

**TENNCARE**  
**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION**  
**FOR**  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT**

**RFA # 31865-00017**

**Please contact the Assistant Director of Contracts Donovan Morgan (615) 741-0041 or [donovan.morgan2@tn.gov](mailto:donovan.morgan2@tn.gov) with any questions on this process.**

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

### STATE OF TENNESSEE

### DIVISION OF TENNCARE

## I. BACKGROUND AND GOALS

According to the American Public Health Association, a Community Health Worker (CHW) is “a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served.”<sup>1</sup> CHWs serve as links between the community and health/social services to expand access to care and improve health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> CHWs can hold a variety of roles, some of which include facilitating care coordination, providing health education, and advocating for the members of the community. CHWs are uniquely equipped to excel in these roles because they share similar life experiences with the individuals and communities they serve.

CHWs have been shown to improve health outcomes, lower health care costs, and reduce health disparities when integrated into communities in a coordinated, intentional model of care. CHWs who focus on specific populations, such as perinatal CHWs, can also add additional impact to the communities they serve. Perinatal CHWs (“PCHWs”) serve pregnant and postpartum individuals, and specialize in connecting families to services, offering continuity for the clinical care team, and being the bridge between vulnerable populations with clinical and social service providers. Through these services, PCHWs have been shown to improve health outcomes for babies and birthing people. However, in trying to achieve consistent, meaningful health outcomes while bending the medical cost curve, CHWs and organizations who employ CHWs have varied experiences and success. In Tennessee, the CHW workforce is a growing and important new area of opportunity. Many CHW organizations across Tennessee are actively working to build infrastructure and invest key resources to sustainably grow their programs. With these grants, the Division of TennCare aims to address some challenges that exist in this current Tennessee Landscape for organizations that support TennCare members. Currently, it is challenging to define the CHW workforce as there is no standard definition for the CHW identity or role. Organizational infrastructure around best practices for the support of CHWs and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/community-health-workers>

<sup>2</sup> Hector Balcazar, E. Lee Rosenthal, J. Nell Brownstein, Carl H. Rush, Sergio Matos, and Lorenza Hernandez, 2011: Community Health Workers Can Be a Public Health Force for Change in the United States: Three Actions for a New Paradigm. American Journal of Public Health 101, 2199\_2203, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300386>

CHW supervisors can be fragmented, under-resourced, or have high variation. These barriers, and others, prevent CHWs from serving Tennesseans to the best of CHWs' ability.

The Division of TennCare is working to address social determinants of health ("SDOH") in its member population through its Health Starts Initiative. TennCare's Health Starts work includes investing in Tennessee's CHW workforce, and in turn, serving TennCare members by supporting the building of critical infrastructure for CHWs to ensure sustainable, impactful, and positive return-on-investment. This funding opportunity is to invest in CHW infrastructure and support CHWs in meeting key CHW program standards and best practices. Additionally, improving maternal health outcomes remains a top priority for TennCare and will also be an additional focus area of this grant. Special consideration will be given to applicants focused on addressing social needs within the maternal health population as part of this grant. Further details provided below.

TennCare believes key domains and consistent implementation of program standards in each of those domains is foundational to any strong CHW organization. The Tennessee Community Health Worker Association ("TNCHWA") has established program standards to facilitate congruency across organizations providing CHW services and establish measurement for the Tennessee Community Health Worker Accreditation process. To view details for each standard listed below and to learn more about the Tennessee CHW Program Accreditation, visit [TNCHWA's website](#). TennCare will provide the standards to recipients upon awarding the contracts.

- Recruitment and Hiring
- CHW Professional and Workforce Development
- CHW Scope of Work
- CHW Performance Evaluations
- Support for CHWs
- CHW Training
- CHW Supervision

The stated purpose of the TennCare Community Health Worker Infrastructure Project Grants will be to:

- (1) Support organizations employing Community Health Workers to make key investments in organizational infrastructure and overhead costs; and to

- (2) Provide technical assistance to organizations employing CHWs to implement evidence-based best practices and integrate the IMPaCT CHW model.

### **CHW Organizational Infrastructure:**

Grantees will build out their organizational infrastructure, according to best practice standards, to sustainably support CHWs and supervisors. Grantees may use funds for expenses such as: administrative overhead, professional development, technology enhancements, and equipment.

### **IMPaCT Technical Assistance:**

Each grantee will utilize technical supports through IMPaCT to support the infrastructure building and implementation of key best practices. Grantees will partner in the development of a blueprint that will identify opportunities to best integrate program standards and build upon existing efforts. The grantee will also receive coaching and technical supports to develop a CHW model of care that incorporates the evidence-based practices from the IMPaCT CHW model. Table 1 outlines how the funding will be allocated in order to fund the IMPaCT support.

The IMPaCT model is the leading evidence based CHW intervention and care model in the U.S. for addressing health inequity and SDOH. Rigorously evaluated through randomized clinical trials, the IMPaCT model yielded \$2,500 annual net savings per patient, had a \$2.74:1 ROI, reduced hospital stays by 66% and increased access to primary care by 12%.<sup>3</sup> Grantees will have the opportunity to build sustainable and scalable models to support growth, development, and consistency within their programs by receiving IMPaCT technical assistance for their CHW programs and care models.

### **Funding Parameters**

TennCare is seeking applications from provider organizations who employ CHWs and organizations who seek to employ CHWs interested in building the infrastructure of their programs as outlined in this RFA. TennCare will offer up to fifteen (15) grants with each awarded grantee eligible for one (1) year of funding and pending an option for continuation for year two at the discretion of the State. The total funding amount for each individual grant will be dependent on the size of the CHW organization as outlined below. All funding amounts shown below

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<sup>3</sup> Kangovi, S., Mitra, N., Grande, D., Huo, H., Smith, R. A., & Long, J. A. (2017). Community Health Worker Support for Disadvantaged Patients With Multiple Chronic Diseases: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *American journal of public health*, 107(10), 1660–1667.  
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2017.303985>

represent the amount for the first year of the grant period. The selected tier will be utilized as the maximum liability for the Grant Contract.

At the end of Year 1, there will be an option to continue for year 2 at the discretion of the State based on completed milestones and progress towards the aims of this grant as outlined in Section A.5 of the Grant Contract. If the grantee is in good standing and meeting the organizational CHW hiring requirement, as outlined in Section A.6.b of the Grant Contract, the grantee will receive a second year of funding at the same funding level. However, TennCare will conduct a review at the end of year 1 of each grantee’s tier eligibility. Funding amounts for a subsequent year may be adjusted to reflect the appropriate tier eligibility at that time at TennCare’s full discretion. A grantee will have its funding amount reduced if they do not meet the organizational CHW hiring requirement. Subject to availability, a Grantee could potentially earn more funds in a subsequent year if its tier eligibility has increased. The funding will be dispersed through successful completion of deliverables and in the form of a reoccurring monthly payment. This reoccurring fee will be an all-inclusive fee to cover all overhead expenses.

As it relates to the size of the CHW organization, both community health workers and the supervisors of community health workers are included in the total count. Additionally, the grantee does not have to employ the required number of CHWs at the time of application. The grantee must have hired the stated number of CHWs in the application by the end of the first year to receive full funding. For instance, if an organization has two (2) CHWs and one (1) supervisor when applying for the grant but they intend to employ four (4) additional CHWs within the twelve (12) months of the grant to have a total of six (6) CHWs and one (1) supervisor, the organization should apply for the funding level associated with the organization size of 6 -10 CHW/CHW Supervisors. While the organization size can be any combination of CHWs and CHW supervisors, evaluation of the grantee will consider the ratio of CHWs to CHW Supervisors. Please see Table 1 for more details regarding the CHW Organization Size and Funding amounts.

**Table 1: CHW Organization Size and Funding Amounts**

<b>Grantees with at least 5 Community Health Workers and/or CHW Supervisors by the end of Year 1</b>			
<b>Funding Year</b>	<b>Total funding Amount</b>	<b>50% Allocated for Allowable Overhead expenses</b>	<b>50% Allocated for IMPaCT Technical Assistance</b>
Year 1	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

<b>Grantees with at 6-10 Community Health Workers and/or CHW Supervisors by the end of Year 1</b>			
Funding Year	Total Funding Amount	50% Allocated for Allowable Overhead expenses	50% Allocated for IMPaCT Technical Assistance
Year 1	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$200,000

<b>Grantees with at least 11-15 Community Health Workers and/or CHW Supervisors by the end of Year 1</b>			
Funding Year	Total Funding Amount	50% Allocated for Allowable Overhead expenses	50% Allocated for IMPaCT Technical Assistance
Year 1	\$600,000	\$300,000	\$300,000

<b>Grantees with over 15 Community Health Workers and/or CHW Supervisors by the end of Year 1</b>			
Funding Year	Total Funding Amount	50% Allocated for Allowable Overhead expenses	50% Allocated for IMPaCT Technical Assistance
Year 1	\$750,000	\$350,000	\$350,000

See Grant Budget Details Page for breakdown of funding by tier. Attachment #4 for reference.

## II. GRANTEE ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

### Eligibility:

Any health care provider organization or association working on behalf of healthcare providers in Tennessee that serves TennCare members and employs or wishes to employ CHWs including primary care and outpatient providers. Special consideration will be given to organizations that have a direct focus on maternal health and provide services to pregnant and postpartum individuals. Organizations must reach the minimum staffing requirement within year 1 as outlined in section I of this RFA.

Collaborative Partnership applications by multiple CHW organizations will be considered. Organizations who do not reach the individually required size for

eligibility in this grant may partner together with other organizations to develop a Collaborative Partnership to apply and receive funds for the grant. Similarly, if an association representing multiple organizations identifies value in forming a collaborative partnership and applying jointly, a Collaborative Partnership application will be considered. If a Collaborative Partnership is established, a Primary Organization must be identified, enter into the Grant Contract, and receive the eligible funds. Please see section A.8. of the Grant Contract for requirements of Collaborative Partnership applications. Additionally, all participating organizations in the Collaborative Partnership must meet the total required size by the required deadline to receive full funding. Collaborative Partnership applications should reflect a thoughtful and deliberate approach to the group engagement and grant requirements.

**Allowable Expenses Include:**

- Technical Support through IMPaCT model to include, at a minimum:
  - o Consultation
  - o Recruitment and Hiring
  - o CHW and Supervisor Training
  - o Workflow development
  - o Technology supports and integration
  - o Data analytics and outcome evaluation
- Administrative Overhead to expand CHW program (e.g. costs for recruiting and hiring)
- Targeted salary support for program management

**Non-allowable Expenses:**

- Construction of building or building space
- Full-time CHW staff salaries
- Food and drinks
- Clothing
- Lobbying
- Gift or gas cards for CHW staff

**Grantee Requirements:**

Please closely review the Grant Contract for specific details around grant requirements and funding structure for completion of required deliverables. High priority items are listed below for informational purposes, but the full requirements list is outlined in the Grant Contract for each grantee to review as part of this application.

**All awarded Grantees will be required to complete the following:**

- Attend a blueprint kickoff meeting with IMPaCT (A.6.a);

- Participate in processes facilitated by IMPaCT through their model and report on progress as outlined in the Grant Contract (Section A.5.g);
- Employ or continue to employ the required number of CHWs/and or supervisors associated with the funding tier awarded (Sections A.5.i and A.6.b);
- Begin implementing best practice standards for CHWs as outlined in the Grant Contract (Section A.5.h)
- Complete Training Report and Patient Enrollment Report as outlined in the Grant Contract (Sections A.6.c and A.6.d);
- Complete Quarterly Reports as outlined in the Grant Contract (Section A.6.e);
- Complete Annual Report as outlined in the Grant Contract (Section A.6.f);
- Initiate accreditation process, at no cost to the grantee, during Grant years, as facilitated by TCHWA.

All grantees must comply with requirements outlined in the Grant Contract and meet all deliverables in order to receive the full amount of funding outlined in this grant application.

### III. APPLICATIONS

To respond to this Request for Application, please complete the **Application and Competitive Requirements**. See also IRS Form W9 and State of Tennessee, Department of Finance and Administration ACH (Automated Clearing House) Credits and Instructions for completion. The **Application** contains detailed questions about your organization’s background and the specifics of your proposed project.

### IV. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The following is the anticipated schedule for awarding grants for the Community Health Worker Infrastructure Project. The State reserves the right to adjust the schedule as it deems necessary.

EVENT	TIME (Central Time)	DATE (all dates are State business days)
1. RFA Issued		May 3, 2024
2. Pre-response Teleconference	10:30 a.m.	May 9, 2024
3. Written “Questions & Comments” Deadline	2:00 p.m.	May 15, 2024



4. State Response to Written “Questions & Comments”		May 22, 2024
5. Deadline for Applications	2:00 p.m.	May 29, 2024
6. Evaluation Notice Released		June 12, 2024
7. Effective Start Date of Contract		July 01, 2024

**Pre-response Teleconference:**

A Pre-response Teleconference will be held at the time and date detailed in the RFA Schedule of Events to answer questions concerning the funding opportunity. The information for the Pre-response Teleconference is as follows:

**Meeting Name:** Community Health Worker RFA 31865-00017 Pre-Response Teleconference  
**Meeting Link:** [Join the Meeting](#)

**Dial in by Phone:**  
[+1 629-209-4396.614359344#](tel:+16292094396614359344) United States, Nashville  
 Phone conference ID: 614 359 344#

Any applicant desiring to submit an application in response to this RFA is encouraged to have at least one (1) representative on the teleconference, however attendance is not mandatory. If you cannot participate, please direct your questions by the scheduled deadline as indicated above, to Donovan Morgan, Competitive Procurement Coordinator, listed below in Section V.

**Questions and Answers:**

All questions concerning this RFA must be presented to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator shown in Section V., in writing, on or before the Deadline for Written Questions and Comments as detailed above in the Schedule of Events. Questions may be emailed to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator. The State’s responses will be emailed and posted as an Amendment to the following website: <https://www.tn.gov/tenncare/information-statistics/upcoming-procurements.html>

**Deadlines stated above are critical.** If documents are submitted late, they cannot be accepted. The clock-in time will be determined by the time of the online submission. No other clock or watch will have any bearing on the time of the application receipt.

Each applicant shall assume the risk of the method of dispatching any communication or application to the State. The State assumes no responsibility for delays or delivery failures resulting from the method of dispatch.

## V. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Please email the completed application with all attachments to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator no later than the deadline specified in Section IV, Schedule of Events in the form and detail specified in this RFA. If requested the State can provide a cloud link to upload files for submission. This request must be received 24-hours prior to the submission deadline specified in Section IV, Schedule of Events.

The Competitive Procurement Coordinator at the address shown is the sole point of contact for this competitive process. **The APPLICATION and all attachments must use 12-point font.**

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Assistant Director of Contracts  
F&A TennCare  
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Nashville, TN 37243  
Phone: (615) 741-0041  
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### Checklist for Submission of Applications:

- Application (**Attachment 1**)
- Competitive Requirements
- Biosketch(es) for key personnel
- Letters of Commitment from senior leadership at each organization
- Budget Narrative (**Attachment 2**) *Do not fill out the grant budget page within the Sample Grant Contract document. This will be filled out by the State after grants are awarded.*
- Statement of Assurance (**Attachment 3**)
- State of Tennessee, Department of Finance and Administration ACH (Automated Clearing House) Credits and Instructions (**Mailed per instructions on form.**)
- Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and Certification (**Mailed with ACH form.**)

## VI. APPLICATION EVALUATION

An evaluation committee made up of at least three (3) representatives of TennCare will be established to judge the merit of eligible applications.

The committee shall review applications on the basis of the information requested in the RFA. Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Level of projected impact
- Number of TennCare members served
- Appropriate ratio of CHWs to supervisors
- Organizational capacity and commitment of staff involved to implementing best practices
- Organizational commitment to growing the CHW program
- Commitment to implementing IMPaCT model
- Collaboration with relevant partners

The committee will evaluate and recommend for selection the application that most aligns with the State's goals and responds to the State's needs.

Any application that is incomplete or contains significant inconsistencies or inaccuracies shall be rejected. The State reserves the right to waive minor variances, reject any or all applications, and request clarifications from all applicants.

## VII. SAMPLE GRANT CONTRACT

Following the State's evaluation, Grant Contracts will be prepared as shown in the **Sample Grant Contract**. The State's expectation is that the Grant Contracts will remain the same as the Sample Grant Contract; however, applicants may ask about changes to specific terms or conditions within the Sample Grant Contract during the Questions & Comments Period. **After the Questions & Comments Period, the State will not entertain any changes to the Sample Grant Contract.**

It is imperative that each applicant review the entire Sample Grant Contract with their legal counsel prior to the Questions & Comments Period and ask the State, during the Questions & Comments Period, about any potential changes to the terms or conditions. All proposed changes to the Sample Grant Contract language must be submitted with the Application for the Community Health Worker Infrastructure Project, and any proposed change to the Sample Grant Contract that was not asked about during the Questions & Comments Period may result in the Application being deemed non-responsive and rejected. Additional information related to the Grant can be found on the Upcoming Procurements website.

**Upcoming Procurements:** <https://www.tn.gov/tenncare/information-statistics/upcoming-procurements.html>

## VIII. EDISON ID

Any applicant who does not already have an Edison Vendor ID/Supplier ID, will need to begin signing up for one using the following link:

[https://hub.edison.tn.gov/psp/paprd/SUPPLIER/SUPP/h/?tab=PAPP\\_GUEST](https://hub.edison.tn.gov/psp/paprd/SUPPLIER/SUPP/h/?tab=PAPP_GUEST)

To avoid any delays, applicants should begin this registration process immediately after submitting their application.

Directions: Once on the Edison supplier portal page, locate the middle column on the page where it says, “*Looking to do business with the State of Tennessee?*” under that should be a link that says, “*Register as a Supplier*”. Click this link and follow the steps for a new registration form.

The following are links to the IRS W-9 form required for registration with the State, and the Edison Supplier Portal Registration Manual. This manual may be useful for answers to questions about the registration process. These links can also be found on the Edison supplier portal page, located under the “*Register as a Supplier*” link.

[https://upk.edison.tn.gov/esupplier/IRS\\_W-9.pdf](https://upk.edison.tn.gov/esupplier/IRS_W-9.pdf)

[https://upk.edison.tn.gov/esupplier/Supplier\\_Registration\\_Instructions.pdf](https://upk.edison.tn.gov/esupplier/Supplier_Registration_Instructions.pdf)