

## Frequently Asked Questions for the CIC-START Call for Applications

### ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

**Q: I have applied for or received funding from DASH in the past. Am I eligible for this opportunity?**

A: Yes, although priority is given to new applicants.

**Q: Can I apply if I am currently funded by one of the *All In* National Program offices (DASH, PHNCI, BUILD, CACHI, NJHI, CHF, etc.)?**

A: Yes. Priority is given to community collaborations that are currently not funded and those that are implementing new strategies to engage partners, build capacity and share data. However, all members of *All In* are encouraged to apply.

**Q: Can a Public Health Department be an applicant if it is leading and convening a collaboration among community partners?**

A: The eligibility criteria states that applicants must be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and must not be private foundations or non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations. A Public Health Department would qualify under that status. DASH is looking for active, pre-existing collaborations to apply.

**Q: Would a foundation be eligible to apply on behalf of a community collective impact initiative?**

A: A foundation is not eligible to apply for CIC-START. However, if one of the members of the community collaboration meets the eligibility criteria they can apply on behalf of the collective impact initiative - this would also make for a more compelling application.

**Q: If my organization is not yet a 501(c)(3), but is in active application process, can I apply? Or must I have definitive 501(c)(3) status as time of application?**

A: Having 501(c)(3) status shows that your organization has reached a certain point in its development and is very important to RWJF due to restrictions regarding how they distribute funds. If you have a documented history of working together that you can point to, it would be useful to write more about your situation and send your question to [info@dashconnect.org](mailto:info@dashconnect.org).

**Q: Am I eligible for another CIC-START contract if I am a current CIC-START awardee?**

A: You are eligible to apply, but the contract is not intended to support multiple stages of work, but rather clearly defined activities with specific products or 1-2 deliverables.

**Q: Can I apply to CIC-START if I previously applied and was turned down? Would our application be considered again?**

A: Yes. The awardees for each round of CIC-START are selected based on the pool of applicants and the quality of the application. If you re-apply, please review the selection criteria and strengthen sections of the application that may have been weak. Because the CIC-START awards are intended to address a relatively immediate need or opportunity, your application for R3 may look different than applications submitted to previous rounds.

**Q: What types of organizations have you previously awarded funds to?**

A: You can browse the [DASH project spotlights](#) and there is also an [All In project directory](#) (you will need to be a logged-in member of the site to access the latter). Previous CIC-START awardees come from a variety of organization types, including Health Information Exchanges, a community clinic, a public health department, a community-based non-profit, a housing agency, etc.

## ALL IN MEMBERSHIP

**Q: How do I join *All In*?**

A: If you're new to *All In*, the first step to join is to sign up for the online community ([allin.healthdoers.org](http://allin.healthdoers.org)) and create an individual member profile. If you do so by the application deadline, you will be eligible for CIC-START funding.

**Q: Is there a cost to becoming an *All In* member?**

A: There is no financial cost to joining *All In*, but members are encouraged to participate in discussions, attend webinars, and use and contribute resources to generate a rich community of practice to advance this field.

**Q: I attempted to join *All In*, but accidentally made an error in typing my e-mail address, thus didn't receive the confirmation e-mail. How can I fix that?**

A: First, re-register with the correct email address. If you had already completed your profile on the account with an error, email [info@dashconnect.org](mailto:info@dashconnect.org) and we will transfer it to the new account.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

**Q: Can you help me decide whether/how this opportunity would be a good fit for my organization?**

A: DASH will not be able to respond to specific requests of this type when the opportunity is still in solicitation. Please carefully review the eligibility and selection criteria in the brochure, the webinar recording, and FAQs at [dashconnect.org/cic-start/](http://dashconnect.org/cic-start/) to determine whether this opportunity is a good fit for your organization.

**Q: Can I apply for both CIC-START and Mentor Program funding?**

A: Yes, although you will still need to submit a separate application for each funding opportunity.

**Q: How many applications will be funded?**

A: We expect to fund up to 15 applications in this third round of DASH CIC-START. We're certain that we will receive more than 15 applications that are worth funding, so we are also encouraging applicants to join the online community at [allin.healthdoers.org](http://allin.healthdoers.org) to reach out to those similar projects or find where they have shared lessons learned or advice.

**Q: To get a feel for how competitive the grant is, can you give us a ballpark of how many organizations have applied in previous rounds?**

A: In R1, which was invitation-only, we received roughly 15 applications and funded five; in R2 we received around 25 applications and funded six communities.

**Q: How do you define sectors?**

A: By sectors, we are referring to fields or people/organizations working in a specific area of expertise. For CIC-START, we are interested in sectors relevant to community health improvement objectives (e.g., health care, public health, behavioral health, housing, human services, community development, education, transportation, criminal justice, public safety, the private sector, or other sector that has a stake in or impact on community health). In the application, you'll be presented with the list of sectors and identify your organization within that list.

**Q: The CIC-START contract seems like a good opportunity for a challenge we've been facing, but the proposed start date won't work for our proposal – we would want to start a few months later.**

A: If you have a strong proposal of limited duration that doesn't fit in the particular 6-month timespan in the brochure, you may still apply. You will be able to explain the need for the adjusted timeline in the application and can enter the appropriate months in the work plan template provided. Please also note that we plan for two more rounds of CIC-START in 2019, and so you may wish to save your application for the next round.

**Q: Can a private technical solution provider who works with nonprofit communities co-apply with one of the nonprofit partners?**

A: DASH seeks strong, active collaborative relationships from across multiple sectors working towards a common goal. A 501(c)(3) public entity or nonprofit organization on behalf of a project idea can include a business as a partner in the collaborative.

**Q: I am part of a multi-sector collaboration. Which organization in our collaboration should apply?**

A: The application can be submitted by any eligible organizational member of a collaboration. Ideally, it would come from the collaboration member most central to the management or implementation of the proposed work. The budget and project activities may reflect expanded roles for other organizations in the collaboration beyond the lead applicant.

**Q: Does the lead applicant from a project currently funded by an *All In* partner need to be the lead organization submitting to the CIC-START CFA?**

A: The lead organization for a currently funded project does not have to be the proposed lead organization for the CIC-START application. Any eligible organizational member of a collaboration can apply as the lead and [sign up for \*All In\*](#) if they haven't already done so.

**Q: Is it possible for another organizational member of our partnership to apply separately?**

A: Yes, as long as the other organization and the collaborative project meets the CIC-START eligibility criteria.

**Q: Can separate entities within the same state's government apply separately (two different projects within one state)?**

A: Yes, as long as the other organization and collaborative project meet the CIC-START eligibility criteria.

**Q: Should a site visit from the DASH NPO be included in the budget?**

A: A "low-effort" site visit is a possible activity of a CIC-START project. The DASH NPO may request this, or the awardee may request it. If there is mutual interest, staff from the DASH NPO will travel to the awardee site and be responsible for all staff travel costs.

**Q: What other financial materials may we send if we do not have two years of audited financials?**

A: If an organization meets the eligibility criteria but does not have audited financial statements, please provide whatever financial statements are available, and the DASH NPO may follow up with additional questions.

**Q: What should documentation of a multi-sector shared data project look like in our application? Letters of support, MOUs, other documentation?**

A: Letters of support and MOUs are all acceptable forms of documentation. We are more interested in applicants that can describe the depth and quality of your partnerships, than knowing you have multiple partners that are only superficially engaged.

**Q: Will there be any challenge with teams submitting applications for programs that are similar in nature to previously funded projects?**

A: The CIC-START program has three purposes: to build local community capacity, to learn and disseminate local lessons and evidence, and to build the network of communities in this field. DASH balances these three purposes as we assess CIC-START applications. Generally, we want to support collaborations that may not have been funded yet by an *All In* partner (including DASH), but we're also interested in applications from communities we already know that are doing interesting and important work that we may be able to support.

**Q: Would you fund a program that is similar to another program previously funded by DASH. i.e. implementing an evidence-based program that has already been funded in another geographic region by DASH?**

A: The fact that we funded something in a geographic area does not work against an applicant in this round. We are more focused on what capacity will be built in this round that wasn't there before and how the lessons learned can be replicated in other communities.

**Q: I don't see the DASH CIC-START grant listed as a current call for proposals**

A: The CIC-START program is offered by the DASH National Program Office, which is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We use the RWJF automated application system, but the DASH Call for Applications will not appear on the RWJF Current Calls for Proposal list. You must click on the [application link](#) provided at [dashconnect.org/cic-start](http://dashconnect.org/cic-start) to access the solicitation. When you log in to the [RWJF portal](#) subsequently, it should appear at the top of the screen in "My Applications."

**Q: I just logged into RWJF to check this out and see I have an ID--does this mean I started an application?**

A: If you have ever made an application to RWJF before, or been included in one, you may have an ID. If you have started a proposal, you should have received an email from [rwjf.org](http://rwjf.org) with the proposal ID. If you believe you have started an application we recommend you try to save it. If you run into any problems or questions, please e-mail [info@dashconnect.org](mailto:info@dashconnect.org) with as much detail as you can provide, and we will make sure that you don't duplicate your effort.

**Q: If we have an active application for another RWJ grant, can we still apply for this one?**

A: DASH does not place any restrictions on submitting an application while you have other active applications. If you have concerns about that particular RWJF grant, it may be worth reaching out to the program officer.

**Q: The application timeline is very short. When will we know about the next round, and where should we be looking for information?**

A: CIC-START contracts are meant to be low-effort in application and administration. It is our hope that applicants will be active collaborations who have already identified a challenge or opportunity in their ongoing work that this type of short-term, targeted funding would help address. We expect to offer the next round of CIC-START in the Spring of 2019. We recognize that three weeks is a short turnaround time, so we will try to give more notice before opening the application process. The application is fairly consistent from round to round, so you could begin preparing the content for your application at any time, based on the current application prompts. We post information about funding opportunities at [dashconnect.org](http://dashconnect.org), in the *All In* online community at [allin.healthdoers.org](http://allin.healthdoers.org), and in the *All In* monthly newsletter.

## CIC- START CONTRACT AND ACTIVITIES

### **Q: Can you speak more to participation and reporting requirements?**

A: The DASH CIC-START contracts are intended to be a low-administration award. Awardees will participate in short, monthly check-in calls with the NPO staff, be invited to engage in discussions on the *All In* platform and may be asked to host a low-effort, in-person meeting with NPO staff. The in-person meeting is for the NPO staff to witness activities and/or milestones alongside the awardee, and not an elaborate presentation. NPO staff will be available for additional consultation if requested. Also, the DASH NPO will offer communications consultation to support the CIC-START project, though grantees will not be required to participate.

Upon completion of the contract, awardees will be expected to submit a concluding report, which will include lessons learned that others could benefit from, and when appropriate to share products of their project. Awardees should also expect to participate in an exit interview to discuss their contract successes and challenges.

### **Q: Can funds be used for consultants and contractors?**

A: A potential activity that CIC-START funds can support includes engaging individual consultants or other collaborative experts to address a problem or an opportunity (legal, collaboration, governance, etc.). In fact, the short-term nature of the CIC-START program suggests that consultants and contractors with specific technical knowledge or experience are appropriate uses of funds. Please note that the most relevant, experienced and cost-effective sources of contract expertise may be other community organizations that have already addressed the particular challenge or opportunity to be addressed.

### **Q: Can the funds be used for data system programming staff time?**

A: Yes, staff time is an allowable use of funds. We recommend you tie the use of the budget for programmer time to the demonstrated objectives of your work plan in your application, as well as explain how the funds would be a supplement to regular programming staff time.

### **Q: Can we use CIC-START funds for evaluation?**

A: CIC-START leverages DASH funds to learn important lessons about what works and doesn't work for multi-sector collaborative data sharing. A robust evaluation focused on understanding successful and unsuccessful work in this field is a welcome component of any application. If the application is focused primarily on evaluation, then the initiative being evaluated should be significant in terms of lessons, replicability or impact.

### **Q: Is there a specific electronic tool or model preferred?**

A: There is no specific tool, model or approach preferred or required, as DASH recognizes that tools are responsive or relevant to the local context.

### **Q: Will DASH fund the purchase of a data platform if the community collaboration has a solid work plan?**

A: Use of funds to purchase technology is an eligible use of the award, and we have funded similar work before. In our experience, the technology is not the answer but more of a tool for systems change. A compelling proposal would explain why this activity would generate a change in the community, and how this tool would accelerate your progress and create value for the field.

**Q: This could augment our in-motion project in a very helpful way – specifically, by enabling us to achieve XYZ. However, our project's timeline is over a year; how do you suggest we align this six-month time frame with collaboration work that might not fit neatly into that time window?**

A: We recommend focusing your application on how the CIC-START award will help you make progress on a very concrete aspect of your project within the six-month time frame. This is intended to be an opportunity to access funds that will enable specific planning activities or next steps in an existing plan for sharing data, or to overcome a specific challenge.

**Q: If we are a nonprofit that has a fiscal agent with a project fee (indirect rate), is this allowable under this contract?**

A: Indirect costs are an allowable part of the contract.

**Q: When and how is the money paid to the participant?**

A: DASH will distribute 90% of the award amount when contracts are initiated, paid to the lead agency on the application. Awardees will be responsible for contracting and dispersing funds, in accordance with their proposed work plan and budget. The 10% balance of the award will be provided upon completion of the final report. In the event that your collaboration relies on one organization to be the fiscal agent and another to lead the proposed work plan, please make a note of this in the budget narrative.

**Q: Will there be another round of CIC-START opportunities in 2019?**

A: We envision further opportunities of this sort in the next year.