

Healthy Communities Technical Assistance

Request for proposals: Healthy Communities Technical Assistance Application
due date: March 31, 2017

Eligible cities: Any city or county in the Twin Cities 7-county Metropolitan Area

Overview

The purpose of community planning is community health. Not necessarily the way we traditionally think of health – doctor’s visits, clinics, vaccines – but rather the policies, systems, and built environment that contribute to the design of our communities and the way in which we live, work, learn, and play (or don’t) in these spaces.

Cities have a unique role in keeping people healthy. A community’s plan for housing, transportation, land use, parks, and economic development - these environments are the largest contributor to our health. Comprehensive planning is a powerful tool to strategically identify and implement initiatives that increase access to healthy food and promote health equity.

To provide community planning support for cities and counties, Terra Soma, a food system consultant based in Minneapolis, is soliciting applications from cities and counties interested in working more closely to create healthy communities. Terra Soma is making available, free of charge, in-depth technical assistance to **cities and counties for initiatives that will improve health by increasing the availability of and access to healthy food.**

This opportunity will help cities identify and develop approaches to incorporate health into city plans, ordinances, policies, and programs, with emphasis on the city’s upcoming comprehensive plan update:

- **Technical assistance** for cities to develop innovative approaches, strategies, and policies that:
 - Increase availability of healthy food, using the [Food Access Planning Guide](#).
 - Focus on serving and engaging priority populations (low-income residents, communities of color, seniors, and people with disabilities).
- **Technical assistance** for community engagement to support community participation in the project steering committee, engagement of constituencies in this work, and other activities.

Through the support of the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, free technical assistance is available to local governments in the Twin Cities metro area. Healthy Comprehensive Planning Director, Nadja Berneche, will serve as a resource for cities and counties working to incorporate health, especially healthy food access, in local comprehensive plans through December, 2018. This position is formally contracted with Terra Soma, LLC. Additionally, the [Minnesota Food Charter](#) has created the Food Access Planning Guide to aide work with local planning efforts to increase access to healthy food.

About Us

Terra Soma helps organizations and partnerships undertake big change together for the public good. Working at the intersection of food, health, and agriculture, we help our clients create healthy communities. We offer a range of strategic services, including long-range planning; customized training and capacity building; design, management, and execution of large scale social change initiatives; strategic communications; research; facilitation; event design and execution; and publication development. Clients are local, state, and federal agencies; foundations; universities; non-profit organizations; and cross-sector collaborations that seek to make a difference.

Nadja is the Healthy Comprehensive Planning Director with Terra Soma. In this role, she works with city and county planners, health advocates, and community members to integrate a health focus into comprehensive plans. A resident of St. Paul, Nadja Berneche has served on the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission for six years, currently serving as cochair. She has worked on changing policies to support urban agriculture, healthy eating, and food access at state and local levels. Prior to this, Nadja served as the Program Director for Gardening Matters, focusing on community-based food systems and urban agriculture policy. Nadja earned her Masters of Social Work and Masters of Public Policy from the University of Minnesota.

Purpose

Terra Soma recognizes that environments in which we live, work, learn, and play have a significant impact on health outcomes. This includes social and economic factors, as well as the way we plan, design, and regulate our communities. The upcoming comprehensive planning process provides an opportunity for cities to look at their plans, policies, and ordinances that have an impact on health, as well as barriers that may currently exist that make it harder for residents to make healthier choices.

The purpose of this RFP is to provide technical support to cities wanting to integrate health, especially food access, more fully into their comprehensive plan. This support may include drafting or reviewing language, providing assistance with data and research, providing consultation on community engagement methods to ensure diverse participation, or other creative requests as appropriate. Cities or counties have the flexibility to define the products that will result from this work. Technical assistance is available through December, 2018.

Selected cities are strongly encouraged to engage community members throughout the process to ensure that the policies adopted reflect community needs. One area for support is designing community engagement efforts to include priority populations such as low-income residents, communities of color, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Proposal Requirements

Successful proposals will describe the city's commitment to developing policies, ordinances, and/or plans that incorporate health and equity, with an emphasis on the city's comprehensive plan. Cities must select a department manager or senior staff member to lead this work.

Cities may access technical assistance for work on any of the following strategies:

- Assess the current state of the food environments in the city.

- Develop language that supports healthy food access for inclusion in the city’s upcoming comprehensive plan update.
- Establish a group of city staff, representatives of community-based organizations, community leaders, and other stakeholders to work on improving food access in the city.
- Work to develop a draft community engagement plan that identifies community engagement goals, objectives, stakeholders, and populations, and articulates desired outcomes and engagement methods
- Develop and conduct outreach activities to engage community members in the project with a focus on under-represented populations.
- Other creative strategies as appropriate

To get the most out of this technical assistance we ask the communities commit to:

- Participating in at least two planning meetings with public health or other cross-sector representatives and the consultant
- Attending at least two trainings or workshops related to health and planning. These may include the Metro Healthy Comp Plan Workgroup or other recommended trainings.
- Presenting work to an appropriate internal or external audience to further the goals of the project

Please explain what you would like assistance with and how this assistance will help meet a goal of improving health and food access in your city (see application below). Explain what products will be produced or enhanced as a result of this work.

Requests for assistance may align with other related grant projects, including Statewide Health Improvement grants.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

A selection committee composed of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Center for Prevention Staff and Terra Soma staff will review proposals. Proposals will be selected based on the following criteria:

- A focused approach to healthy eating strategies and health equity
- Commitment of city staff, elected officials, and/or the community to your strategies
- Demonstrated need and commitment for this support
- Commitment to under-represented populations in your community
- Plan for sustainability after the work is completed

If the requests for support exceed the resources available, proposals will be prioritized based on demonstrated need and a focus on equity. Applying for support does not guarantee assistance.

Instructions for Proposal Submission

Application Deadline: 4:00 p.m. on March 31, 2017

Submission Format: All applications must be submitted electronically to Nadja Berneche at nadja@terrasoma.org.

If you have questions or would like assistance, please contact Nadja Berneche.

Contact:

Nadja Berneche

nadja@terrasoma.com 651-968-3899

RFP Application

Applications must be received by Nadja Berneche by 4:00 p.m. on March 15, 2017. Applicants will be notified by April 15, 2017.

Applicant Details			
City Name			
Primary Contact			
Title			
E-mail Address		Phone Number	
Mailing Address			
City Manager/Administrator			
	Printed Name		
	Signature		Date

Overview

1. Please explain why your city is interested in deeper technical assistance. (Limit: 200 words)
2. How would your city benefit from deeper engagement on this project? (Limit: 200 words)

Specific Strategies

1. What goal(s) can this support help your city more fully realize? (Limit:100 words)
2. Explain the specific strategies you would like to work on and products that will be produced or enhanced by this work. (Limit: 200 words)
3. What is your current assessment of your city's local food environment? Where do you see the greatest need/ barriers? (Limit: 200 words)

Community Engagement

1. How could this technical assistance strengthen your engagement efforts? (if applicable)

(Limit: 200 words)

Sustainability

1. Please describe the support anticipated from elected officials, city administration, and community members to ensure the success of this work. (Limit: 200 words)
2. Please list the lead and other staff who will work on this project and briefly describe their role. (Limit: 100 words)