



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **FIT COMMUNITY**

#### **A DESIGNATION AND GRANTS INITIATIVE**

**PROPOSAL DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 10, 2006**

**01/24/06: SEE REVISION TO FORMATTING ON PAGE 10**



## SUMMARY

*Fit Together*, a partnership of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) announces the establishment of **Fit Community**, a designation and grant program that recognizes and rewards North Carolina communities' efforts to support physical activity and healthy eating initiatives, as well as tobacco-free school environments. Fit Community is one component of the jointly sponsored *Fit Together* initiative, a statewide prevention campaign designed to raise awareness about obesity and to equip individuals, families and communities with the tools they need to address this important issue.

All North Carolina municipalities and counties are eligible to apply for a Fit Community designation, which will be awarded to those that have excelled in supporting the following:

- physical activity in the community, schools, and workplaces
- healthy eating in the community, schools, and workplaces
- tobacco use prevention efforts in schools

Designations will be valid for two years, and designated communities may have the opportunity to reapply for subsequent two-year extensions. The benefits of being a Fit Community include:

- heightened statewide attention that can help bolster local community development and/or economic investment initiatives (highway signage and a plaque for the Mayor's or County Commission Chair's office will be provided)
- reinvigoration of a community's sense of civic pride (each Fit Community will serve as a model for other communities that are trying to achieve similar goals)
- use of the Fit Community designation logo for promotional and communication purposes

The **application for Fit Community designation** is available on the *Fit Together* Web site ([www.FitTogetherNC.org/FitCommunity.aspx](http://www.FitTogetherNC.org/FitCommunity.aspx)).

Municipalities and counties that apply for the designation may also choose to compete for grant funding. **Please note that an application for a Fit Community designation is a prerequisite for a grant application.** Fit Community grants are designed to support innovative strategies that help a community meet its goal to becoming a Fit Community. Eight to nine, two-year grants of up to \$30,000 annually will be awarded to applicants that have a demonstrated need, proven capacity, and opportunity for positive change in addressing physical activity *and/or* healthy eating. HWTF will seek to choose a diverse portfolio of grantees.

The **grant application** can be found on the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's Web site ([www.hwtfc.org/htmfiles/availfunds.html](http://www.hwtfc.org/htmfiles/availfunds.html)).

## **BACKGROUND**

Physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use are primary risk factors for cardiovascular disease, cancer and several other chronic illnesses. According to the North Carolina Prevention Partners' *2005 Prevention Report Card*, nearly 96% of North Carolinians are at risk for at least one of these factors, which may explain why two-thirds of preventable deaths in North Carolina are related to these three behaviors. The number of annual deaths and hospitalizations in North Carolina that are linked to physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use are staggering (34,745 and 183,520, respectively), and these three risk factors cost North Carolinians approximately \$15.85 billion each year. Such statistics confirm the importance of providing programs, creating policies, and developing supportive environments and social systems that sustain healthy lifestyles.

The Fit Community initiative is similar in intent to the All America City program supported by the National Civic League, the Well City USA program designed by the Wellness Councils of America, and the Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign supported by the League of American Bicyclists. These and other similar programs appear to have a positive impact on civic excellence by encouraging community leaders, government officials, businesses and non-profit organizations to work together to address critical health, livability and sustainability issues.

Technical assistance for all applicants and grantees of this initiative will be provided by Active Living by Design (ALbD - [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)), a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. ALbD is administered by the UNC School of Public Health in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

### **FIT COMMUNITY DESIGNATION:**

Although the Fit Community program targets municipalities and counties, **any non-profit or governmental organization may apply for the designation as the lead applicant on behalf of a municipal partnership or county partnership.** One application will be allowed per unit of government (i.e., one per municipality; one per county). Each municipality application must be endorsed by the Mayor, and each county application must be endorsed by the County Commission Chair, using the Fit Community endorsement form provided. This will help encourage collaboration among community leaders, government officials, business owners and non-profit directors. Applications that do not include the endorsement form and/or contain multiple applications from an individual municipality or county will not be reviewed.

It is expected that the lead applicant will be the same for both the designation and the (optional) grant. **If the applicant is also interested in applying for an HWTF Fit Community grant, the lead applicant must fall under one of the eligibility categories described in the following grants section.**

**FIT COMMUNITY GRANT FUNDING:**

Under the NC General Statutes, the following are **organizations eligible to receive a grant** from HWTF:

- a state agency
- a local government or other political subdivision of the state or a combination of such entities
- a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which has as a significant purpose promoting the public’s health, limiting youth access to tobacco products, or reducing the health consequences of tobacco use

Other entities interested in being involved in this initiative may apply in partnership with an eligible organization that is functioning as the lead applicant for the grant. The lead applicant is responsible for fiscal and overall grant program management, including the performance of any subcontractor or partner. The lead applicant must act as the fiscal agent for the grant. As is the case for designation applications, only one grant application will be allowed per municipality or county, and each application must be endorsed by the Mayor or County Commission Chair (depending on the target community) using the Fit Community endorsement form provided for grant funding.

**THE PROGRAM**

**FIT COMMUNITY DESIGNATION:**

A Fit Community designation recognizes municipalities and counties that have excelled in supporting physical activity *and* healthy eating initiatives in three areas: the community, schools, and workplaces, as well as tobacco use prevention efforts in schools.

Each applicant must complete a self-assessment questionnaire to demonstrate the community’s support for these behaviors (provided in Part II of the Application for Fit Community designation). The self-assessment is based on the five key strategies (preparation, promotions, programs, policy, and physical projects) described in ALbD’s “Community Action Model.” **Table 1** summarizes key components of the self-assessment. For more information on the “five Ps,” refer to the Fit Community Grant Funding section of this RFP and ALbD’s Web site: [www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=293](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=293).

**Table 1**

Behavior	Site	Strategy				
		Preparation	Promotions	Programs	Policy	Physical Projects
Physical Activity	Community	x	x	x	x	x
	Schools	x	x	x	x	x
	Workplaces	x	x	x	x	x
Healthy Eating	Community	x	x	x	x	x
	Schools	x	x	x	x	x
	Workplaces	x	x	x	x	x
Tobacco use Prevention	Community					
	Schools	x	x	x	x	x
	Workplaces					

**FIT COMMUNITY GRANT FUNDING:**

**Municipalities and counties applying for Fit Community grant funding must simultaneously submit an application for a Fit Community designation (both are due February 10, 2006).** The self-assessment used for the designation application will provide useful information to help identify potential objectives and tactics for the grant proposal.

Eight to nine, two-year grants of up to \$30,000 annually will be awarded to communities that have a demonstrated need, proven capacity, and opportunity for positive change in addressing physical activity *and/or* healthy eating. HWTF will seek to choose a diverse portfolio of grantees.

Applicants must identify in their proposals how they would use funding to increase physical activity and/or healthy eating by integrating *each of the 5P strategies*, a part of ALbD's "Community Action Model," which can be found at [www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=293](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=293). Strategies are explained briefly below and include several ideas to consider for each.

1. *Preparation.* Create a partnership with representatives from local organizations that can help identify and address current barriers to, as well as new opportunities for, increasing physical activity and/or healthy eating. At a minimum, the partnership should include one health-related partner (e.g., health department leader, physician, community health advocate, etc.) and representatives from at least two other relevant disciplines. Other partners could include school officials, leaders from local nonprofit organizations, representatives from the business community, and/or representatives from government departments such as planning, parks and recreation, transportation, public safety and other related fields. Additional preparation activities could include, but are not limited to: conducting a formal assessment of opportunities and barriers, conducting surveys or focus groups within the community to better understand residents' attitudes and perceptions, identifying additional sources of financial and in-kind support, and finalizing project plans.
2. *Promotions.* Implement activities to promote programs, policies, and physical projects. Promotional activities should increase understanding of the benefits of routine physical activity and/or healthy eating, highlight recommendations, publicize existing local opportunities, and communicate the need for additional community supports. Specific tactics could include developing a social marketing campaign, advertising, special events, mailings, a Web site, or working with the media to secure ongoing coverage of physical activity and/or healthy eating issues.
3. *Programs.* Develop one or more organized activities that are designed to engage individuals in policy, environmental or behavioral change. Programs should complement changes in policy and the physical environment and, unlike one-time promotional events, are structured and organized over periods of time. Specific tactics could include developing a walking club to utilize new trails or walking routes, developing a walk-to-school program, or organizing classes, clubs or support groups designed to encourage lifelong physical activity and/or healthy eating.
4. *Policy.* Change existing or seek to enact new regulations or policies to promote physical activity and/or healthy eating. Specific tactics could include requiring sidewalks in all new developments, changing school policies to require more daily physical activity and healthy

food options for all children, or implementing changes in worksite policies to promote physical activity and/or healthy eating during the workday. Educating policy makers, citizens, professionals and advocates is an essential component of this strategy.

5. *Physical Projects.* Change the physical environment to be more conducive to physical activity and/or healthy eating. Specific tactics could include advocating for the construction of walking trails, parks, or greenways; working with officials to implement traffic-calming measures such as crosswalks or roundabouts; or improving access to destinations such as grocery stores, farmers' markets, or community gardens. Physical environments that are altered or built with Fit Community grant funding should be accessible to the public. These funds should ultimately be used to leverage additional funding for capital projects.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

In spring of 2006, HWTF and BCBSNC will announce Fit Community designations, and HWTF will announce eight to nine Fit Community grant recipients. The application process for both the designations and grant funding will begin anew in fall 2006.

**Designation applications** will be screened to ensure the municipality or county meets a broad distribution of basic criteria in the Fit Community self-assessment and that submitted data is valid. The number and diversity of designated Fit Communities will depend on the strength of the individual applications as well as on the overall pool of applications. Designations will be valid for two years, and designated communities may have the opportunity to reapply for subsequent two-year extensions subject to program continuation and funding.

**Successful grant applicants** will demonstrate the following attributes:

- the need for increasing support for physical activity and/or healthy eating policies, programs, and environments in the community, including physical, demographic and social challenges or barriers
- an effective, interdisciplinary partnership with strong project leadership, commitment from diverse stakeholders, and a clear understanding of organizational roles, responsibilities and contributions
- strong organizational capacity in planning, program development, implementation, and evaluation that serves to improve community health or quality of life
- practical goals and specific tactics that are likely to strengthen the partnership, create or improve policies, implement promotions, execute programs, and initiate or complete physical projects that support the goals of Fit Community
- ability to generate resources to sustain initiatives after the grant period ends
- willingness to serve as a model for other North Carolina communities

### **GRANT TERMS**

Each recipient must enter into an initial twelve-month grant contract (from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007) that will be renewed for a second grant year, subject to continued availability of funds and satisfactory grantee performance. HWTF expects to receive more requests than can be funded. Therefore, submission of a grant application does not guarantee receipt of an award. Furthermore, grants that are awarded may not be funded at the requested amount. Final awards

will be commensurate with the size and scope of the proposed activities. HWTF reserves the right to conduct pre-award interviews or on-site assessments.

Grantees will designate one of the following methods for receipt of the grant funds:

1. An initial payment of 40% of the first-term approved budget, followed by disbursement of the remaining balance of the total annual award amount in three (3) equal quarterly installments beginning in the second quarter of the grant cycle.
2. Reimbursement of the amount submitted on the monthly expense reports without the initial payment.

Grantees will be required to submit monthly grant expenditure reports to HWTF. All grantees will be required to provide a six-month and twelve-month report on their progress in a format provided by HWTF. ALbD will review all progress reports in order to monitor project developments and will provide any follow-up recommendations to grantees and HWTF. A final cumulative progress report and comprehensive financial report will be due 30 days after the end of the grant period.

#### **USE OF HWTF GRANT FUNDS**

Grant funds must be used exclusively to support the approved project and spent in accordance to the grant contract and approved project budget. Each year, all grantees must certify the proper use of the funds. Grant funds may be used for staff salaries, project-related travel, supplies, limited amounts of equipment, and other direct expenses essential to the project. These expenses must be budgeted to the categories and line items identified in the Budget and Financial Requirements section of the application for HWTF grant funds.

Grant funds may not support any efforts to engage in political activities or lobbying including, but not limited to, support of or opposition to candidates, specific legislation, ballot initiatives, referenda, or other similar activities. *Note: Because of the nature of policy work inherent in this program, advocacy work and education on particular issues are allowed.* Grant funds may not be used for research studies, unless it is directly linked to evaluation purposes, or to substitute for funds currently supporting similar services.

Grantees who elect to receive the 40% initial payment described in the Grant Terms section must place all sums not immediately spent in a segregated, interest bearing account that is fully insured for the maximum amount of money that will be placed in the account.

#### **AUDITING AND FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

All grantees are required to comply with G.S. 143-6.1 and G.S. 143-6.2. Detailed information about this requirement can be found on the NC State Auditor's Web site ([www.ncauditor.net](http://www.ncauditor.net)).

## HOW TO APPLY

### [FIT COMMUNITY DESIGNATION: \(www.FitTogetherNC.org/FitCommunity.aspx\)](http://www.FitTogetherNC.org/FitCommunity.aspx)

1. Carefully review the **Request for Proposals (RFP)** and application materials available on the Fit Together Web site.
2. Read and understand the information about the **5P strategy areas** described in the RFP.
3. Be familiar with the **Timeline** for deadlines and award announcements (in RFP).
4. Review the **Frequently Asked Questions** and answers.
5. Review the list of **Resources for the Fit Community designation** when filling out the **Fit Community Self-Assessment**.
6. Obtain an endorsement from your Mayor or County Commission Chair (depending on the target community) using the **Fit Community endorsement form for designation**.
7. Review the **Fit Community designation application checklist**.
8. Participate in one of the three **applicant conference calls**. (*Note: This is not required. To receive dial-in information, follow registration instructions provided in RFP.*)
9. **Email and mail (postmark) completed designation application to ALbD** (see Contact information at the end of RFP) **by 5:00 pm on February 10, 2006**.

### [FIT COMMUNITY GRANT FUNDING: \(www.HWTFC.org/htmfiles/availfunds.html\)](http://www.HWTFC.org/htmfiles/availfunds.html)

1. Carefully review the **Application for Fit Community grant funding** available on the HWTF Web site.
2. Form (or strengthen an existing) **interdisciplinary partnership**.
3. Refer to the list of **Resources for the grant application**, and draft your proposal and budget.
4. Obtain an endorsement from your Mayor or County Commission Chair (depending on the target community) using the **Fit Community endorsement form for grant funding**.
5. Review the Fit Community grant application checklist (in grant application).
6. Email and mail (postmark) completed grant application to ALbD (see Contact information at the end of RFP) by 5:00 pm on February 10, 2006.

## TIMELINE

Wednesday, November 10, 2005	Request for Proposals (RFP) released
Monday, December 12 (1:00 pm)	Registration deadline for 1 <sup>st</sup> conference call
Tuesday, December 13 (1:00-2:30 pm)	1 <sup>st</sup> conference call with prospective applicants
Wednesday, January 11 (10:00 am)	Registration deadline for 2 <sup>nd</sup> conference call
Thursday, January 12 (10:00-11:30 am)	2 <sup>nd</sup> conference call with prospective applicants
Tuesday, January 24 (10:00 am)	Registration deadline for 3 <sup>rd</sup> conference call
Wednesday, January 25 (10:00-11:30 am)	3 <sup>rd</sup> conference call with prospective applicants
Friday, February 10, 2006 (5:00 pm)	Applications due
February 11 – March 31, 2006	Application review and selection
Early May, 2006	Fit Community designations and grants announced
July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007	Year One funding/Technical assistance provided
Fall 2006	Fit Community 2 <sup>nd</sup> round RFP released
July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008	Year Two funding/Technical assistance provided

### **APPLICANT REGISTRATION FOR CONFERENCE CALL**

Three conference calls are scheduled for prospective applicants. (*Note: Participation in a conference call is not required to apply for designation or grant funding. However, it is advisable to participate in at least one session in order to hear questions and concerns raised by other applicants.*)

1. Tuesday, December 13, 2005      1:00-2:30 pm
2. Thursday, January 12, 2006      10:00-11:30 am
3. Wednesday, January 25, 2006      10:00-11:30 am

Before registering for a call, please review the following guidelines:

- The **purpose** of the conference call is to provide applicants with information about the Fit Community designation and grant program, the Request for Proposals, and the application process. The call will include brief overviews from representatives of HWTF and ALbD staff, followed by a question and answer session.
- To **prepare for the call**, applicants are required to do the following:
  1. Read the entire RFP
  2. Review all application materials
  3. Read the entire list of FAQs; and
  4. Identify questions or issues, and send them to ALbD via email when you register for the conference call.

All designation-related documents can be found on the Fit Together Web site ([www.FitTogetherNC.org](http://www.FitTogetherNC.org)), and all grant-related documents can be found on the HWTF Web site ([www.hwtfc.org](http://www.hwtfc.org)).

In order to accommodate as many applicants as possible, each prospective applicant is limited to one phone line per conference call. It is highly recommended that you and your partners dial into the call from a speakerphone.

To receive the dial-in number and conference ID, you must **register 24 hours in advance**:

1. Please email [fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org](mailto:fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org)
2. In the subject line, write the following: Register CC – *your preferred date*
3. In the message, provide the following information:
  - Name and title
  - Organization
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - Email address
  - How you first learned about Fit Community
  - Any questions (*Note: additional questions can be asked during the call*)

If neither you nor any of your partners can participate in one of the live conference calls, you may listen to a recording of the first call anytime between December 14, 2005 and February 10, 2006. To hear this recording, please register following the instructions above. In the subject line, write: Register CC – Recording. If you have any **questions about the conference calls**, please email before calling: [fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org](mailto:fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org); 919-843-3298.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **FIT COMMUNITY DESIGNATION:**

Submit a complete designation application package via **email by 5:00 pm on February 10, 2006** to [fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org](mailto:fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org). **Eight copies** of the designation application package must also be mailed (**postmarked by February 10, 2006**) and addressed to:

Cara Crisler  
Active Living by Design  
400 Market Street, Suite 205  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

### **FIT COMMUNITY GRANT FUNDING:**

Submit a complete application package (designation application materials and grant application materials) via **email by 5:00 pm** on February 10, 2006 to: [fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org](mailto:fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org). **Eight copies** of the entire application package must also be mailed (**postmarked by February 10, 2006**) and addressed to ALbD (see above address).

### **Formatting**

**Contrary to prior formatting instructions, applicants need *not* include a name at the top, right corner of each form page of the application.** The title of all *email attachments* should begin with the community's name (e.g., Wrightonville Designation App.doc)

**For all inquiries and assistance**, contact Active Living by Design (please email before calling): at [fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org](mailto:fcinfo@activelivingbydesign.org) or (919) 843-3298; Web site: [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org).