Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2016 Healthy Communities small grant program

Deadline: 12 p.m. Monday, Feb. 22, 2016

The Wellmark Foundation’s goal is to be a catalyst in bringing groups together within a community to impact health improvement. Our funding focuses on prevention efforts targeting access to nutritious foods and safe and healthy environments which encourage activity where we live, work, learn and play—now and for generations to come.

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Healthy Communities small grants

This RFP supports smaller projects of $25,000 or less. The goal is to encourage new collaborations that are focused on improving community health. This includes ensuring all residents of Iowa and South Dakota have access to nutritious food and safe and healthy environments which encourage activity where they live, work, play and learn.

The Wellmark Foundation believes everybody deserves to live, work, learn and play in a safe and healthy environment. This includes having a safe and healthy home, access to nutritious and affordable foods and outdoor spaces that promote active living and active transportation. In 2016, we will fund proposals that can demonstrate measurable outcomes and long-term sustainability in these areas.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Commission to Build a Healthier America, “people can make healthier choices if they live in neighborhoods that are safe, free from violence and designed to promote health. Ensuring opportunities for residents to make healthy choices should be a key component of all community and neighborhood development initiatives.”

The American Public Health Association reports the way we design and build our communities affects our physical and mental health. “When communities have plenty of walkable sidewalks and bike-friendly routes for kids to take to school, students are more active. When people can walk where they need to go, car traffic decreases, and that can improve air quality and respiratory health. When children live in homes that do not contain lead or asthma triggers, they are better able to grow and develop.”

In 2016, in addition to our existing focus on access to and consumption of healthy foods, we’ve expanded our focus on active living/built environment to now include safe and healthy environments where Iowans and South Dakotans live. We are seeking proposals that look at how environmental triggers in the home can affect an individual’s ability to be active. An example is an innovative, community-based program that attempts to decrease the number of falls occurring in the home.

The Wellmark Foundation’s approach with this funding is to address upstream health issues that affect the health of the community. It is not designed to fund temporary food assistance or disease management programs.

The Wellmark Foundation is also offering its challenge grant program this year via a separate funding cycle and application process. See page 11 for more information on the Matching Assets to Community Health (MATCH) grant program or visit Wellmark.com/Foundation to learn more.
Ways to use this funding opportunity in your community

The Wellmark Foundation hopes to engage nontraditional collaborators and organizations that can influence health — even (and especially) those that might not be thought of as traditional health organizations. This could include community coalitions to address issues, programs or projects.

The Foundation’s focus is safe and healthy environments which encourage activity and access to and consumption of healthy foods. Projects that can demonstrate long-term sustainability — meaning they will have a lasting effect after the grant funding is over — are preferred.

The following pages describe examples of ways communities can tap into this funding to increase safe and healthy environments in which to be active, as well as enhance access to healthy, affordable foods and generally advancing approaches to improved nutrition. Other approaches are welcome if they can convey project need, capacity and sustainability in the focus areas.
Promoting safe and healthy environments in which to be active

The Wellmark Foundation supports addressing local policy and environmental approaches that promote active living where we live, work, learn and play.

The built environment refers to human-made resources and infrastructure, such as buildings, roads, parks and other amenities. The characteristics of the built environment can affect residents’ health in multiple ways. The existence of safe and accessible environments is likely to increase physical activity for all age groups.

Here are just a few examples of how communities can use these approaches with The Wellmark Foundation’s funding support:

- **Promoting safe, accessible venues for physical activity in a community.** An example is joint-use agreements between schools and community groups to leverage investments and encourage shared spaces for physical activity.

- **Advancing active transportation concepts.** This refers to approaches that encourage individuals to bike or walk to their destinations. Examples of projects include Safe Routes to School projects, walking school buses, community walking audits, active-living workshops or community bicycle promotion.

- **Promoting “Complete Streets” or trail development.** This could include regional trail planning efforts, promoting pedestrian/bicycle/trail master plans, actual trail construction and development and incorporating Complete Streets policies and projects.

- **Developing programs, tools and policies promoting environmental and physical standards and best practices for safe and healthy homes.** Examples of the types of projects we are seeking include community-based educational programming on ways to improve safety in the homes such as fall prevention; and education programs promoting safe and healthy environments where Iowans and South Dakotans live.

To see community projects funded in 2015, go to Wellmark.com/Foundation and select Funded Projects.
Increasing access to and consumption of nutritious foods

Since good nutrition is a cornerstone to optimal health and well-being, The Wellmark Foundation supports solutions that encourage improved nutrition and access to nutritious foods.

Funding examples include:

- **Nutrition education and locally sourced food solutions.** Initiatives that improve access to and consumption of healthier foods can build lifelong dietary patterns. Supporting farmers’ markets and community gardens, promotion of culturally-specific foods, developing youth agricultural and food preparation training programs are all examples of supported projects.

- **Supporting connections between local food systems and health.** Advance the planning, work or implementation of local, multi-county or statewide food policy councils to positively impact food systems and address the interconnectivity between food and health.

- **Addressing food insecurity.** Support efforts to address food insecurity, identify food deserts and develop appropriate long-term hunger solutions and food assistance programs in communities needing greater access to nutritious foods.

- **Promoting obesity prevention solutions in school settings.** Projects to improve the food environment and dietary education in school settings including: farm-to-school programs, advancing school wellness policies, healthy vending, health literacy or curriculum enhancement projects to promote health knowledge for both classroom and after-school programs.

To see community projects funded in 2015, go to [Wellmark.com/Foundation](http://Wellmark.com/Foundation) and select Funded Projects.
Grant eligibility

To be eligible to receive a grant from The Wellmark Foundation, the primary applicant (grant fiscal agent) must meet all the following requirements:

- Must be classified as a Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code or a governmental entity
- Cannot be a private foundation under Section 509(a)
- Must be an organization within the states of either Iowa or South Dakota or seeking funding support for grant funding restricted for use in Iowa or South Dakota
- Must not have a contractual relationship with Wellmark, Inc., Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota or Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc. This does not include having health insurance coverage through Wellmark.

A proposed project is more likely to be funded if as many of the following criteria as possible are met:

- Aligns with The Wellmark Foundation grant-making focuses
- Outcomes are clearly stated and measurable
- Has a sound evaluative process
- Maximizes collaboration with applicable, needed stakeholders
- Aligns with evidenced-based, best practices and/or principles
- Leverages private, public and/or community resources
- Meets a need in the community as identified from a needs assessment or localized data
- Has a legitimate, sound prospect to progress beyond the Wellmark Foundation’s initial grant support (sustainability)

The Wellmark Foundation will not consider making grants for the following:

- Biomedical research that will not impact local residents in the immediate future or that does not have a direct application to implementing a community-driven health intervention
- Uncompensated care for direct clinical services or services that are billable for third-party reimbursement
- Projects solely requesting support for the acquisition of equipment
- Projects without viable prospects for sustainability
- Organizational indirect costs
- Individuals. The granted entity must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or governmental entity
- For-profit organizations or programs operated by or for the benefit of for-profit organizations
- Debt retirement
- Annual fund drives and capital campaigns
- Fundraising events
- Endowments
- Reimbursement for cost of projects already completed or underway before grant is approved

If you have questions related to eligibility to receive a grant from The Wellmark Foundation, please contact Foundation staff by email at WellmarkFoundation@wellmark.com or by phone at 605-373-7429.
2016 Healthy Communities small grant program details

What? The Wellmark Foundation is offering grants for projects that focus on access to nutritious foods and safe and healthy environments which encourage activity that can demonstrate sustainability. Grant awards will be capped at $25,000. The project duration can be up to one year beginning in May 2016. The scoring tool to be used in evaluating these small grant submissions is available at Wellmark.com/Foundation.

When? Grant proposals are due by 12 p.m. Monday, Feb. 22, 2016. Funding awards will be disbursed the first week of May 2016 (with applicant-determined grant periods of 12 months or less).

How? Small grant proposals must be completed online at Wellmark.com/Foundation. You will be required to create an account in order to complete the application, but the account allows you to save your work. In addition, you will be able to use the saved information for future grant applications. Hard-copy proposals will not be accepted.

Instructions for accessing the online application

1. The link to the online application can be found on Wellmark.com/Foundation under “View RFPs.” You can also click on the “Apply Now” button on the navigation bar or at the bottom of the website.

2. Complete the steps in the application process:

Step 1: Fiscal agent information
- This is for the fiscal agent or the organization that will manage the grant if selected.

Grant Applicant Contact information
- This is the person completing the application and is the main contact person for the application and the grant, if selected.

Step 2: Grant Project Information
This includes the following:

- **Brief description of the project.** This is how the project will be described in communication, including press releases, so clearly define your project. (100-word limit)

- **Problem or issue statement.** (250-word limit)
  - What is it your project is attempting to prevent/solve or the issue(s) your project will address?
  - Define the community your project will impact, including geographic, target population, socioeconomic status, etc.

- **Description of the audience being served, including:**
  - Number of people served, target population and how they will benefit (150-word limit)

- **Goals and objectives as they relate to this grant, along with the activities (tactics) planned to accomplish these.** (300-word limit)

- **Timeline for implementation of identified activities/tactics**
  (150-word limit)

- **A list of other organizations, if any, integral to the success of your proposed work.** (150-word limit)

- **Project evaluation.** This is where you assess the impact of your grant-supported project by addressing: (300-word limit)
  - What are the expected results during the funding period both short-term (duration of grant) and after funding is over (long-term).
  - How are you defining and measuring success?
  - How will the project’s results be used and/or disseminated?

- **Budget.** Include a line-item detail of the funding request along with your narrative, as well as any in-kind or matched funds. We are not requiring a firm, hard-match commitment, but applicants will be rewarded for bringing resources to the proposed project so that the entire project budget is not just the awarded/proposed grant amount. (250-word limit)

Instructions continued on next page
**Sustainability.** What is your plan for sustainability? How will this project be funded after The Wellmark Foundation grant funding is over? (250-word limit)

**Step 3: Attachments**
The organization (fiscal agent) applying for the grant must submit items listed below with the proposal.

- IRS determination letter verifying 501(c)(3) status (or statement of governmental entity status)
- Audited financial statement or financial review for 501(c)(3) entity — most recently available (or governmental auditor’s statement)
- Board of directors’ list, or governmental body or community advisory body with governance capacity for your entity
- You may include other documentation you believe may help us have a better understanding of your project such as a map or design document.

**Step 4: Submit application**
Once you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email that your application was submitted successfully. If information is missing or incomplete, you won’t be allowed to submit the application.

**Proposal assistance**
If you are developing a Healthy Communities small grant proposal and have questions, please feel free to contact:

**Stephanie Perry**
605-373-7429
perryss@wellmark.com
Planning resources

There are many tools available to help you determine need, community readiness and possible intervention approaches.

The following resources share data and ideas. These and many other state and local tools may provide information to help grant applicants justify projects and deliver stronger plans.

- The Community Guide
  thecommunityguide.org

- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force
  preventiveservices.ahrq.gov

- Healthy People 2020
  healthypeople.gov

- Iowa Community Health Needs Assessments
  https://idph.iowa.gov/chnahip

- Healthy Iowans
  http://idph.iowa.gov/healthy-iowans

- South Dakota Department of Health
  doh.sd.gov/statistics

- Children's Food Environment Health Indicator Report
  cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/ChildrensFoodEnvironment.pdf

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – State Indicator Report
  cdc.gov/obesity/resources/reports.html

- County Health Rankings
  countyhealthrankings.org

- Community Health Status Indicators Report
  cdc.gov/communityhealth

- National Policy and Legal Analysis Network
  changelabsolutions.org

- South Dakota Good & Healthy Community Health Needs Assessment and Improvement Planning Toolkit
  goodandhealthysd.org/communitytoolkit

- Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities
  surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/active-living.pdf

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build a Healthier America
Two other opportunities for funding

2016 Matching Assets to Community Health (MATCH) grant program
The MATCH grant program leverages The Wellmark Foundation’s funding (up to $75,000) to attract additional funds from other sources. The goal is to support projects that build on the unique assets and already determined health needs in local communities. Please visit Wellmark.com/Foundation to learn more about the MATCH grant program and its May 8, 2016, deadline.

Community Kickstarter grants
These grants provide up to $10,000 for smaller projects focusing on making communities more active or improving access to healthy foods. Details on how to apply for these small grants will be available on Wellmark.com/Foundation after June 1, 2016.
The Wellmark® Foundation is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

The Wellmark® Foundation is a private, non-profit foundation created by Wellmark® Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Iowa. The Wellmark Foundation seeks to measurably improve the health of Iowans, South Dakotans and their communities.