

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Open Society Foundations Roma Healthy Start Grants

Early Childhood Program and Public Health Program

2 March 2018

What is this call for?

Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, and this is why we believe that investment in maternal and child health to advance Roma children's best interests from the start is paramount.

Through this Call for Proposals the Public Health Program and the Early Childhood Program at Open Society Foundations would like to support community-based organizations to model equitable maternal and child health services while applying the **Nurturing Care Concept**, and elevating these models at policy level. The aim is to improve pregnancy and birth outcomes, eliminate racial disparities in infant mortality, reduce low birth weight and preterm births, reduce maternal depression and address the social determinants that affect Roma maternal and child health.

What is the 'Nurturing Care' Concept?

We know that the first three years of a child's life are a critical time for both physical growth and brain development. Unfortunately, the approaches to early childhood development are still siloed – health, child protection and education work largely separately. To support children during this critical period, the [2016 Lancet Early Childhood Development \(ECD\) Series](#) calls for the promotion of integrated programming and the concept of *Nurturing Care*¹:

¹ The Nurturing Care Framework - http://who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/child/nurturing-care-framework/en/

the “health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving, and early learning provided by parent and family interactions, and supported by an environment that enables these interactions.” The Lancet Series, chaired by WHO and UNICEF, brought together the latest evidence highlighting that the time is right to strengthen programming for ECD, which requires **access to good nutrition and health services from gestation, responsive caregiving according to the child’s developmental stage, social protection, child welfare, and early stimulation and learning opportunities.**

The timely and appropriate provision of services for Roma parents and their children will require intersectoral management, involving and organizing the participating sectors. The interventions will require these sectors to:

- a) support nurturing care during the first 1000 days starting from the time of conception through applying an indivisible cluster of information
- b) build on existing services and promote a dual approach of care for the caregiver and care for the child
- c) propose system solutions, policies related to work force, capacity development, service provision, monitoring, finance and accountability.

Strong synergies arise from interventions that combine health literacy, hygiene, nutrition and education and ultimately improve children’s well-being. Practical examples for the application of the ‘Nurturing Care’ concept can include evidence-based interventions on nutrition, early stimulation, child and social protection, and health, to benefit childhood development.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Through this call we are looking for inspiring examples of collaborations across sectors designed to improve the health of Roma children and mothers in CEE countries with high Roma population, including but not limited to: Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. We are looking for collaborations across sectors, whether longer-term or more recently established, that have achieved success judged according to different dimensions relevant to women’s and children’s health, such as the efficiency, effectiveness or sustainability of the collaboration. We are also looking for ideas to set up new collaborations.

All proposals will be reviewed using the following **criteria**.

- Support efforts to reduce the longstanding two-to-one disparity in infant mortality rates between Roma and non-Roma;
- Embrace a comprehensive, integrated and cross-sectoral approach focused on achieving developmental milestones that include prenatal and perinatal care, access to children’s health care, home visiting programs and family and parenting resources;
- The initiative can be headed by a health sector provider, or with a health sector provider as a partner, it can also be civil society led or led by an academic

institution but it has the potential for sustainable scale up and policy shaping in this area;

- In principle, the main stakeholders of the collaboration, including local government, health professionals, child protection specialist and/or others have agreed to the proposal and participation in the intervention process.
- The collaboration has to ensure an active involvement of Roma civil society organizations;
- Clearly demonstrates what is new and beneficial in the proposed collaboration.
- Integrates human rights, child rights, gender equality, equity considerations, including participation and voice of the Roma community within the implementation.
- The proposals should also seek to address the social determinants of health, i.e. political, social, economic causes of health inequities within and between countries. They should consider factors as daily living conditions and housing, public infrastructure, social exclusion, access to public services, access to justice, information, and public participation, and distribution of power, funds and resources;
- The successful proposals will incorporate data and documentation on the collaboration including evaluations, surveys, reports and other information on which to build case studies;
- The ultimate purpose of the proposal to be supported is its implementation at scale or be ready to be scaled;
- The final result of the funded proposal across sectors is to be well-established with related processes and institutional mechanisms which would result in sustainable policy changes.

The proposals will be guided by the following principles:

- a) strongly endorse a life-course concept for Roma women's health care
- b) endorse that preconception care can improve Roma maternal and newborn health by providing the foundation for a good pregnancy and birth experience
- c) endorse that every child can be given the best start in life by reducing health and social inequalities
- d) enable Roma community active participation
- e) provide an evidence-based integrated health service for the Roma community
- f) consider sustainability and advocacy from the beginning, how NGO-delivered services can be taken over, sustained and embedded into government-offered services, and how advocacy and supporting key actors can lead to a prioritized health and early childhood agenda.

Application Guidelines

Please submit an initial proposal not exceeding 5 pages that includes the following items:

- A brief statement of programmatic capability and past experience- describe the organizations and project staff's suitability and capacity to deliver the project (not more than a page)
- A project work plan, including (up to 3 pages)
 - o Key Intervention Activities
 - o Timeline
 - o Collaborating partners
 - o Target group served by the project (age group, targeted number and project sites)
- Project's progress towards its desired outcomes – M&E (up to one page)
- Itemized Project Budget (please see the budget form provided)

The proposal period is initially limited to two years with potential for longer term consideration.

Please submit your proposal on the [OSF grantee portal](#) by 30th of March 2018. The portal can be accessed here:

<https://www.foundationconnect.org/GrantsManager/Pages/V3/Portal/GrantApplication.aspx?OrgID=00Dd0000000c6ik&RequestRT=012d0000000SPIY&CampaignID=7010V000001zAEU&AccountId=001d0000026EoUnAAK>.

If you have any questions please email them to katherine.street@opensocietyfoundations.org