

# Opioid Crisis Innovation Challenge 2024

## Request for Proposal

### I. About the Foundation

The [Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts](https://www.forefdn.org) (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 and overdose crisis, we continue to be faced with a national crisis of opioid-related addiction and poisoning. One underlying reason for this may be that there continues 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. Launched in 2022, FORE's Innovation Program has supported projects that combine strategies from diverse fields and engage multidisciplinary teams to tackle some of the opioid crisis' most intractable problems. The first cohort of projects focused on reducing stigma through creative ways of educating community members, leaders, and healthcare providers, and on developing novel, cross-sector collaborative methods to generate more timely and actionable data to better guide government responses to and inform the public about the opioid crisis. FORE now sees an opportunity to further build the Innovation Program by generating new ideas and potential solutions for other significant, challenging problems related to the crisis.

### 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 and overdose crisis with few examples of how to approach differently to accelerate improvements in reducing overdoses, increase access to treatment, and support long-term recovery:

- 1) **Innovative Payment Models.** While federal policy changes have worked towards increasing the accessibility and affordability of evidence-based OUD treatment, evidence continues to show that people with and without health coverage continue to face payment barriers, including benefit limits and high out-of-pocket costs, when trying to access care. Current payment models rarely align with the full range of services -which may include addiction and non-addiction health care and psychosocial care - a person may need to achieve a successful health outcome. Projects in this focus area may include creation and/or evaluation of payment models for improving access to all aspects of an individual's treatment plan, development of quality measures to assess value of care, and/or analysis of policy issues, such as parity for SUD care or disparities in treatment reimbursement. Projects may focus on public or private payers, or both. Projects may also address payment and reimbursement barriers for the other two RFP focus areas below, workforce development and supporting the transition to recovery.
- 2) **Workforce Development.** The nation continues to face a growing shortage of addiction and behavioral health care professionals, including treatment providers, clinical social workers, and peer support specialists. This shortage has severely limited access to treatment and recovery services, particularly for rural and underserved communities. Projects in this focus area may include programmatic and policy work to expand and sustain the addiction and behavioral health care workforce pipeline, to deploy the current workforce in more strategic and impactful ways, and/or to create new training opportunities for peers.
- 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 an initial focus on treatment to a more long-term recovery phase. Such transitions are often a time of increased vulnerabilities, which could trigger a return to use without supportive systems. Challenges during this period often include finding stable housing, employment, or managing family reunification, while maintaining treatment. Projects in this focus area may include, for example, the development of and access to effective recovery housing models, as well as other innovative ways to address barriers facing 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, including adolescents and older populations, pregnant, parenting and postpartum people, and those with justice involvement. 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 projects should be able to contribute to long-lasting improvements in patient care and/or other aspects of the national opioid and overdose crisis. Competitive applications will demonstrate clear, immediate needs, as well as the potential to inform short-term improvements as well as longer-term, broader impact, sustainability, 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](mailto:info@ForeFdn.org).

## V. Key Dates

Applications (see Section VI below) will be accepted until 11:59 AM EST on August 8, 2024 and grants will be awarded in early 2025.

June 14, 2024:	RFP released on FORE website
June 27, 2024:	Informational Webinar on RFP
August 8, 2024:	Last possible day to submit Concept Note (see Section VI below)
September 6, 2024:	Latest notification for request for Full Proposal
February 28, 2025:	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 proposals upon request.

## VII. Contact

Questions about this funding opportunity should be addressed to FORE's Program Director, Ken Shatzkes, PhD at [kshatzkes@ForeFdn.org](mailto:kshatzkes@ForeFdn.org).

Technical questions regarding the application process should be emailed to Program Associate Lydia Tschoe, MHA at [lotschoe@ForeFdn.org](mailto:lotschoe@ForeFdn.org).