

Using Behavioral Science to Advance Community Health and Well-Being



Invitation to Apply

ideas42 is currently soliciting applications from communities who are tackling challenging problems in community health and well-being, and who are interested in learning how the field of behavioral science, which provides deeper insights into how people make decisions and take actions, can be used to develop better solutions to these problems. Interested communities will designate an organization or consortium of organizations to submit the application on their behalf.

Health and well-being are greatly influenced by where we live, how and where we work, the safety of our surroundings, our access to affordable health care, the quality of our environment, and the strengths of our families and communities—factors that lie both inside and outside the traditional health care system. Many communities struggle to encourage the individual actions needed to address these factors, even when residents are motivated and when there are existing health initiatives in place. However, new tools from the behavioral sciences can be very effective at helping people make better decisions and follow through on good intentions. By learning how to apply behavioral insights, communities can improve the effectiveness of initiatives that encourage healthy behaviors, tackle social and economic challenges, and work to transform access to care. We encourage any community working on these or related issues to apply.

Selected applicants will be invited to attend an intensive workshop on applying behavioral science to advance community health and well-being. In addition, a small number of applicants who attend the workshop will be selected to partner with **ideas42** to design and test behavioral interventions in their communities.

The Request for Problems (RFP) application process is short and easy. In total, it requires less than 1000 words and a couple of hours to complete; the information in this RFP document will help applicants develop the required behavioral problem statement. **Applications are due by June 17, 2016 at 5 pm EDT. ideas42 will host a webinar about this RFP on May 4, 2016 at 2 pm EDT to provide more information and answer questions.** Visit the RFP website at ideas42.org/communityhealth

ideas42 is a non-profit behavioral design firm that uses behavioral science to help solve difficult social problems and to have impact at scale. We grew out of research programs in psychology and economics at top academic institutions. Our work draws on decades of experimental scientific research in decision-making and the most rigorous methods in program and policy evaluation. We work in the US and internationally on important challenges in domains such as consumer finance, economic mobility, education, criminal justice, and health, among others. We work with foundations, government bodies, private companies, and non-profits to address some of the world's toughest social problems.

Who Should Apply

- We encourage communities interested in improving health and well-being to apply. We define communities as neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, tribes and tribal communities, and regions (e.g., contiguous towns, cities, or counties).
- Communities must designate a “lead applicant” that is an organization or consortium of organizations. The lead applicant should submit the application on behalf of the community.
- As ultimately we seek partners to design and test behavioral interventions in the field, we encourage communities to select lead applicants that can implement this type of work. We encourage lead applicants that are smaller organizations, or may not have the capacity to run such efforts, to apply as a consortium of organizations.
- Special consideration will be given to communities with limited resources and to communities working with populations most affected by poor health; funding may be available to help these applicants enhance data collection capabilities in the case of future collaboration with ideas42.
- Communities may submit multiple applications containing different behavioral problem statements with different lead applicants.

How to Apply

- Go to ideas42.org/communityhealth to submit the brief online application by June 17, 2016 at 5 pm EDT. The application in total requires less than 1000 words.
- ideas42 will hold a webinar to provide more information about behavioral science and the application process on May 4, 2016 at 2 pm EDT. This webinar will be recorded and made available at ideas42.org/communityhealth.
- ideas42 may conduct follow-up interviews or request written answers to follow-up questions with applicants after the applications are due and prior to the final selection notification.
- Questions about the RFP process should be sent to communityhealth@ideas42.org.

Why Behavioral Science?

Communities working to improve community health and well-being must tackle both traditional health care issues—like access and quality—as well as broader concerns, from the daily nutritional and activity choices of individuals and families, to the social, economic, and environmental factors that affect health.

Designing effective policies and programs that improve community health and well-being requires a deep understanding of human behavior. Policies and programs are typically created with the best intentions, but often assume that beneficiaries consider all of the available options, weigh tradeoffs properly, and follow through on their decisions. Behavioral science shows us that humans are more complex than this. People procrastinate. We follow the crowd. We get overwhelmed by choices and by small hassles. We stick with the status quo or use simple rules of thumb instead of carefully evaluating our alternatives. We make decisions based on the information we have received most recently, instead of looking at the full picture.

Behavioral science can help us understand, predict, and design for these and other human tendencies. Growing evidence suggests that using insights from behavioral science can improve the design and effectiveness of policies, programs, and products. Behavioral levers can be powerful and cost-effective tools, especially for resource-constrained communities and organizations seeking to improve community health and well-being.

For more information and examples of the application of behavioral science, visit ideas42.org/communityhealth.

Detailed Information about this Opportunity

1 RFP Application due June 17, 2016 at 5 pm EDT

This is a call for communities to help us identify pressing problems related to community health and well-being that would benefit from the application of behavioral science. Communities must designate an organization or consortium of organizations as the “lead applicant” that will submit the application on their behalf. Applicants should be interested in developing a deeper understanding of applied behavioral science and potentially piloting a behavioral science intervention within an existing community health program, service, policy, practice, or system. ideas42 will host a webinar on May 4, 2016 with more information about behavioral science, developing behavioral problem statements, and the RFP application process.

Interested communities should have their lead applicant submit the short (less than 1000 words) online application available at ideas42.org/communityhealth. A preview of the application, as well as information on developing a behavioral problem statement, can be found later in this document. ideas42 may reach out to applicants for additional information after the applications are due and prior to the final selection notification. Selected applicants will be invited to participate in the ideas42 workshop, where the behavioral problem statements collected through the RFP process will help shape our discussion.

2 Workshop: September 28-29, 2016 in Chicago

This two-day workshop in Chicago will provide finalists with a highly interactive, immersive experience in the ideas42 framework for diagnosing behavioral problems and designing interventions. The workshop will include presentations and break-out group activities, as well as opportunities to engage with ideas42 staff, a leading academic expert, and other participants. Together we will delve into the problem statements submitted by attendees, generate new ideas, and inspire innovation in community health and well-being. At the conclusion of the workshop, communities who are interested in a potential partnership with ideas42 will have the opportunity to be selected for future collaboration.

Thanks to the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a significant portion of travel and accommodation costs will be covered for participants.

3 Partnerships – Fall 2016

Shortly after the workshop, ideas42 will select from interested attendees a small number of partner communities with which we will collaborate in future work to design and test behavioral science interventions that can potentially impact community health and well-being outcomes. Preliminary work is scheduled to start as early as fall 2016.

Timeline

2016

- ▶ **April 27**
RFP Released
- ▶ **May 4**
Webinar
- ▶ **June 17, 5 pm EDT**
Applications Due
- ▶ **July 29**
Workshop Attendee
Selections
Announced
- ▶ **September 28-29**
Workshop in Chicago
- ▶ **Fall 2016**
Partner Selection
for Collaboration



Application Preview (Submit Online)

Applications should be submitted via the online form at ideas42.org/communityhealth. To help you prepare, here are key application questions:

1. Introduce us to your community. What information is important to understanding the people who live there? Include population size and relevant socioeconomic details. *(100 words or less)*
2. Provide information on the designated lead applicant organization, including mission, target population, and leadership and staff buy-in, as well as 1-2 contacts.
3. Provide information on any additional applicant organization(s) (if you are applying as a consortium), including mission, target population, and leadership and staff buy-in, as well as 1 contact.
4. Why are you interested in the opportunity to design behavioral interventions? *(100 words or less)*
5. Please describe a behavior change related to community health and well-being that you would like to achieve within your community. State your problem in the form “People are doing X; we’d like them to be doing Y.” See *Developing a Behavioral Problem Statement* in the RFP for guidance. *(30 words or less)*
6. Explain more fully the details and background of your problem statement. Provide any relevant background information, e.g. where and/or when is this problem occurring? What are the current consequences and impact of this problem? What program(s), if any, in your community currently tackle this problem? How well do they work, and what challenges do they encounter? *(200 words or less)*
7. Describe how solving this problem will improve community health and well-being. *(150 words or less)*
8. Are there other non-behavioral factors contributing to the problem? If so, please describe. Non-behavioral factors include things like economic and environmental issues, infrastructure and housing challenges, and access to services. Please elaborate if there are other non-behavioral factors impacting the outcome of the problem being addressed. *(200 words or less)*
9. What types of outcomes do you currently measure and how? It’s okay if your capability to measure outcomes is limited by resource constraints; we simply want to understand the capacity of our applicants. If your community collaborates with ideas42 in the future, funding may be available to help you. *(100 words or less)*

What is Community Health and Well-Being?

The conversation about improving health and wellness in our country has shifted from a focus on what happens in the doctor’s office, to the broader factors that affect our daily lives. We recognize now that addressing health means more than just making sure sick people get care—it also means building a culture that gives every person an equal opportunity to live the healthiest life they can, whatever their ethnic, geographic, racial, socioeconomic, or physical circumstance happens to be. The communities that we live in are key to achieving well-being and a high quality of life.

Efforts like the County Health Rankings (countyhealthrankings.org) seek to elevate this approach by measuring a diverse set of indicators, from access to clinical care and health behaviors, to social and economic factors that contribute to the health of communities, individuals, and families.

This RFP is intended to engage many types of communities and organizations, problems, and missions in support of community health. Those working in any of the following areas are encouraged to apply:

- Increasing access to and quality of health care and social services
- Encouraging healthy eating and active lifestyles
- Making communities more resilient
- Targeting housing and transportation challenges
- Increasing access to quality education and care for children
- Improving economic outcomes

This is not an exhaustive list; please contact us at communityhealth@ideas42.org if you have specific questions about eligibility.

Defining a Behavioral Problem Statement

As part of the application process, you'll be asked to submit a brief behavioral problem statement. Communities focused on health and well-being likely tackle multiple problems through a variety of programs and approaches. In addition, if you are applying as a consortium, each organization may have different problems they are trying to solve. For this application, we would like you to focus on one key challenge — specifically, a challenge related to changing the behavior of individuals to achieve better community health and well-being outcomes.

The goal of our behavioral design projects is to improve outcomes by addressing problems where there is a discrepancy between the targeted population's desired and actual behavior. For example, we may want to help people follow through on intentions to be more active, eat better, vote more often, or save more money for health expenses. Behavioral interventions can take a variety of forms, including changes to a process, program, service, technology, or policy. In this RFP, problem statements will likely focus on the behavior of community members. However, the intervention itself may be designed to target administrators, health care providers, or other stakeholders or systems. The following pages contain three key guidelines, as well as an optional idea generation worksheet, to help you define a problem for this application.

1. **Focus on a specific behavior rather than a general issue.** Focusing on a specific behavior helps ensure interventions are tailored to the right context. The more general the issue, the harder it is to design a solution that works for many users. We find that the format “people are doing x; we want them to do y” (where x and y represent behaviors) can be a helpful way to ensure that you are focusing on specific issues.



“Many people in our community aren't healthy; we want them to be healthier.”



Too general; there are many factors that contribute to health, and it will be hard to create solutions to address such a broad goal.



“Children infrequently engage in active outdoor play; we want them to play actively outside more.”



Better; now we are focused on **specific behavior** that we can investigate and design solutions for.



2. State the problem without embedded assumptions so that you're not presupposing the solution.

Making assumptions about the solution can lead to missed opportunities. Start simple. You can share further details on likely solutions and existing program approaches in your application.

✗	<i>"People don't eat healthy meals because they can't afford them; we need to increase the supply of affordable, healthy foods."</i>	➔	Assumes that affordability is the main barrier to eating healthy foods; this limits the solutions we can explore to solve this problem.
✗	<i>"Only a small fraction of eligible people enroll in our free healthy eating classes; we want to increase the number of attendees."</i>	➔	Assumes that increasing enrollment in this program is the solution to this problem; while program uptake is important (and a detail we would like you to share in your application), for this exercise we want you to focus on the simplest version of the problem.
✓	<i>"People don't eat healthy meals; we want them to prepare and eat healthier foods."</i>	➔	Without assumptions , we can look for other behavioral barriers that may make it difficult to prepare and eat healthy foods.

3. Define at the right level – not too broadly or narrowly. Think of behavioral challenges that have broader applications beyond your specific program, but are also specific to a particular behavior change you want to facilitate.

✗	<i>"Adults in our community don't exercise enough; we want them to exercise more."</i>	➔	This problem is broadly relevant but includes too many potential behavior changes ; this makes it challenging to direct our problem-solving.
✗	<i>"The treadmills at the local Y are poorly maintained; we want them to be repaired more often."</i>	➔	This problem statement is too narrow, focused on an important but only locally relevant issue , which might make scaling it to other communities difficult.
✓	<i>"Adults in our community use cars to make short trips that could be done by walking or biking; we want them to choose more active transportation methods for short trips."</i>	➔	This is the right level; we can effectively focus our problem-solving, yet the results will be applicable to other communities.

These guidelines and examples are intended to help you develop a behavioral problem statement for your application. We recognize that this can be a challenging process. For additional guidance, try the optional worksheet on the next page, which is designed to help you generate additional ideas. We will also discuss behavioral problem statements during our webinar on May 4.

Need some more guidance?

Try out this worksheet, which is designed to help applicants generate additional behavioral problem statements and look at the problem from multiple perspectives. And be sure to check out our webinar on May 4, 2016.

There are often multiple ways to identify critical issues. Here, we'll brainstorm potential challenges. To do so, we'll take you through questions designed to help you consider behavioral issues that might be at play. For each, we'll provide a related example to get you thinking.

When considering health and well-being in your community, are there actions you want individuals or families to **do more**? If so, write them below. Remember to use the "people are doing x; we want them to do y" format.

Example: *Many families do not eat dinner together; we want families to eat dinner together more often.*

When considering health and well-being in your community, are there actions you want individuals or families to **stop doing**? If so, write them below. Remember to use the "people are doing x; we want them to do y" format.

Example: *30% of individuals in our community smoke; we want them to quit smoking.*

When considering health and well-being in your community, are there actions individuals or families **are doing that you want to replace with different actions**? If so, write them below. Remember to use the "people are doing x; we want them to do y" format.

Example: *Many people eat unhealthy meals; we want them to eat healthy meals instead.*

Selection Criteria

We encourage a broad range of communities and associated organizations to consider this RFP. In considering which applicants to select for the workshop, ideas42 will use the following criteria:

- 1. Presence of behavioral problems.** The problems presented by applicants must have likely behavioral factors or bottlenecks associated with them. Structural problems that stem from a lack of capacity or resources are usually best suited for organizations other than ideas42, though they may sometimes have a related behavioral component.
- 2. Excitement about applying behavioral science and willingness to innovate.** Applicants should demonstrate enthusiasm for new approaches that incorporate behavioral science into their work. ideas42 ultimately looks to work with partners who are willing to innovate to achieve better outcomes. Innovation is inherently risky; while many low-cost behavioral interventions succeed, these outcomes are not guaranteed, especially in early iterations. However, the rewards of success can be significant.
- 3. Leadership and staff buy-in and support.** Applicants should also demonstrate strong support from both the organization's executives and a mid-level leader. The creation of a new process, program, or product, especially one that may involve some element of organizational change, requires clear organizational commitment. Managers should be enthusiastic about behavioral science and the potential for innovation, responsive to requests for data and information, and able to bridge relationships throughout the organization and community.
- 4. Potential for social impact.** Our ultimate goal is to create interventions that scale beyond our partners to have significant impact on the lives of millions. Communities facing limited resources and working with populations most affected by poor health will be given special consideration in this RFP.
- 5. Creating a diverse portfolio of attendees.** In order to create a dynamic and engaging workshop, we will seek to diversify our pool of selected applicants across types of organizations, geographic locations, populations, submitted problem statements, and existing program work.

For More Information

Visit the RFP website: ideas42.org/communityhealth

Email questions to: communityhealth@ideas42.org

Join us for our webinar on May 4 at 2 pm EDT.

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