

Request for Applications
NGA Center for Best Practices

Health Equity Learning Network

- Purpose:** To support states and territories for a period of 16 months in peer learning and custom technical assistance to advance Governors’ health equity priorities, particularly related to health equity for people with disabilities, racially and ethnically marginalized groups, and rural communities.
- Opportunities Provided:** Through the learning network, a group of states and territories will: (1) participate in an in-person kick-off meeting near Washington, DC, (2) join monthly virtual learning and peer-learning opportunities, (3) receive ongoing technical assistance from NGA Center staff and consultants in support of health equity goals, and (4) attend an in-person wrap-up meeting.
- Applications Due:** January 19, 2024
- Selection Announcement:** January 29, 2024
- In-person kick-off meeting:** March 11-12, 2024
- Project Period:** March 2024 – June 2025
- NGA Contacts:** Dr. Shelby Hockenberry, Program Director, Healthcare Delivery
shockenberry@nga.org
- Anna Heard, Senior Policy Analyst, Healthcare Delivery
Aheard@nga.org

OVERVIEW

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is launching the “NGA Health Equity Learning Network.” This learning network is an opportunity for Governors’ offices and their state health leaders to address health equity priorities. This learning network will focus on state and territory best practices related to health equity policy across several populations, including people with disabilities, racially and ethnically marginalized groups, and rural communities. This learning network will feature:

- **In-Person Kick-off Meeting:** Participating states and territories will attend a kick-off meeting near Washington, DC on March 11-12, 2024 with the NGA Center and consultants. This meeting will convene the network teams to engage in peer networking and learning, hear about innovative health equity policies, and begin development of an action plan specifically tailored to the state’s or territory’s needs.

- **Monthly Virtual Group Meetings:** Network teams will develop a strategic action plan to map potential progress and goals for the duration of the project. Project teams will meet monthly as a group with the NGA Center to provide status reports and discuss progress on their action plan, as well as to hear from subject matter experts and learn from their peers.
- **Technical Assistance:** The NGA Center and consultants will provide network teams with technical assistance and action planning support.
- **Wrap-up Meeting:** Project teams will attend a wrap-up meeting where they will have the opportunity to share their strategic action plan and discuss progress made in their state or territory.

BACKGROUND

This learning network will build on the NGA Center’s work with nine states and territories in the past year to identify best practices and innovative health equity strategies and communication approaches, including the coordination of initiatives designed to improve health equity for different populations. In 2023, the NGA Center conducted research and learning calls, held a virtual workshop, and hosted an [in-person roundtable](#) to explore these issues. The NGA Center recently published a brief, [Leading State Approaches and Communication Strategies to Support Health Equity](#), to summarize findings identified through the project.

The next phase of this work will include the formation of a learning network, including both states and territories involved in the first year of the project and additional states and territories interested in participating. States and territories with some existing health equity work in one or more of the three previously mentioned areas (disability, racial, and rural equity) are welcome to apply to join the network. Network teams will be asked to engage in peer learning to share challenges and priorities related to health equity policy coordination. Participants can expect to gain insights in health equity policy through peer learning, hearing from experts, and receiving technical assistance, as well as support in developing state/territory action plans to address their Governors’ top health equity goals.

TIMELINE

The following represents a tentative timeline for the Policy Academy:

Timeline	Activity
January 3, 2024	Proposal Period Opens
January 19, 2024	Proposals Due
January 29, 2024	State Selection Announced
March 11-12, 2024	In-person Kick-off Meeting
April 2024 – May 2025	Monthly Virtual Meetings
June 2025	In-person Wrap-up Meeting

REQUIRED APPLICATION CONTENT

To apply, states and territories should submit the following:

- **(1) Letter from the Governor’s Office.** A signed letter of support from the Governor is required. The letter must include the state or territory interest in and expected outcomes related to the learning network opportunity. The letter should indicate whom the Governor is designating as the team leader. The team leader will serve as the main point of contact between the NGA Center and the state or territory.

- **(2) Statement of Interest.** A brief statement (1-2 pages, 11 pt. font, single-spaced) that should include the following elements:
 - ***Brief assessment of the state or territory’s existing health equity initiatives, with particular focus on the three previously mentioned areas of health equity (disability, race/ethnicity, and rural equity), particularly any cross-cutting initiatives among these areas.*** Applications should provide a description of the current landscape, addressing the following questions as they apply to the state or territory’s proposed scope of work:
 - Is your state or territory looking to develop a new action plan to support health equity goals and initiative coordination, or expand on existing work? *Please note all participating offices and agencies for expanding existing work and any additional details on the scope and current impact of initiatives within the state/territory.*
 - What agency or body is responsible for health equity policy coordination? *Please list multiple if applicable.*
 - ***Area of focus.*** A brief description of the Governor’s health equity priorities and the state or territory’s policy interests. Please identify what health equity policy challenges your state or territory is seeking to address. Include information, including data where applicable, about current challenges, gaps, system limitations, or other relevant information that may affect implementation of the action plan.
 - ***Learning Network Team.*** Each participating state or territory must assemble a high level “core team” of three to five representatives from at least two agencies, one of which should be designated as the team leader as outlined above. Please provide the names, titles, and contact information and indicate who the Governor has designated as the team leader. Please note that if selected, team members will be expected to devote a few hours each month to participate in the learning network by attending the meetings and convenings described on page two. An administrative contact who is connected to the team lead should also be identified to help schedule conference calls and team logistics. Members of the core team should include:
 - The Governor’s Office (e.g., governor’s health, human services, or equity policy advisor)
 - State/Territory health and human services agencies
 - State/Territory equity offices/task forces/advisory councils
 - Individual(s) with lived experience (e.g., consumer advisory boards)
- Members of the core team may also include:
- Other state/territory agencies as relevant
 - Community partners (e.g., community leaders, community-based providers, etc.)

We recognize that states/territories may have different structures or unique positions. States/territories may select other participants not listed here as additional team members so long as the core criteria for team members are met.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All applications must be received by **11:59 p.m. ET on January 19, 2024**. Applications must be submitted by the Governor’s office. Please combine all application materials into a single PDF document and email Anna Heard (AHeard@nga.org). Following submission, applicants will receive a confirmation email from the NGA Center verifying receipt of your application.

All questions about this Learning Network and the “Request for Application” process should be directed to Anna Heard (AHeard@nga.org) and Dr. Shelby Hockenberry (shockenberry@nga.org).

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) would like to thank the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) for their generous support in development of this Request for Applications (RFA). The contents of this RFA are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of RWJF.

This request for application (RFA) is not binding on the NGA Center, nor does it constitute a contractual offer. Without limiting the forgoing, the NGA Center reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all applications; to modify, supplement, or cancel the RFA; to waive any deviation from the RFA; to negotiate regarding any proposal; and to negotiate final terms and conditions that may differ from those stated in the RFA. Under no circumstances shall NGA be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a response to this RFA.