

NHLBI’s *The Heart Truth*®
2021-2022 Community Subcontract Program
Request for Proposals

Through *The Heart Truth*® Community Subcontract Program, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) focused on the implementation and assessment of community health worker resources to address heart disease education within American Indians and Alaska Native communities.

RFP Details:

RFP Issued:	July 7, 2021
Questions Due:	July 14, 2021 by 3 p.m. EDT
Letter of Intent:	July 21, 2021 by 3 p.m. EDT
Proposal Responses Due:	August 9, 2021 by 3 p.m. EDT
Primary Contacts:	Glynis Jones, Westat GlynisJones@Westat.com TaWanna Berry, Westat TaWannaBerry@Westat.com
Anticipated Period of Performance:	September 20, 2021-September 13, 2022

1. BACKGROUND

HEART DISEASE: Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, causing one in four deaths each year. It disproportionately affects certain communities, including American Indians and Alaska Natives. “Heart disease” is a catch-all phrase for a variety of conditions that affect the heart’s structure and function. Coronary heart disease is the most common type of heart disease. It develops when the arteries of the heart cannot deliver enough oxygen-rich blood to the heart. Coronary and other types of heart disease cause heart attacks. High blood pressure, commonly known as hypertension, increases the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Smoking, being overweight, and having diabetes, unhealthy cholesterol levels, or a family history of heart disease also increase the likelihood of developing heart disease.

Heart disease is largely preventable. NHLBI encourages all Americans to make healthy lifestyle choices that can reduce the risk for heart disease. Heart-healthy lifestyle behaviors include:

- Eating a heart-healthy diet
- Increasing physical activity
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Knowing and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol numbers
- Getting quality sleep
- Not smoking
- Reducing stress

Learn more at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/heart-healthy-living>.

THE HEART TRUTH PROGRAM: The NHLBI created *The Heart Truth* in 2002. It is the first federally-sponsored national health education program specifically designed to raise awareness about heart disease as the leading cause of death in women. Initially, the program focused on women ages 40-60, with an emphasis on reaching women of color. *The Heart Truth* introduced the Red Dress® as the national symbol for women and heart disease to bring greater visibility to risk factors and educate and motivate women to take action to protect their hearts. Since that time, *The Heart Truth* has focused on making sure women know about their risk for heart disease. Studies show women’s heart disease awareness has doubled since the launch of the program almost two decades ago, but it still remains their leading cause of death—and the leading cause of death for all Americans.

Because research shows that a heart-healthy lifestyle can decrease the chances of developing heart disease, *The Heart Truth* is committed to raising awareness about heart health among all populations, especially those most affected by heart disease, such as African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other minorities. NHLBI’s outreach and education efforts aim to amplify awareness about heart disease risk factors; help people identify specific health goals to control risk factors; increase individual accountability to prevent heart disease; and increase the number of Americans who intend to take action to protect their hearts.

The Heart Truth established the [Healthy Hearts Network](#) in 2019 to expand the program’s reach into local communities and collaborate on heart health education initiatives. *Network* partners include national organizations with local affiliates; state and federal agencies; and academic, civic, and nonprofit institutions with a demonstrated interest in heart health education. *The Heart Truth* provides free, science-based educational materials and information about heart-healthy living, coordinates American Heart Month, supports National Wear Red Day®, and participates in other outreach activities.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TOOLS FROM THE HEART TRUTH: Community health workers (CHWs) and community health representatives (CHRs) play an important role in educating their communities about heart disease by implementing culturally tailored health promotion and disease prevention programs. As trusted members of their community, they can share information, encourage healthy behaviors, and help reduce health disparities. *The Heart Truth* supports CHWs and CHRs by creating culturally tailored resources they can use within their programs, especially those programs that reach communities that are disproportionately affected by heart disease. These resources include comprehensive curricula and tools, with supporting health education materials such as promotional resources, recipe books, and picture cards.

Learn more at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/heart-truth/CHW>.

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Heart Truth seeks proposals from community-based and/or tribal programs to implement and assess [Honoring the Gift of Heart Health](#), a CHW/CHR curriculum for American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Honoring the Gift of Heart Health includes two manuals, one for American Indians and one for Alaska Natives. Each is comprised of a culturally appropriate 10-lesson heart health education curriculum and supporting educational materials, like picture cards. Each manual includes skill-building activities, handouts, recipes, idea starters, and activities that train and guide CHWs and health educators to implement the community-based program on heart disease prevention.

Honoring the Gift of Heart Health has been used within the American Indian and Alaska Native communities since 2006. *The Heart Truth* is interested in updating the curricula and the supporting materials to ensure they are relevant and meet the current heart health education needs of these communities. Therefore, applicants will be required to develop a one-year pilot program implementing *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* messaging, materials, and resources. The organization or organizations that receive a subcontract will provide: (1) an assessment of the existing resources with recommendations for improvement; and (2) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the content, messaging, and approach used in the pilot to engage and educate American Indian and/or Alaska Native populations on strategies to reduce heart disease. Pilot programs should focus on using *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* to train CHWs/CHRs to implement heart health education programs within various American Indian and Alaska Native communities, and/or to use the manual and supporting materials to implement a heart health education program with community members.

The primary goals of the 2021-2022 *The Heart Truth* Community Subcontract Program are to:

- Incorporate audience and user insights, lessons learned, and recommendations from the pilot implementations to update information and resources available in future iterations of *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* manual and resources
- Identify evidence-based strategies tailored to American Indian and Alaska Native populations that align with *The Heart Truth's* goals of:
 1. Amplifying awareness about heart disease risk factors
 2. Helping people identify specific health goals to control risk factors
 3. Increasing individual accountability to prevent heart disease
 4. Increasing the number of Americans who intend to take action to protect their hearts and control modifiable risk factors

Westat, NHLBI's contractor for *The Heart Truth* program, plans to administer multiple subcontracts to support NHLBI and *The Heart Truth* program goals. **We are looking to provide funds to at least one program that specifically reaches American Indian populations/communities and at least one program that reaches Alaska Native populations/communities.** The total number of awards will be dependent on the number of applications received and funds available.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

A. ELIGIBILITY

Organization Type:

Applicants must be nonprofit organizations or state, tribal, county, or municipal government agencies with demonstrated experience in outreach to American Indian and/or Alaska Native populations. When a task force, working group, consortium, or coalition is involved, one organization must be the lead, with a single point of contact. Special consideration will be given to organizations that:

- Work in geographic areas with a demonstrated need for heart health intervention and education for American Indian and/or Alaska Native populations (for more information on heart disease impact on American Indian and Alaska Native populations review this [Circulation](#) article¹).
- Have an existing infrastructure and the capacity to implement and assess a community-based heart health education pilot program.

Collaboration:

Applicants are encouraged to seek collaborations with additional partners including, but not limited to, local, state and/or tribal health departments, health systems, area employers (e.g., plants, factories, corporations); and tribal organizations. Awarded organizations must identify a point of contact for their program. Written commitment from proposed partnering organizations, and evidence of those partners' capacity to implement what's proposed, must be demonstrated at the time of proposal submission.

B. REQUIREMENTS

- **Demonstrate Relevance and Alignment** – Offerors must show how their proposed solutions will align with the goals for this RFP as described in Section 2, Scope of Work, employ evidence-based community health education practices, and are tailored for American Indian and/or Alaska Native populations.
- **Improving Existing Program Materials and Resources** – Offerors are encouraged to describe in their proposals how they plan to assess *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* materials and resources with key stakeholders within the American Indian and/or Alaska Native community. Offerors will be required to recruit and engage a minimum of three stakeholders in their tribe or community who are familiar with and/or have experience and expertise in health education and/or cardiovascular disease in American Indian and/or Alaska Native populations. Please note all awardees will be required to provide a detailed **report on their assessment and evaluation of *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* materials no later than six months of award.** Awardees will be asked to assess the manual (*Manual for American Indians* or *Manual for Alaska Natives*), the picture cards (*Honoring the Gift of Heart Health Visuals and Handouts*), the patient education booklet (*Your Choice for Change-Honoring the Gift of Heart Health for*

¹ <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000773>

American Indians), and recipe book (*Honoring Traditions with the Heart in Mind—Heart Healthy American Indian Recipes*). Westat will provide an assessment tool/questionnaire to aid in the development of this report.

- Visit the [Materials for the American Indian/Alaska Native Population webpage](#) to access the *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* tools and materials, which can be downloaded free of charge. Hard copies of the materials can be sent to organizations after awards are made.
- **Evaluation** – Offerors must describe how they will measure the impact of their pilot implementation program and agree to complete assessment forms provided by *The Heart Truth*. Please note all awardees will be required to provide a **final evaluation report of their pilot projects to Westat by September 13, 2022**.
- **Address Human Subjects Protection** – Offerors must submit a completed Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary document as an appendix to the proposal. See “Human Subjects Protection” in Section 7, Proposal Instructions.

Note: Ideally, organizations will implement the Honoring the Gift of Heart Health curriculum in its entirety. If offerors foresee an issue with implementing the entire curriculum, please specify which sections of the curriculum your program will focus on and your rationale.

4. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

September 20, 2021–September 13, 2022

Exhibit A provides a suggested work plan timeline with key deliverables and milestones.

Exhibit A. Key deliverables and milestones

Date	Activity/Deliverable
September – October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontracts awarded • Kick-off meeting with all awardees • Awardees submit Human Subjects Protection documents and complete Westat Human Subjects Protection training, if applicable
September 2021 – March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awardees conduct formal review and assessment of <i>Honoring the Gift of Heart Health</i> curriculum • Deliverables include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Materials and message testing report as part of the assessment of the curricula (no later than March 20, 2021) ○ Three bi-monthly activity reports (November 7, January 7, March 7)
March 2022 – September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awardees conduct pilot implementation of <i>Honoring the Gift of Heart Health</i> with target audiences • Deliverables include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final evaluation report of pilot implementation (by September 13) ○ Two bi-monthly activity reports (May 7 and July 7)

5. AWARDEE SUPPORT (PROVIDED BY NHLBI CONTRACTOR WESTAT, INC.)

Financial

Awardees will receive funds to support the *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* education activity in their communities, to be paid in increments based on a schedule and deliverables to be mutually agreed upon at the onset of the Agreement.

Technical Assistance

The NHLBI contractor, Westat, Inc., will provide technical assistance to Awardees as needed in the form of counsel on strategic planning, including target audience data, communications, media relations, event planning, and reporting. Westat will also provide questionnaires to guide awardee's assessment of *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* materials.

Operations

Upon receiving the announcement of their award, Awardees will receive a *The Heart Truth Awardee Handbook* that provides schedules for conference calls, reports, and activities, along with reporting formats, contact information, and opportunities for sharing questions and information with other Awardees. Westat will hold monthly conference calls with all Awardees.

Program Support

In addition to the *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* materials currently available, NHLBI's *The Heart Truth* program has produced, and will continue to produce, print and radio PSAs, fact sheets, digital animations, videos, PowerPoint presentations, infographics and info cards, social media resources, templates for events and local media outreach, and other materials.

Awardees may download print-ready materials from *The Heart Truth* website and customize them by co-branding with their own logos and contact information. See *The Heart Truth* webpage (www.hearttruth.gov) to access tools and materials.

6. REPORTING

Bimonthly Activity Reports

Awardees will be required to submit brief bimonthly reports reflecting 60 days of activity on the 7th day of every other month (October, December, February, April, June, and August). A report template will be provided on the [program website](#) to describe:

Activity since last report

- New contacts made: organization contacts with name(s) and title(s)
- Meetings and/or conference calls held

- Presentations or exhibits: forum, estimated number of people in attendance, information about the audience, number of *The Heart Truth* program materials distributed
- Other accomplishments and progress
- Areas of challenge and plans to address the challenge
- Budget updates and tracking
- How are you progressing on achieving your goals?
- Do you see any need to adjust your initial goals?
- What aspects of managing the program are most difficult?
- What aspects are most successful?
- What lessons have you learned to date that you would share with other Awardees to facilitate a successful outcome?
- How else could *The Heart Truth* support your current efforts?
- Other resources used

In each report, awardees must track and provide an update on each deliverable outlined in their proposal/award. Reports must also include a brief description of plans and goals for the upcoming reporting period.

Materials and Message Testing Report

Within six months of award, each Awardee will submit their assessment of *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* manual and supporting materials. The assessment will include providing answers to an NHLBI-provided questionnaire on the following:

- Overall impression of manual, picture cards, patient education booklet, and recipe book
- General summary of the goals, objectives, and intended target audience(s) of *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health*
- Feedback on the content in each section of the manual along with its complementary materials
- Feedback on the interventions and outreach approaches provided
- Feedback on the design, layout, and formats of all *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* materials
- Detailed recommendations for improvement

Final Report and Program Evaluation

Upon completion of the project, each Awardee's final report will include the following sections:

- A summary of all project activity
- Audiences reached
- Dollars expended and other resources used
- Evaluation methods and data
- Observations on project successes and lessons learned
- Sustainability plans
- Replication guidelines

7. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

The proposal should include the following sections, organized as follows:

A. Approach to the Statement of Objectives:

This section should include:

- **Understanding of the challenge and the current heart disease landscape:** Explain your interpretation of, and your insights about the program goals and objectives, as it relates to the current state of heart disease within American Indian and/or Alaska Native communities. Describe any previous experience implementing *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* curricula or other heart disease education programs.
- **Strategies and Methods:** Describe your proposed strategies and specific methods, including but not limited to:
 - How you would effectively and efficiently implement and evaluate *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* materials
 - Process in recruiting and engaging a minimum of three stakeholders within the American Indian and/or Alaska Native community to assess *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health*
 - Process for implementing and evaluating a mini-pilot program
 - Information about the audience(s) you would target and geographic reach
 - Events/activities you would develop or use
 - Organizations you would partner with
 - How you would promote your activities to your audiences
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Describe how you will monitor and evaluate the quality and progress of your work.

Schedule: Provide a timetable or schedule with enough detail to demonstrate your understanding of the tasks, from the time the Agreement will be awarded to its conclusion.

B. Organization:

This section should include:

- Proposed management structure for the project. This should include a Project Director who oversees the entire project, and who is authorized to on the Agreement with Westat on behalf of the organization. **Only a maximum of one day-to-day contact, and a back-up, will be accepted.**
- Qualifications of proposed personnel and their roles on the project.
- Details on existing infrastructure and capacity to implement and assess a health education program.

C. Budget:

This section should:

- Identify total budget required to implement the proposed plan. NHLBI expects to award multiple organizations, with each award not to exceed \$50,000.
- Provide line item detail for estimated costs for specific activities, including direct labor and allowable direct expenses, in accordance with [FAR Part 31](#), necessary to complete your proposed program. Proposals should include detailed descriptions of expenses along with cost backup for each item. If travel is required, it shall be in accordance with [Federal Travel Regulations](#).
- NHLBI expects a cost sharing arrangement with awardees. Identify other sources of revenue to help support this project and indicate whether they are funds or in-kind support.

A budget template (Appendix A) is provided in the attachment. The template is also available on *The Heart Truth* Community Subcontract Program webpage www.nhlbi.nih.gov/heart-truth/subcontracts Appendices (as brief as possible while conveying your credentials):

- Resumes of proposed staff or job descriptions of staff to be hired.
- Description of your organization, organizational capabilities, resources, and facilities.
- Description of success in conducting similar programs, utilizing community resources, and demonstrating the usage of other revenue streams, effectively.
- Three letters of reference from leaders of organizations, media, or communities not directly associated with your organization.
- Letters of commitment from other organizations with whom you intend to partner.

Length of Proposal: The entire proposal Section 1 “Approach to Statement of Work: Understanding of the Problem, Strategies and Methods, and Monitoring and Evaluation,” should not exceed 10 pages single-spaced in Arial or Times New Roman font size 12, with 1-inch margins. Diagrams, tables, and graphics may use smaller type, if needed.

The length of the Schedule, Organization, Budget, and Appendix sections is up to the discretion of the proposal team but brevity is encouraged. The Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary (Appendix B) must be included as an appendix to the core proposal and should be no more than 4 pages in length. This document does not count toward the 10-page limit for the core RFP response.

Human Subjects Protections: Review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required of all projects and activities that involve research with human subjects. Regulations define research as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. (See 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(d)). Human subjects are living individuals about whom: (1) data is obtained through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) information is obtained that is both private and identifiable. (See 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(f)).

IRB review is required if any aspect of the proposal involves research with human subjects, such as the following:

- Collecting qualitative data using focus groups, one-on-one interviews, or site visits;
- Analyzing or storing data with personal identifiers (e.g., name, address);
- Collecting physical measurements (e.g., height, weight, blood pressure);
- Using invasive procedures (e.g., blood draw);
- Collecting survey data via telephone, web, mail, ACASI, or other methods with identifiers retained;
- Requesting humans to ingest any substance; or
- Using humans as study subjects in an experiment.

All applicants must complete and submit the Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary document. If the applicant determines that IRB oversight is not required, based on the definitions outlined above, the document should still be submitted **indicating the applicant's assessment that IRB approval is not required**. Please refer to the Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary (Appendix B) for further instruction on completing that document.

Submission:

All proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m. EDT on August 9, 2021. Proposals can be Microsoft Word or PDF files and should be emailed to GlynisJones@Westat.com and TaWannaBerry@Westat.com.

LETTERS OF INTENT

We request that applicants submit a non-binding letter of intent by 3:00 p.m. EDT on July 21, 2021.

The letter of intent will give us a sense of the number of proposals to expect, and allow us to plan accordingly.

Letters should be emailed to GlynisJones@Westat.com and TaWannaBerry@Westat.com.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR AWARD

The following point system will be applied to determine selection of Awardees:

Criteria	Point Value
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: Established presence in American Indian and Alaska Native communities; prior success and proven results conducting public health education efforts at the community level; proven ability to collaborate with partners around a common goal (specific to heart disease); qualifications of key personnel and project staff	40
APPROACH: Specific plan for implementing solutions that serve current unmet needs, explaining approaches/rationale that will reach: (1) At-risk American Indians and/or Alaska Natives; and/or (2) Community health representatives and/or community health workers that serve American Indian and/or Alaska Native communities. Inclusion of specific deliverables, milestones, and timeline.	30
EVALUATION: Demonstrated knowledge, via the proposal, of processes that will support evaluating success (e.g., communication, project monitoring, program evaluation, fiscal management) and alignment with <i>The Heart Truth's</i> goals.	20
BUDGET: Proposed budget and use of funds	10
Total Points Value	100

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions, please contact:

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