



## **Request for Application for The Aging and Disability Business Institute Health Information Technology Learning Collaboration (HITLC)**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this initiative is to develop a learning collaborative for up to twelve community-based organizations (CBOs)—including Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, and other community-based aging and disability services providers—to assist in making strategic decisions around investing in health information technology (HIT) systems to collect, manage and analyze service data and enhance program quality, client satisfaction, and service reimbursement. The key outcome of participation in the HITLC will be the successful implementation and use of administrative systems to grow the capacity and impact of participating CBOs, and the development of tools that can assist the larger field of CBOs with the decision-making process.

Additional expected outcomes of the learning collaborative include assisting participating CBOs with:

- making strategic decisions around investments in information technology (IT) infrastructure and processes, and
- positioning for health care contracting success and growth.

The learning collaborative will assist the Aging and Disability Business Institute (Business Institute), which is led by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) with:

- developing decision support and implementation tools for other CBOs making choices related to HIT and health care contracting,
- creating a cohort of aging and disability CBOs with increased capacity to mentor and support other CBOs in this area, and
- documenting the experience of CBOs as they position themselves for successful service delivery partnerships, especially related to health care transformation.

### **Background**

Recent changes in the health care system—targeted to improve outcomes, provide better care and lower costs through a coordinated system of care—have presented CBOs with new opportunities for partnerships and contracting with the health care system.

While opportunities for health care and other partnerships are increasing for CBOs, the work that must be done to capitalize on these opportunities often requires agencies to retool their strategies for service delivery and to collect and report data and outcomes in a more robust way. Grant-based reimbursement that pays for staff expenses regardless of program volume and fee-for-service compensation independent of outcomes are increasingly being replaced by performance-based payment models.

Information technology has become increasingly important as CBOs have expanded their portfolio of services to diversify funding sources and include integrated care and evidence-based health and

wellness programs. The ability of CBOs to share data with health care providers and payers, including health systems, health plans, accountable care organizations, and others, is critical to enhance partnerships and contracting between CBOs and the healthcare system in the future. These new partnerships often rely on IT to collect and share data to promote better outcomes, which also requires adopting sophisticated IT systems and improving health information security. These systems also assist CBOs with internal performance management and measurement and more.

In recent years, the Business Institute and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) have convened learning collaboratives that assist CBOs and their network and community partners with building their business capacity and align their service capabilities to contract with health care entities and integrate care. The Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI) works to improve health and health equity through partnerships and systems improvements and has led a variety of learning collaboratives and projects to support health information technology and cross-sector data sharing. The Business Institute has partnered with IPHI to facilitate this learning collaborative, which will take a deeper look at the data and IT infrastructure needs and initiatives of CBOs working to advance their collaborations with healthcare systems and payers. The learning collaborative will be led by IPHI staff in consultation with Business Institute staff, under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Administration for Community Living.

## Activities and Expectations

**Estimated number of organizations selected:** Up to 12

**Project start date:** October 5, 2018

**Estimated project length:** twelve months, ending in September 2019

### **Selected organizations will be expected to participate in the following activities:**

- Program and IT staff attend monthly webinar meetings (12 total) that alternate between the full learning collaborative cohort and subgroup meetings
- Homework assignments for each organization/team that take place between the full learning collaborative calls (5 total)
- Three one-on-one calls with IPHI staff, one in October 2018, February 2019, and May 2019
- Participation in bi-monthly group coaching calls with subject matter experts, as appropriate
- Two evaluation surveys (links will be provided following the mid-point learning collaborative webinar and the final webinar)
- Participation in an online community

As with all learning collaboratives, organizational benefits will be proportional to participant commitment and effort, so we encourage only CBOs that are committed to participating in the full process to apply.

*No direct funding will be provided through this initiative;* rather, this collaborative will deliver targeted technical assistance and coaching through the means described above.

## Eligibility & Screening Criteria

This opportunity is open to nonprofit and governmental community-based organizations, including, but not limited to:

- Area Agencies on Aging

- Centers for Independent Living
- Behavioral health organizations
- Developmental disability organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Native American tribal organizations (American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian)
- Protection and Advocacy Agencies
- Service providers for older adults and/or people with disabilities
- State-based associations of community-based organizations
- State Developmental Disabilities Councils
- State Independent Living Councils
- State Units on Aging

CBOs can be at the beginning of their data/IT journey or in implementation and quality improvement stages, but CBOs should provide or plan to provide services under contracts with health care providers and/or payers related to at least one of the following sets of services: (1) care coordination/management/transitions or (2) evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs. Applicants should be actively seeking to develop, purchase, or use software to enhance their health care partnerships. Organizations must commit to having staff responsible for program and IT (employee or contractor) participate in the learning collaborative and should encourage community partners and IT consultants to participate as appropriate. For-profit vendors/organizations are not eligible to apply.

All applications submitted via the [online application form](#) from organizations that meet the eligibility criteria by the 5pm CT deadline on September 14, 2018 will be reviewed.

## How to Apply to Join the Learning Collaborative

To submit an application to join the learning collaborative, please complete the [online application form](#) (<https://goo.gl/forms/ei6smDzXXZyQIZOI1>) no later than 5pm CT on Friday, September 14, 2018. To assist in planning your application, the form contains the following questions:

**Summary/Abstract (1,500 character maximum):** This section should include a brief description of the proposed project your CBO will work on during the learning collaborative, including any goal and outcomes.

**Goal(s)/ Anticipated Outcomes (2,200 character maximum):** This section should describe your CBO's long-term vision, any short-term goal and anticipated measureable outcomes of your participation in this learning collaborative that are related to data and IT. Goals and outcomes should be concrete, realistic and specific, recognizing the time-limited nature of this technical assistance.

**Proposed Project (5,000 character maximum):** Describe the scope of your data/IT project for this learning collaborative. Include information about the services you provide (care management, evidence-based health promotion programs, etc.), where your CBO is in the process of reviewing, selecting, implementing and using data/IT system(s) to support its work, data/IT challenges your CBO has faced that it would like to address, relevant healthcare and payment drivers for your work, and any requirements your CBO currently has from healthcare contracts for data/IT sharing and use.

1. If we divide the learning collaborative group into two sub-groups to target IT needs by service, please indicate which of the 2 sub-groups you'd prefer to participate in:
  - a. Care coordination/management/transitions
  - b. Evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs

**Project Management/Organizational Capacity:**

2. What is the size of your organization? (This question is purely to help us ensure diversity in the types of organizations selected for the collaborative.)
  - a. 1- 10 FTEs
  - b. 10.5-21 FTEs
  - c. 21.5-36 FTEs
  - d. 36.5-79 FTEs
  - e. 79.5+ FTEs
3. What best describes your organizational structure?
  - a. Independent nonprofit organization
  - b. Part of county government
  - c. Part of a Council of Governments/Regional Planning and Development Agency
  - d. Other
4. Please briefly describe you CBOs service area (counties & state):
5. Who will participate in the learning collaborative? It is recommended that at least 2 staff members participate, with teams of up to 5 staff/consultants/partners welcome. Please include information for the main point of contact/manager (lead) for this project, contact information for program and data/IT staff and a brief description of any other staff, IT consultants/vendors or community partners you plan to invite.
  - Lead name:
  - Lead title:
  - Lead email:
  - Lead phone number:
  - Additional program/IT staff participant name (if you are a small organization and your program/IT staff people are the same, please indicate "same"):
  - Additional staff title:
  - Additional staff email:
  - Additional staff phone:

Provide a brief description of other potential participants (staff and partners; we'll collect contact information for all participants upon selection for participation in the learning collaborative):
6. Briefly describe the need your CBO would like to address with a data/IT solution.

7. At what point is your CBO in implementation of the IT solution to address the need identified above?
  - a. Early investigation
  - b. Selection
  - c. Implementation and workflow redesign
  - d. Active use
  - e. N/A or we haven't started thinking about the IT solution
  
8. If you have selected or are using software and/or data systems to address your need, please name the product or describe use of a generic product. If you have not yet selected a product/system, please write "N/A."
  
9. Is your organization using, or intending to use an IT consultant or vendor for this system?
  - a. Yes, we've already selected a consultant/vendor.
  - b. Not yet, but we plan to select a consultant/vendor.
  - c. No, we won't be hiring externally for this work.
  
10. Do you currently have a contract with a healthcare payer for your services?
  - a. Yes, more than one contract has been executed.
  - b. Yes, we have one contract that has been executed.
  - c. Yes, we are finalizing negotiations on a contract.
  - d. No, but we are actively exploring opportunities for contracts.
  - e. No, we do not have any contracts/opportunities for contract.
  
11. Which statement best describes the use of data to drive action, change, or improvement (including and in addition to the current project) by your organization?
  - a. Our CBO has frequently used data to drive desired change.
  - b. Our CBO has sometimes used data to drive desired change.
  - c. Our CBO uses data to drive desired change but on an infrequent, ad hoc basis.
  - d. Our CBO has not used data to drive desired change.
  - e. Don't know.
  
12. Which statement best describes your CBO's understanding of and progress on the legal and/or regulatory requirements to share data with healthcare systems/payers?
  - a. Necessary agreements for data sharing are finalized.
  - b. We have identified the relevant requirements, and necessary data sharing/data use agreements are in process.
  - c. We have identified the relevant requirements and understand the extent to which we can share data, but are experiencing barriers or delays in moving forward.
  - d. We are unsure of the requirement for data use agreements and/or if privacy laws will allow us to share data.
  - e. No legal agreements are needed for our work.
  - f. Don't know.
  - g. Not applicable

13. Which statement best describes the data and information systems skills of key program staff within your CBO?
- a. Key program staff have the necessary understanding and skills to manage and share data with healthcare partners.
  - b. There are sufficient staff with the basic data and information skills to share data with healthcare partners.
  - c. Some staff in our CBO lack data and information systems skills, hampering the ability to share data with healthcare partners.
  - d. Lack of data and information system skills is a significant barrier to data sharing in our organization.
  - e. Don't know.
  - f. Not applicable

## Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted by 5pm CT on **Friday, September 14, 2018**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

An informational webinar for potential applicants will be held on Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 pm-3:00 pm CT/3:00 pm-4:00 pm ET. To register for the webinar, visit

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/231484973680971523>

## Review and Selection Process

A panel of Business Institute, IPHI and ACL staff will evaluate applications submitted by the deadline. The panel will consider geographic diversity, the likelihood the proposed project will result in the benefits expected, and the opportunity to share learnings from the project with the broader network of community-based aging and disability organizations.

## Anticipated Announcement Date

Applicants will be notified by Friday, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

## Contact for this Announcement

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