive and sexual lives.

## Partnership Opportunity for State and Local-Level Policy and Advocacy

NIRH is seeking partnership proposals for work on the state and/or local level from across the United States.

- Up to \$40,000 in funding is available for proposals where a single organization would receive funding. Joint proposals in which two or more organizations lead the project and receive funding are welcome and are eligible for funding up to \$65,000.
- The partnership cycle is **July 15, 2024, to July 14, 2025.**

Proposals should be focused on advancing policies that will promote reproductive freedom and equity by:

- **Expanding access to abortion.** We encourage applications for projects that will enshrine abortion protections into state law through constitutional amendments or into state or local law through expansive reproductive freedom legislative agendas and that will improve upon and expand upon public funding for abortion and abortion coverage without restrictions or limitations.
- **Expanding access to all methods of contraception.** This can include but is not limited to policies that will improve and protect insurance coverage of contraceptives, ensure non-coercive, inclusive contraceptive counseling, and expand the places and types of providers from which people can receive contraception.
- **Promoting birth justice.** This can include but is not limited to policies that will improve insurance coverage for birth workers, such as doulas and midwives, broad based legislative agendas to improve pregnancy outcomes and end obstetric violence, and policies that dismantle family policing, such as drug testing or pregnant people and newborns.

### Important Dates

- April 29th, 2024: Completed applications due.
- May 10, 2024: Applicants will be notified if they have been selected for an interview.
- Applicants will be informed of decisions on a rolling basis; all applicants will be notified of final decisions by June 2, 2024.
- July 15, 2024: Partnerships will begin and will run through June 30, 2024.

### Links and Contact Information

- [Submission form.](#)
- Folder with:
  - [PDF version](#) of the submission form.
  - [Sample applications](#) to use as a reference.
- Contact information if you have questions or concerns: [partnerships@nirhealth.org](mailto:partnerships@nirhealth.org).

## Submission Process and Selection Criteria

This year, NIRH will use a new process designed to be easier for applicants while improving the information we can consider. Applicants will complete a series of short answer questions, including their proposed budget. You can find a PDF version of the short answer questions [here](#) and three sample applications for reference [here](#). If the project directly involves close collaboration with additional organization(s) or coalition(s) that are not co-authors of the proposal and who will not receive funding, please also submit a letter or letters of support from each organization or coalition.

NIRH will review the applications. Selected applicants will be invited to participate in an interview. NIRH will make final decisions and notify applicants.

Applications will be judged based on a variety of criteria including but not limited to:

- The impact the project will have in advancing reproductive freedom in the state or municipality.
- How well the proposal fits within NIRH's policy priorities.
- The extent to which the proposal will promote equity and/or address disparities in access to care and reproductive health outcomes.

We prioritize proposals from reproductive justice organizations and organizations that serve and center communities of color, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian communities. We strongly encourage proposals from organizations with an operational budget below \$500,000 per year.

### *Budget Guidelines*

The range of funding awarded will be up to \$40,000. Joint proposals in which more than one organization receives funding are eligible for up to \$65,000. Possible budget lines include staffing, coalition meetings, materials development, technical costs (e.g., website), and other direct program costs. Organizations should submit their ideal budget for their proposal, but please note that NIRH may propose a modified budget based and scope of work on our assessment of the initiative's scope and impact.

- Requested funding should not be the exclusive source of funding for any staff person, unless the staff person is a temporary role dedicated to this initiative only.
- Lobbying costs should not exceed 15% of the overall budget.
- Indirect costs should not exceed 15% of your initiative's budget. Indirect costs include overhead expenses, such as rent, or ongoing operational costs and administrative or other expenses that are not directly allocable to a particular activity or initiative.

- NIRH funding does not support the provision of direct services, such as social services, health care, or food distribution.

Funding offered in this RFP is for 501(c)(3) activities, however, some goals may require 501(c)(4) activities, like a greater lobbying expenditure and electoral work. While we cannot offer 501(c)(4) funding, we may be able to provide technical assistance and guidance to help you expand your 501(c)(4) capacity. If you believe support would be beneficial to your project, please indicate that.

*Letter(s) of Support*

- If your proposal directly involves close collaboration with additional organization(s) or coalition(s) that are not co-authors of the proposal and who will not receive funding, please submit a letter or letters of support from each organization or coalition. Each organization or coalition can choose to submit their own letter or jointly sign one letter indicating their willingness to partner and any other relevant information.
- Additional letters of support from organizations or policymakers are welcome, but not required.

## Strategic Guidance and Technical Assistance Menu

*We are proud to offer wrap-around support and technical assistance to our partners in addition to our funding. This menu is meant to provide examples of the types of technical assistance available. No one project will need every type of assistance, nor is this an exhaustive list of the technical assistance NIRH may provide.*

### **Strategic Guidance**

- Plan development and identification of near, mid, and long-term benchmarks for policy, advocacy, and electoral goals\*
- Integration of racial equity and reproductive justice approach
- Facilitation or facilitation training
- Building connections between advocacy groups, elected leaders, and the political infrastructure, as well as with national resources and other state groups working toward similar goals
- Access to our ongoing series of capacity building webinars on topics including state and national policy; fundraising and donor development; data integration, testing, and experiments; and advocacy rules and regulations

### **Advocacy Support**

- Coalition coaching on management and/or expansion, and how to achieve shared priorities
- Development of advocacy, voter engagement, accountability, and mobilization campaigns
- Creation, expansion, and maximization of lobbying capacity
- Creation, expansion, and maximization of organizing capacity
- Creation and implementation of endorsement programs
- Collaboration with NIRH Action Fund

### **Legislative and Administrative Policy Support**

- Policy strategy
- Government relations strategy, policy mapping, and lobbying support, including training for organizations/advocates as well as serving as a validator
- Legal research and analysis
- Proactive policy drafting or best practice feedback on existing drafts
- Development of resources, including talking points, testimony, briefs, and other materials

### **Communications Support**

- Communications strategy and planning
- Message development based on existing national and state best practices
- Messaging and guidance to inform customized messaging for both legislative and electoral campaigns
- Creation of messaging resources, talking points, press releases, and trainings for legislators, advocates, and activists

*\* Electoral support would be provided by the National Institute for Reproductive Health Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) entity.*