Identifying Evidence-Based Solutions for Vulnerable Older Adults
Grant Competition

Pre-Application Deadline: April 7, 2017, 11:59pm ET
Application Deadline: May 19, 2017, 11:59pm ET

AARP Foundation Overview

AARP Foundation works to ensure that low-income and vulnerable older adults have nutritious food, safe, secure and affordable housing, a steady income, and strong and sustaining social bonds. To address those needs, the grant competition is seeking evidence-based solutions that are guided by a deep level of engagement with AARP Foundation and that can be nurtured, evaluated and brought to scale.

Through this grant competition we hope to achieve multiple goals:

- Create a portfolio of evidence-based interventions that serve vulnerable older adults, align with our four impact areas (food security, income, housing, isolation), and include projects with different levels of evidence with the goal of scaling, at the appropriate time, to serve more low-income older adults; and
- Identify solutions that seek to achieve a double bottom line (sustainable programs that achieve a positive financial and social return).

Ultimately, we expect a percentage of the selected grantees will increase their level of evidence in preparation to scale their programs nationally. AARP Foundation will be actively involved during the grant period to understand how each grant-funded program works and how we can provide the necessary technical assistance to reach the different levels of evidence and create a model to achieve sustainability and expansion.

Funding Eligibility

Eligible organizations include institutions of higher education, public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as well as other types of nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Grants for individuals;
- Capital campaigns;
- Debt retirement or operating deficits;
- Endowments or reserve funds;
- Political organization or campaigns;

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• Lobbying legislators or influencing elections;
• Sponsorship of fundraising events;
• Marketing endeavors and personal research
• Indirect expenses unrelated to the project being funded; and
• Local affiliates or chapters of national organizations for solely implementing a national program at the local level.

Advancing Effective Solutions

As stated in our mission, AARP Foundation is focused on creating and advancing effective solutions around our four impact areas (food security, income, housing, and isolation), which we support with vigorous legal advocacy. Below are the objectives for each of the four impact areas for which we are seeking solutions. We know that some interventions may directly or indirectly affect more than one area (e.g., increased income security will often result in increased food security) and encourage proposals that have cross-objective impact, including proposals relating to legal advocacy that advances these objectives. However, be sure that your proposed solution has a primary focus related to at least one of the impact areas that follow.

• Income Security Objectives
  o Increase low-income older adult financial stability and inclusion in the financial mainstream through innovative products and services.
  o Connect employers with a pipeline of trained, prescreened and qualified older adult workers.
  o Empower low-income older adults to protect their income by learning how to recognize, refuse and report financial fraud, scams and abuse.

  Ultimate outcome: More working-age older adults are employed and able to manage and protect their financial assets.

• Food Security Objectives
  o Reduce negative health outcomes of vulnerable 50+ due to food insecurity.
  o Improve food security of low-income 50+ by increasing food access, availability, affordability and/or diet appropriateness.

  Ultimate outcome: A food-secure nation where all older adults have access to healthy, safe and affordable foods.

• Housing Security Objectives
  o Increase supply of affordable and adequate housing by scaling tested models that provide services and/or products in the home and have or may have a non-charity based revenue stream (Medicaid, Medicare, insurance companies, etc.). Examples of these models include the following:
    ▪ Upgrades to the physical structure of the home: grab bars, ramps, etc.
    ▪ Technology based products: telehealth, monitoring devices, medication monitoring/reminders.
- Healthcare based services: home care that can range from traditional services (nurses, doctors, etc.) to innovative new programs that combine medical, technology, and/or other professionals.
  - Assisting vulnerable older adults in determining their housing options through a scalable model that may or may not be solely dependent on a charity based revenue stream.
  - Prevent foreclosures (foreclosure from delinquent payments resulting in default on one’s property taxes, reverse mortgage, and/or traditional mortgage) by utilizing technology based-solutions.

  Ultimate outcome: Provide opportunities for older adults to age-in-place and age-in-community.

- Social Connectedness Objectives
  - Create and advance effective products, services, and resources that reduce social isolation in older adults leading to improved health outcomes. In particular, solutions focused on addressing one or more contributing factors to isolation and loneliness among older adults, such as:
    - limited mobility/transportation access;
    - inadequate caregiving resources and supports;
    - falls; or
    - hearing loss.

  Ultimate outcome: Older adults are healthier and more fully connected to their community.

Innovation Pipeline

To create and advance effective solutions, AARP Foundation uses an innovation pipeline. Concepts and programs enter the pipeline based upon level of project maturity and evidence. Through this pipeline, projects are piloted, tested and reiterated based on results of the different testing stages. We do not expect every project will go through each phase of the pipeline. As a result, we invest smaller amounts of resources in many projects with less evidence and increase the level of investment as the amount of evidence of impact increases. Below is a graphic that represents this approach. The greater the risk (i.e., the less evidence of impact a project has), the less resources allocated to each individual project. As the risk decreases, the resources increase.

Our goal is to assist you through the process as you seek to achieve each milestone with your grant-funded project. Funding beyond the initial grant period is based on availability of funds and progress toward milestones.
Evidence Level

Existing and new programs have varying degrees of evidence demonstrating effectiveness. Our goal with this RFA is to support grantees’ work in progressing along the evidence continuum in ways that ultimately demonstrate increasing effectiveness. The following definitions are helpful in determining the current level of evidence supporting your proposed project:

- **Theory of Change/Pre-Evidence:** The project being proposed is supported by a theoretical framework (e.g., theory of change) that describes the knowledge base, assumptions, strategies and expected results (see guidance on creating a theory of change, here, for more information).

- **Self-reported Evidence:** Systematically collected data tracks who is served, and the outputs and outcomes that are achieved. Internal evaluations may have been conducted to assess program delivery and make improvements. Outputs and outcomes have been analyzed internally to measure program effectiveness.

- **Independent Evaluation:** The program or proposed model has been evaluated independently and outcomes have been used to measure program effectiveness. An impact evaluation may have been conducted within one of the following scenarios:
  1. changes were observed that may be attributed to the program, but cannot be generalized beyond the study group;
  2. the evaluation controlled for factors other than the program that could account for the observed change with a large range of participants; or
  3. multiple well-designed impact evaluations of the same model support the same or similar conclusions.
AARP Foundation will consider funding projects at each level of evidence described, with preference given to those that are based on self-reported evidence or independent evaluations of the same model that support the same or similar conclusions. However, regardless of which level of evidence supports your proposal, you must submit a theory of change or logic model to be considered for funding. Guidance for creating a theory of change and logic model is provided on our webpage, along with optional templates. If you are submitting a logic model, please indicate whether it is theoretical or operational (i.e., reflects how you expect the program to be implemented or reflects how the program is currently implemented). If your program has been evaluated, you must also submit a summary of the evaluation results/findings and how the evaluation was conducted.

Double Bottom Line: Social and Financial Return

AARP Foundation views grantmaking as investments that seek a social return, particularly as it relates to improved health outcomes. The social return can be financial savings to the program beneficiary, the government, and/or the community at large as a result of the positive health outcome. Depending on your level of evidence, you may not have calculated your social return. Because this grant program is funding programs with different levels of evidence, we will support costs to assist in determining the program’s social return when one has yet to be calculated.

In addition, we seek interventions that have a compelling financial model, such as:

- Self-sustaining financial model not reliant on donations or grants (social entrepreneurship);
  or
- Break-even financial model reliant on existing and identified funders (social service).

AARP Foundation can play multiple roles to assist programs in serving more people. Those ways may include investing in the solution to increase its organizational capacity; utilizing the trusted AARP Foundation brand to enter new markets; and playing an intermediary role in which AARP Foundation can connect the solution with customers and funders.

Scaling and Program Life Cycle

Broadly defined, scaling simply means helping more people in need (specifically in the case of AARP Foundation, low-income older adults). To provide greater context to our definition as it relates to AARP Foundation and, in particular, this grant competition, there are two conditions for consideration:

1. Identifying and replicating the best evidence-based, sustainable models
2. Increasing the number of people served while decreasing the unit price of marginal cost

The two conditions are intrinsically linked. Both need to occur in order for us to consider scaling a program. Therefore, the time necessary for each program to meet both conditions is considered on an individual basis with specific milestones tailored to each program. For more information about scaling frameworks that we find compelling and useful, please read Transformative Scale: The Future of Growing What Works by Jeffrey Bradach & Abe Grindle.

AARP Foundation Engagement
AARP Foundation is both a grantmaker and a direct service provider. As such, we work to identify new programs that we can implement directly or through close collaboration with other organizations, including our grantees. This deep level of engagement seeks to:

- Understand your program outcomes and methodology to measure the outcome.
- Provide resources to help refine your business and program model.
- Help determine your readiness for the appropriate evaluation.
- Help to scale the program to serve more low income older adults.

If a program has demonstrated evidence of impact, we want to make sure it reaches the greatest number of intended beneficiaries across the nation. We will help determine the most effective and efficient structure for expansion to achieve that goal.

**Grant Award Information**

The total amount and length of the grant award will coincide with the level of evidence and maturity of the program. The cost to move from one milestone to the next is often higher – particularly as more people are being served and the necessary evaluation becomes more complicated. Your proposed budget should align with the level of evidence of proposed project. In general, the following should be considered guidelines, but not strict funding bands:

- **Theory of Change/ Pre-Evidence**: $50,000-$75,000; 9-18 months
- **Self-reported Evidence**: $100,000-$200,000/year; 18-24 months
- **Independent Evaluation**: $200,000-$300,000/year; 24-36 months

**Grant Application Process**

All applications must be completed online. The application itself will consist of two parts:

- **Mandatory pre-application**: deadline April 7, 2017
- **Invited full application**: deadline May 19, 2017

Eligible organizations are invited to submit the pre-application, which, besides general organizational information, contains a list of basic information about your current program and how it aligns with AARP Foundation’s mission and impact area objectives. The pre-application submissions undergo a thorough review process, from which a select number of organizations will be invited in April to complete a full application. During our review, you may receive clarification questions and follow up (which may include video conference or on-site visit). Our goal is to make a final decision by mid-June.

**Pre-application (See Appendix A)**

The pre-application provides an overview of the current program you have in place or a new program based upon a theory of change. Our goal is to receive a basic understanding of the level of evidence and/or affiliated research of your program. The pre-application questions seek concise and specific answers. Please note that you must attach a theory of change OR logic model to be considered for funding. For guidance on creating a theory of change, click here; for guidance on creating a logic model, click here, and consider using our optional logic model template (here).
If your program has been evaluated by either an internal or external evaluator, you must also submit a summary of evaluation results/findings. At this stage we are not requesting your grant amount request or a budget.

**Full application (See Appendix B)**

Those invited for the full application will have an opportunity to provide additional details about their program and, in particular, their financial model and current operations, and social benefit calculation (if possible). The social benefit calculation should be based on actual data or research and, ideally, is quantified. For example, a program to increase food security for an individual may also increase the individual’s health outcomes, which in turn would reduce health care costs; we would seek that actual dollar amount of the reduction in health care costs. In this section you will also have the opportunity to make your formal request for the grant amount and length of grant award. The clarification period, which shortly follows the full application deadline on May 19th, will focus on your responses.

**Review Criteria**

Through this grant competition, AARP Foundation is looking to provide funding to projects that have a clear plan and demonstrable capacity for increasing their level of evidence and are aligned with AARP Foundation’s mission to serve low income older adults. Applications most likely to be funded are those with a researched-backed theory of change, a concise logic model, strong data collection systems, specific evaluation plans, a compelling financial model, and an innovative program model that lends itself to eventual scaling to serve many low-income older adults around the country.

The questions in the pre-application and full application are designed to demonstrate where your program resides in its lifecycle and its associated level of evidence. The questions seek concise and specific information. A new program should be informed by research and have a strong theory of change, but it might not have outcome-related data. However, a mature program should have outcome-related data, a detailed logic model and should be able to answer the application questions with specific detail and outcomes backed by data.

**Organizations requesting general operating support for non-evidence based programs with no plans or capacity to increase their level of evidence will not be considered for funding.**

**Timeline**

March 14: Technical assistance call/webinar, 3:00 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

April 7: Pre-application deadline by 11:59 p.m. ET

April 28: Notification to all applicants regarding invited status

May 19: Invited full application deadline by 11:59 p.m. ET

May 20 – May 31: Clarification period (as needed)

June 23: Organization informed about funding
July 1: Program start date

Contact

The primary contact for this grant competition is Matt D’Amico, Grant Program Officer (evidence@aarp.org). For any questions related to this grant competition, Matt will assist you and provide a timely response.

Appendix A: Pre-Application Questions

The pre-application allows for you to provide details on the proposed project for which you are seeking funding from AARP Foundation. Please be specific and concise, and include the required attachments.

Funding Eligibility

Eligible organizations include institutions of higher education, public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as well as other types of nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.

Are you requesting funding for any of the following (of which AARP Foundation does not support)?

- Grants for individuals;
- Capital campaigns;
- Debt retirement or operating deficits;
- Endowments or reserve funds;
- Political organization or campaigns;
- Lobbying legislators or influencing elections;
- Sponsorship of fundraising events;
- Marketing endeavors and personal research;
- Indirect expenses unrelated to the project being funded; or
- Local affiliates or chapters of national organizations to implement a national program at the local level.

- Yes (If “Yes,” unfortunately your organization does not meet the criteria to apply to this funding opportunity from AARP Foundation).
- No

Contact

- Salutation
- First Name
- Last Name
- Job Title
- Phone
- Email

Organization Details
Company
Address
Website
EIN
How did your organization learn about this grant competition? (Select from list)
  o AARP Foundation directly
  o AARP State Office
  o Twitter
  o Chronicle of Philanthropy
  o Professional Association
  o Other: please list (255 character limit)

Project Details

  Project Title
  Primary Impact Area (Select from list)
    o Food security
    o Social connectedness
    o Income security
    o Housing security

  Secondary Impact Area (Select from list)
    o Food security
    o Social connectedness
    o Income security
    o Housing security
    o n/a

  Project Summary (500 character limit). Give a short summary of the project you would
  undertake with funding from AARP Foundation. What, if anything, will you do differently,
  should you receive funding from AARP Foundation?
  Program Description (2500 character limit). Briefly walk us through your
  program/intervention from the beneficiary’s perspective, step by step.
  Statement of Impact (500 character limit). Provide a short statement about the expected
  long term outcomes of this project.
  Current Program Costs. What are the current costs to run your program, absent support
  from AARP Foundation?
  Number of People Served
  % of People Served that are low-income older adults

Evidence Level

  Please identify the level of evidence of your program:
    1. Theory of Change/Pre-Evidence
    2. Self-Reported Evidence
    3. Independent Evaluation
o Attach a relevant theory of change or logic model on the Attachments tab. If you have not collected data on your program or conducted any evaluations yet, ensure you include the theory of change for what you intend to propose for funding. If the program model is in place and you have already collected output data and defined the outcomes, include the logic model (you can use the template provided or use your own template).

The theory of change should include the following 4 components:

1. The knowledge base behind the approach you will be taking. Answer the question, “what do we know?” This is the theory, research, your organizational experience and the best practices of others that support the strategy you are proposing to reduce x and/or increase y among the vulnerable 50+ population.
2. The beliefs and assumptions for the project, based on current knowledge.
3. What are you going to do? This is the strategy or approach you are proposing based on current knowledge and assumptions.
4. What do you expect to get? These are the results (outcomes) you expect based on all of the above.

• Please support why you selected the particular level of evidence (1000 character limit).
• Please describe how you will use grant funding from AARP Foundation as it relates to increasing evidence and evaluation (1000 character limit).
• Has your proposed project been evaluated?
  o Yes
  o No
• If “Yes,” what type of evaluation was conducted? When was it conducted? Who conducted the evaluation? Please attach a summary of the evaluation findings/results (1000 character limit).
• Describe how the proposed project will collect, manage, store, and analyze program output and outcome data (1000 character limit).

Required Attachments

• Theory of Change (guidance provided) OR Logic Model (guidance and optional template provided) Depending on the current level of evidence of your program.
• Summary of Evaluation Findings/Results (if applicable)

Appendix B: Full Application Questions (For Invited Applicants Only)

Additional Project Description

• What is your requested grant amount?
Please provide a budget narrative to explain budget line items and how the grant will help you achieve a greater level of evidence and the opportunity to scale (5000 character limit).

What is the proposed start date of the grant-funded project?

What is the proposed end date of the grant-funded project?

List your key project deliverables (5000 character limit).

What is your timeline for project completion and the dates related to key project milestones? If the project will be expanded, what are the key milestones for expansion? (1000 character limit)

Is the project sustainable beyond the funding period? If yes, explain how the project will be sustained/funded (1000 character limit).

Describe your evaluation plan for the project and your experience with evaluation work (1000 character limit).

Scaling Information

What is the increase in the number of people your project will serve? What are the specific activities that will allow you to reach that goal? Please list past experiences in expanding projects to more people while maintaining project fidelity (2500 character limit).

How would you (or another organization) replicate your project with fidelity as you enter a new market? (2500 character limit)

What would your method of distribution be for your program to enter new markets? (2500 character limit)

What is the specific demographic your solution is seeking to serve? Please be specific in terms of age ranges, income levels, race and ethnicity and any other factors you wish to highlight. If there are multiple approaches for different demographics, please include here (2500 character limit).

Please describe the addressable market, both where the solution is currently available and where it could be expanded in the future (if applicable). Please include the size of customer base (business-to-business and/or business-to-customer), potential funding, and geography (2500 character limit).

How do you currently reach your customers? How do you plan on reaching them in the future in order to achieve proposed market penetration (in current markets and in new markets)? (2500 character limit)

Does your solution have a social benefit calculation? If so, what is the social benefit (in dollars)? Describe the assumptions used in this calculation (1000 character limit).

Organizational Capacity

What is your experience in providing your solution or comparable solutions? (1000 character limit)

Please list employees leading the project and how their experiences and skills are relevant to the project and its success (2500 character limit).

What other organizations in the area you serve provide a solution that seeks to achieve the same outcomes (List organization names)? (255 character limit)

How is your project more effective than similar solutions in achieving your desired outcome(s)? Please provide specific metrics (costs, performance, price, features, etc.) (255 character limit).
• What is the principal risk, if any, to achieving your intended social benefit and financial sustainability? (1000 character limit)

• Do you require partners to implement the solution or achieve the program’s outcomes? If yes, please list the partners and their role (2500 character limit).

Financial Information
• Is your solution sustainable now (i.e., it generates enough revenue – without donations – to cover operational costs)?
  o If yes, what are those revenue sources? What is the business model (revenue and expenses, market opportunity, etc.) to achieve sustainability? Include evidence of the price buyers will pay at your program’s price. How long would it take to be sustainable based upon best case scenario, moderate scenario, worst case scenario (please provide total months and probability for each scenario)? (2500 character limit)
  o If no, do you think it could be sustainable without donations? What would be the mixture of revenue sources to keep the program operating at current level? To achieve your proposed market penetration? (2500 character limit)

• What does it cost to acquire a new customer? (250 character limit)
  o What are the assumptions behind your cost? (1000 character limit)

Required Attachments
• Please attach a detailed project budget (Please use AARP Foundation’s budget template).
• Please attach your most recent audited financial statements.
• Please include financial statements for your current fiscal year (include actuals to date through the most recent reportable month and projections through end of the fiscal year).

Pre-Application Information – This section includes information submitted from the Pre-Application.

Below is the information you selected previously when completing the inquiry process. The previously asked questions are not editable. If any of the information has changed, please list those changes in the box provided below.