

Opioid Crisis Innovation Challenge 2021

Request for Proposal

I. About the Foundation

The [Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts](#) (FORE) was founded in 2018 as a private 501(c)(3) national, grant-making foundation focused on addressing the nation's opioid crisis. FORE is committed to funding a diversity of projects contributing solutions to the crisis at national, state, and community levels. FORE's mission is to convene and support partners advancing patient-centered, innovative, evidence-based solutions impacting people experiencing opioid use disorder (OUD), their families, and their communities.

II. Introduction

While much effort, resources, and funding has gone to addressing the nation's opioid crisis, we continue to be faced with a national crisis of opioid-related addiction which has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One underlying reason for this may be that there continue to be long-standing challenges which may be limiting our ability to make as much progress as hoped for, even after two decades of growing public attention and increased available government funding. These challenges include (but are not limited to) the ongoing stigma of addiction, generating timely and actionable data, having adequate capacity of and equity in the health care system, and limited holistic responses that collaborate across different sectors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the ability to bring together expertise from different fields and sectors, such as healthcare, technology, and government, to rapidly begin to solve complex and immediate problems. For example, within days of the start of the pandemic, multi-disciplinary teams from different sectors began standing up innovative new systems to aid governments and health systems track multiple aspects of the pandemic. We are looking to harness similar cross-sector collaboration efforts to accelerate new innovations and improvements across prevention, treatment, and long-term recovery.

III. Funding Opportunity

FORE will provide grant support for specific projects that bring an innovative approach to long-standing and complex issues related to all aspects of stemming the tide of the nation's opioid crisis. This RFP targets projects which can explore and/or evaluate new "outside-the-box" ideas, bring together approaches from several diverse fields, and engage multi-disciplinary, cross-sector teams to solve some of the crisis' most intractable problems. Currently, this opportunity will focus on projects in the following three areas which, based on discussions with experts in the field, are widely recognized challenges to adequately address the opioid crisis with few examples of how to approach differently to accelerate

improvements in reducing overdoses, increasing access to treatment, and supporting long-term recovery:

- 1) **Professional Education and Training.** Stigma towards those with addiction continues to be a barrier to evidence-based treatment, as well as to the resources and capital a person needs to sustain long-term recovery, such as employment. While there is an increase in available professional education on addiction and recovery among healthcare, education, legal, criminal justice, and other professionals, these are still not routinely taught. Projects in this focus area may include innovative new approaches to educating professionals and addressing stigma within these and other settings.
- 2) **Timely and Actionable Data.** Real-time and actionable data is still severely lacking for all levels of government to appropriately respond to the crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic shined a light on how to utilize new emerging technologies to create new data systems for tracking public health crises in real-time. Projects in this focus area may include integrating new and untapped data sources across different sectors to generate a more in-depth understanding of the crisis, as well as applying new emerging technologies (such as machine learning and artificial intelligence) to aid in national, state, and local government responses.
- 3) **Supporting the Transition from Treatment to Recovery.** While much focus has been put on access to treatment, there is a great need to aid those transitioning from treatment to recovery. As individuals facing transitions or life course changes are often at increased vulnerability, it is important that we “meet patients where they are.” Projects in this focus area may include novel uses of technology, such as digital and mobile apps, as well as other innovative ways to support those transitioning to long-term recovery.

FORE prioritizes work which incorporates a focus on patient-centered solutions and on health equity, as well as reaching diverse high-risk populations. FORE also assesses projects within a framework of meeting one or more of our overarching objectives of supporting: 1.) policy initiatives, 2.) professional education, 3.) payer and provider strategies, and 4.) public awareness.

Proposed innovative solutions should be able to contribute to long-lasting improvements in patient care and/or other aspects of the national opioid crisis. Competitive applications will demonstrate clear, immediate needs, as well as the potential to inform long-term, broader impact and scalability. Applicants must also demonstrate a commitment to and support for the proposed project from their organizational leadership.

Applicants may apply for a grant of up to \$300,000 a year for up to two years. Award amounts and project duration must align with the scope of work and the capabilities of the applying organization. Projects may be proposed for less than two years in duration but may not exceed these limits.

IV. Eligibility

For information regarding your organization's eligibility for a FORE grant, please visit the [Grants & Funding](#) page on our website. If you have further questions regarding eligibility for a FORE grant, please contact info@ForeFdn.org.

V. Key Dates

Applications (see Section VI below) will be accepted until 11:59 PM EST on July 19, 2021 and grants will be awarded from Fall 2021 through early 2022. An additional round of this RFP may be considered after July 2021.

May 19, 2021:	RFP released on FORE website
July 19, 2021:	Last possible day to submit Concept Note (see Section VI below)
August 3, 2021:	Latest notification for request for Full Proposal
February 28, 2022:	Latest notification of final decisions (subject to change)

VI. Application Requirements and Selection Process

All applications must be submitted through FORE's online grants management system. [You can access the application here.](#)

The first step in the application process is to submit a short, structured Concept Note. FORE will evaluate all submitted Concept Notes for responsiveness to the RFP and alignment with FORE's mission and interests. Selected projects will be invited to submit a Full Proposal, which consists of a brief proposal, line-item budget, as well as required organizational documents. Applicants will have up to four weeks from notification to submit the Full Proposal.

FORE will evaluate all submitted proposals and seek independent expert review as needed. The review process may include feedback to selected applicants on proposals and recommended revisions. Funding recommendations for selected proposals will be prepared by FORE program staff and presented to the FORE Board of Directors for final approval. All approved proposals will then be the subject of a grant agreement between FORE and the grantee organization which will specify the grant period, payment schedule, specific deliverable requirements, and reporting timeline.

There is no expectation of any specific number of awards, and FORE reserves the sole right to not recommend the funding of any applications. FORE is not obligated to provide feedback on unfunded proposals, but may, to the extent possible, provide summarized feedback on Full Proposals upon request.

VII. Contact

Programmatic questions about this funding opportunity should be addressed to Senior Program Officer Ken Shatzkes, Ph.D. at kshatzkes@ForeFdn.org.

Technical questions regarding the application process should be emailed to Program Associate Lydia Tschoe, MHA at Itschoe@ForeFdn.org.