Community Health Center Special Projects Grant

Summary
The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers (“League”) is committed to assisting community health centers in Massachusetts with recruitment, retention and professional development of primary care providers. The League works to meet this commitment through offering its Community Health Center Primary Care Loan Repayment Program. The League also recognizes the need of CHCs for resources to strengthen their retention efforts that demonstrate the value of their primary care providers.

The Community Health Center Special Projects Grants, currently in its fourth year, offers assistance to centers to enhance the retention and professional development of primary care providers at community health centers. The program provides funding to support qualified and approved projects or mini-fellowships that match the clinical or career interest of selected providers and the programmatic needs of the Health Center. Definitions of acceptable proposals are included in Attachment A of this RFP.

Under this Request for Proposals, the League is inviting community health center providers with their respective community health center employer to apply for funding for initiatives and training aimed at developing provider skills/interests that will benefit the programmatic needs of the Health Center.

Applications may request up to $40,000 for the proposed project. At this time, the League is committed to support up to 6 projects. Applications will be accepted until March 1, 2013.

Program Impact
The purpose of the Community Health Center Special Projects is to support retention of primary care providers at community health centers in Massachusetts by providing opportunities for career development. The funding made available by this RFP will assist community health centers in offering paid designated employment time for a primary care provider to undertake a project that will mutually benefit the provider and the health center.

The grant period will be one year and projects need to be initiated and completed during the year (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014). The grant maximum is $40,000 and may be used for salary, fringe benefit, and tax expenses; and other direct costs of the projects. It is anticipated that there will be up to 6 projects awarded this year.

Eligibility
Funding eligibility is limited to projects submitted by primary care providers employed at qualified community health centers with the documented support of the CHC’s Executive Director/CEO and Medical Director/CMO. Applicants must be in good standing and must have the appropriate organizational capabilities to receive and administer the grant funds. More than one provider can be involved in a project but one provider must be identified as the lead provider/applicant.

Funding Priorities
The primary purpose of the grant program is to enhance the retention of valued providers at their health centers through the provision of funded, paid time, for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposal. With that purpose in mind, applications will be reviewed and scored based on the following criterion. Bolded items will receive extra weighting in the scoring process: innovation/creativity, feasibility of project, potential for spread, site commitment to project, applicant commitment to project, the effect of the project on applicant commitment to site, tenure of applicant, appropriateness of budget, overall strength of project, overall impact on retention and project sustainability.

Preferences will be given to sites not previously funded but all are encouraged to apply. Please note that feasibility studies or strategic plans that do not include an implementation phase as part of the project will not be considered for funding.

Administrative Requirements
For those projects selected, funds will be paid directly to the community health center to support the approved salary, fringe benefits, and taxes; and other project expenses as detailed in the project budget.

To ensure each project follows the purpose stated in the original proposal, funded providers and their respective organizations will be required to submit a written one-page report to the League upon project completion. Those
organizations that do not use the funding for the approved purpose stated in their applications will be required to reimburse the League the full award amount and may be subject to additional penalties.

Applicants will be required to have a letter of support submitted by the Medical and Executive Directors of their health center. **No individual organization will receive more than one award per year.**

**Instructions**

Applications will be due on **March 1, 2013**. Funding awards will be made on a highest-ranked basis of the complete applications submitted by the deadline. Applications may be mailed or hand delivered. No faxed applications will be accepted. The organization's CEO or Executive Director must sign the application. Grantee notification will be made by May 15, 2013 to the provider applicant and their respective community health center Executive Director/CEO. Projects/training must be completed by June 30, 2014.

Submit one original, signed application (hard copy) and one electronic copy in PDF format.

**Mail hard copy to:**
The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
40 Court Street, 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Attn: Leslie Bailey, Program Manager, Primary Care Workforce Initiatives

**Email electronic copy to:**
apowell@massleague.org

For more information call (617) 988-2296

**Application contents:**

1. Completed cover sheet (provided) that includes all relevant contact information for you and your organization, including a brief, concise abstract of your proposed project.

2. Proposal should be **no more than five (5) one-sided, single-spaced pages using Times New Roman 12 pt. font** and include the components below. Due to the large number of applicants, please be advised that proposals exceeding the 5-page limit may not be reviewed at the discretion of the review committee.
   - Proposal Summary
   - Proposal description/methods/activities (describe your proposed project in detail and show how it will benefit your CHC and the community you serve).
   - Proposal goals and objectives (describe your project's primary objectives and how they will be determined/measured).
   - Sustainability plan for project after funding ends.
   - If applicable, target population (describe the population served by the proposed project, including income, households, age, sex, ethnicity/race).
   - If applicable, describe the CHC department and/or operations that will benefit by the proposed project.
   - Staff responsible for your proposed project. Describe the roles of the lead project provider and other relevant staff necessary to carry out the project scope.

3. A **one-page** summary of the CHC’s background, primary mission, and history should be included in the appendix.

4. Statement from the lead clinician applicant stating interest, vision and commitment to the proposed project/training. **Statement should be in letter format and signed by the lead clinician applicant.** The lead applicant's statement must answer the following:
   - Describe how the project will impact the health center/population
   - Describe how the project will impact providers’ career development
   - Describe how the project will impact retention (provider specific and/or CHC wide)
5. Curriculum Vitae of the lead provider

6. Two letters (one each) of support describing the provider qualifications, commitment to CHC, and the CHC’s support of the project specifically detailing the mutual benefits of the project, from:
   - Executive Director
   - Medical Director

7. Appendix: Budget for your project (up to $40,000 maximum) with brief narrative describing planned expenditures. The grant funds are primarily intended to cover the cost of the provider(s) time to plan, implement and achieve the proposal’s goals and objectives. Please note:
   - Preference will be given to projects that use most of the awarded funds to support the release time of the lead provider (and other providers as appropriate) in the development/implementation of the project
   - Overhead may not exceed 10% of the project budget
   - Equipment expenses may not exceed 5% of the project budget
   - Grant funds may not be used to support lost revenue
Attachment A

DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers ("League") will accept proposals for the Community Health Center Special Projects Grants that fall into one of the following categories:

A. **Special projects:**
   Time limited activity that is of interest to the clinician and will enhance the services or operations of the health center. The time period can be more intensive for a short period (for example full time for 6-8 weeks) or less intensive over the year (8 hours per week for 12 months). Examples would include: QI or research projects, development/implementation efforts for new service, and development/implementation efforts for new training program. Please note that training associated with development and implementation of a special project initiative may also be included as a budget expense.

B. **Mini Fellowships:**
   Time limited activity that is of interest to the clinician and will enhance/expand the services the health center may provide to the patient population or the management capacity of the individual/site. The time period can be more intensive for a short period (full time for a month) or less intensive over the year (8 hours per week for 12 months). Examples would include: working in an academic specialty program such as dermatology, sports medicine, allergy, etc., or working with a community.

C. **International health experiences:**
   Time limited activity that is of interest to the clinician and will improve their skills and understanding in working with the populations served by the health center. The time period would be expected to be full time over 2-8 weeks. Examples would include: volunteering for an existing international health partner, participating in an international language emersion program.

Funds awarded by the League under the Community Health Center Special Projects Grants may be applied to support:
- Salary, taxes and fringe benefits for the provider
- Tuition or other program fees (see details above)
- Travel and living expenses
- Clinical coverage expenses
- Administrative and capital expenses (see guidance for limitations)

Funds may not be used for lost revenue.