

NVHF Upstream Grant 2026 FAQs

1. What is the goal of this grant cycle?
 - a. NVHF Upstream grants are for projects that address one or more issues that affect the health of predominantly low-income Northern Virginians through efforts to change systems, policies, or processes. Grants will support projects that impact population health, not direct provision of services, and that forge or deepen collaborations among three important sectors: nonprofit community organizations, government agencies, and nonprofit healthcare providers (primary, oral, and/or behavioral health care).

2. Who is eligible to apply?
 - a. Non-profit organizations who are working to improve health equity or reduce disparities in an ‘island of disadvantage’ in Northern Virginia may apply for these grants. Priority will be given to organizations who have a trusted relationship within the community, work toward systems change, and incorporate community input into organizational planning and priorities. Partners do not need to be non-profit organizations, but the lead organization/applicant must have an IRS 501(c)3 designation.

3. Why do we state a preference for grants to organizations working in the “islands of disadvantage”?
 - a. An important step in attaining health equity is to focus resources and interventions in the areas where the greatest disparities currently exist. The Foundation is aiming to build resources in the areas of greatest disadvantage in Northern Virginia, the so-called ‘islands of disadvantage’ (as described in “[Getting Ahead: The Uneven Opportunity Landscape in Northern Virginia](#)”). Strengthening the organizations that work in these places in turn strengthens these communities.

4. Can we use this grant to grow a program or increase services?
 - a. No, these grants are focused on system change and may not be used for operational or program support.

5. Can current NVHF grantees apply for these grants?
 - a. Yes, current NVHF grantees may apply for these grants, unless the organization is already receiving an Upstream Grant from the Foundation.

6. What are the deadlines for this RFP?
 - a. Anyone interested in applying for this funding must schedule a pre-proposal conversation with Foundation staff prior to March 11. The Foundation will then invite promising projects that align best with its mission and strategic goals to submit a full proposal. Proposals will be due by April 8.

7. What is a pre-proposal conversation?
 - a. A pre-proposal conversation is similar to a traditional letter of intent, but rather than submitting the concept in writing, applicants will be able to share details of their proposed project directly with Foundation staff over zoom. It will allow for real-time questions and conversation.

8. What do I need to be prepared to discuss in the pre-proposal conversation?
 - a. Applicants must cover the following areas: the issue you will address and how you will address it, what population or populations you will focus on, what you hope to achieve and how it will improve health, and a description of the applicant organization and the partners in the collaboration.

9. How do I apply?
 - a. Schedule a pre-proposal conversation with Foundation staff through this [link](#). Meetings must be scheduled prior to March 11. For any questions, please contact Rachel Ermann Lynch at rlynch@novahealthfdn.org.