

Built Environment Policy Advocacy Fund (BEPAF)
Application Questions and Answers
January 21, 2020

This document provides answers to questions submitted in response to the BEPAF Request for Proposal (RFP) and informational webinar. We urge applicants to read the full RFP carefully (found [here](#)) since it provides the complete details regarding eligibility, selection criteria, the review process, and the overall BEPAF grant opportunity. Please note that we consolidated duplicative questions and paraphrased as necessary.

Does our proposed project need to involve one of the existing Best Start partnerships?

Not necessarily, but it does need to take place in one or more of the 14 Best Start geographic areas. Please see First 5 LA's website for [an interactive map of the Best Start communities](#).

We understand the RFP is focused on three built environment priority issues (parks and open space, transportation/mobility, and food security) but what about intersecting environmental issues such as air pollution, lead exposure in housing, and green zones, or social factors such as displacement or criminal justice reform? Can we submit an LOI that focuses on these intersections?

We recognize that there are linkages between BEPAF's three built environment priority areas and other critical community issues. We welcome LOIs that articulate these intersections in the analysis of the built environment context in which you are working, however the focus of BEPAF proposals must be on parks and open space, transportation/mobility, and/or food security, as described in First 5 LA's [FY2020-2028 Strategic Plan](#). We would certainly welcome LOIs proposing innovative approaches that link a policy- or systems-change advocacy goal in one of the three priority areas with an intersecting issue in a cogent, compelling manner.

How will LOIs/proposals be scored?

LOIs and full proposals will be scored according to the Eligibility and Selection Criteria listed in the RFP. Please note that a Scoring Rubric was posted on [Prevention Institute's BEPAF website](#) on January 21st.

Could BEPAF funds be used to support a statewide gathering of advocates in one of the three priority areas (parks and open space, transportation/mobility, or food security)?

The BEPAF is a local policy advocacy initiative, meaning that the focus of an application should be at the city, county, or regional level. If a gathering of advocates is a strategic element of a proposed local policy initiative, funds could be applied to such a gathering. On the other hand, if a statewide gathering is only tangentially linked to the local initiative, it could potentially diminish the proposal's competitive edge.

We are working on a park development project in a high need area. What types of activities will be funded by the BEPAF? We want to understand what your grant dollars are meant for—would they cover the costs of project design, engineering, construction, or the fees charged by consultants?

As indicated in the RFP, physical or "brick and mortar" projects and service-delivery programs are not eligible. Proposed projects that are directly connected to policy- and systems-change advocacy work are eligible for funding; and an LOI/full proposal should clearly describe how the proposed work will lead to policy- and systems-change. Eligible activities are broadly related to policy advocacy efforts and include but are not limited to: base-building/community organizing; community engagement and coalition-building; resident or member capacity-building and leadership development; research and policy/strategy development; and communications and narrative change to build collective will. As a

reminder, please see the Use of Grant Funds for a list of non-allowable expenses and activities on page 11 of the RFP.

Regarding the use of funds, would the BEPAF initiative fund a project that has an advocacy goal (i.e., to change land use policy) but involves physical semi-permanent demonstrations (i.e., it is partially a "physical"/"built" project) within a strong community leadership development and systems-change framework?

If the ultimate goal of a proposed project is not explicitly related to policy- or systems-change or its activities are not advocacy-oriented, then it likely would not have a competitive advantage compared to other more policy- or systems-change specific applicants. In our experience, most policy advocacy initiatives rarely have a physical component until after the policy goal has been reached. That said, each application will be scored on its own merits and we look forward to innovative built environment policy advocacy LOIs.

Can we use the grant to form a new coalition?

Unfortunately, no. As stated in the RFP, the BEPAF is not intended to fund the formation of new coalitions, however grant funds can support the policy- and systems-change advocacy activities of existing coalitions, networks, or single organizations that focus on one of the three priority issues—parks and open space, transportation or food security. To be clear, we are not requiring that proposed work be done from a coalition standpoint, but certainly look forward to coalition-based applications.

Can you clarify what would qualify as a new coalition? For instance, would it be considered a new coalition if we are taking existing advocates/members in a region and formalizing the way they conduct advocacy in their area?

For the specific purposes of the BEPAF, a new coalition entails the establishment of a new formation of collaborating organizations that has not previously worked together on policy advocacy issues, whether built environment or other types of advocacy issues. If your example refers to an existing membership-based advocacy organization proposing to work on a built environment issue that is new to the organization and its members, that would not be considered a 'new coalition.'

Can we do a joint application in partnership with another organization?

There should be a single, lead applicant organization that applies for this funding opportunity. For coalitions that are not a 501(c)3 organization, one of the member organizations should apply on behalf of the coalition, with the coalition's endorsement. In such cases, it would be okay to subcontract with another coalition member organization if that group is conducting work or activities that will be paid for by the grant.

Which Appendix form(s) do we need to submit with our LOI?

Accompanying your LOI, you only need to submit Appendix C, the preliminary budget template. (As described on page 13 of the RFP, you should also submit a cover page with your LOI.) The other appendices posted on [Prevention Institute's BEPAF website](#) are for background information only or for the full proposal stage of the application process.

How will the LOIs/proposals be evaluated in terms of alignment with the overall BEPAF goals versus the priority focus areas identified in Appendix B of the RFP?

The information presented in Appendix B is meant for background purposes only and will not be used in the review and scoring of LOIs/proposals. Applicants should focus their LOIs/proposals on one or more of the BEPAF's three priority areas (parks and open space, transportation/mobility, and/or food

security). Applicants will not be penalized if their LOI/proposal does not address the information presented in Appendix B.

According to the RFP Appendix B - Community Priorities, we see that for Central Long Beach, for example, the priorities are: building community knowledge about child development and parenting skills; preventing child abuse and neglect; increasing access to quality and affordable childcare; and increasing access to quality and affordable housing and economic security. How closely should our applications tie to these Community Priorities vs. what the goals are (parks/open space, transportation/opportunities; and food security for children prenatal to age five and their families)?

As described in the question above, please focus your LOI/proposal on one or more of the BEPAF's three priority areas (parks and open space, transportation/mobility, and/or food security).

Would proposals that meet multiple goals be seen as more competitive than proposals that meet only one goal?

Not necessarily. LOIs/proposals that address one of the BEPAF's three priority areas (parks and open space, transportation/mobility, and/or food security) will be considered as competitive as those that address multiple priorities.

Can we submit multiple applications? And, are we allowed to apply for both categories of grants, each with a different Best Start community?

We strongly urge applicants to submit a single application that covers your priority policy goals and objectives. Submission of multiple LOIs could be viewed by reviewers as sending a mixed message about commitment and focus. That said, we are not excluding multiple applications in one or both categories. Please note that it is highly unlikely that a single organization or coalition would receive more than one grant award; a key goal of the BEPAF is to expand the network of organizations working on built environment policy- and systems-change advocacy across the LA County region.

To clarify, is the difference between the two grants that Implementation grants are already doing advocacy work (for at least two years) and Incubation grants are in the planning stages of advocacy work? What are the other key differences?

Not necessarily. Policy Advocacy Incubation Grant applicants could be beyond the planning stage and already doing advocacy work. In such cases, an Incubation Grant could build grantees' organizational capacity on built environment issues or policy- and systems-change advocacy methods. And, there are several key differences between the two grant categories.

- Experience/Qualifications: Policy Advocacy Implementation Grant applicants must have a successful track record of at least two years in community-driven policy advocacy specifically to advance equity in the built environment related to parks and open space, transportation/mobility, or food security. On the other hand, Policy Advocacy Incubation Grant applicants should have policy advocacy experience, but it does not necessarily need to be specific to the built environment.
- Desired Outcomes: All grantees are expected to produce field-level outcomes, as described on page 6 of the RFP. Policy Advocacy Implementation Grants are intended to support experienced groups with strong track records to make a significant impact in the development or implementation of built environment policies. Implementation grantees are also expected to produce policy- and systems-level outcomes as evidenced by the adoption of (or significant and measurable progress towards the adoption of) new policies/practices, changes to existing policies/practices, or oversight of policy implementation to advance equity related to parks and open space, transportation/mobility, and/or food security. Policy Advocacy Incubation Grants

are intended build grantees' organizational capacity on built environment issues or policy advocacy methods, and to grow the field of built environment policy advocates in Best Start areas. Incubation grantees are expected to produce planning-level outcomes as evidenced by reporting and documentation of policy- and systems-change advocacy plans, processes, tools, and materials, including (but not limited to):

- Built environment policy research and identification of potential policy objectives;
- Cultivation of potential organizational allies and elected champions; or
- Development of a resident engagement and leadership development plan.

What is the cap on how much funding can be used for administration and engagement?

There is no cap on how much of your proposed budget can be used for community engagement activities or any other type of activities. However, there should be alignment between your policy advocacy goals, strategies, and activities, and the overall budget overall and specific line items. Lack of alignment could be problematic from a competitive standpoint. In addition, we anticipate that indirect costs (also known as overhead/operations expenses) would not be more than 10-15% of the total budget request. However, indirect rates vary depending on what elements are included in the rate and should be justified by the applicant. As described in the forthcoming BEPAF Scoring Rubric, budgets will be reviewed and scored based on the following criteria:

- The budget is realistic for the activities proposed and does not include any of the non-allowable expenses/activities specified in the Use of Grant Funds section of the RFP.
- The requested amount does not represent more than 25% of the applicant organization's total annual budget.
- The budget narrative clearly justifies all costs included in the budget. (Applicable to invited full proposals only.)

Are we tied to the jurisdictions we designate on our LOIs or do we have the flexibility to change up our plans/jurisdictions once we move on to the full proposal stage?

If invited to submit a full proposal, an applicant will be asked to expand upon the goals, strategies, and activities articulated in the LOI. In order to conduct a fair competitive grant-making process, there must be continuity across the LOI and the full proposal in terms of the specific strategies and activities outlined including the jurisdiction/location in which the proposed activities take place.