

Blue Zone Project- Corry Expansion

Pilot Project Grant Program

Partnership for a Healthy Community

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LOI Form

Question Group

Project Name*

Blue Zone Project- Corry Expansion

Name of organization*

Partnership For a Healthy Community

Brief description of the organization*

Please include your mission statement, a brief history of the organization, and how the project is part of your mission.

The Partnership for a Healthy Community (Partnership) is a 501c3 that was originally established under the Pennsylvania Department of Health's State Health Improvement Plan that began in 1999 and was referred to as the "SHIP". SHIP-Affiliated, community-based health improvement partnerSHIPS worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to help improve health status and eliminate barriers to good health for all who resided within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Health and community partnerSHIPS had mutually agreed to share responsibility and accountability for improving the health status of all residents. This design was a perfect foundation to transition for the Partnership for a Healthy Community to implement the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The Partnership's focus shifted from a State-driven initiative to a locally-driven initiative. The current Partnership is comprised of executives from UPMC- Hamot, Allegheny Health Network- Saint Vincent Hospital, LECOM Health- Millcreek Community Hospital, Corry Memorial Hospital an affiliate of LECOM Health, EmergyCare, and the Erie County Department of Health.

In 2014, the Community Health Improvement Plan Committee met quarterly to discuss programs, activities and initiatives to improve the community's health. These activities are related to the identified priority areas similar to those identified today as: lifestyle behavior change, chronic disease prevention and control, cancer prevention and detection and mental health. It quickly became apparent that the group needed a leadership structure that could pursue grant dollars and administer programs. In 2015, the first Partnership for a Healthy Community meetings were held to develop Bylaws, elect officers and set meeting frequency. Starting November of 2015, nine meetings were held to develop the board, discuss strategies and prepare for future funding opportunities. Commencing in April of 2016 there had been fourteen meetings held to prepare and pursue Blue Zone Project (BZP) as the community health improvement plan for Erie to address 21st century population health issues identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment. After the successful launch of the Corry Blue Zone Project in November of 2018, the Partnership continues to hold monthly meetings to discuss health initiatives including the Corry Blue Zone Project. Three of the Partnership Executive Board members serve on the BZP Governance Committee.

The capacity of the Partnership has not reached its potential because the magnitude of the work has not required expansion to support large projects. However, the Bylaws are written to allow for expanded board membership, ad hoc committees and workgroups to implement large, complex projects. The Partnership also has the ability to secure and develop, legal consultation, accounting and financial infrastructure.

The mission of the Partnership for a Healthy Community is “to improve the health status of Erie County residents by mobilizing the collective power of caring community partners.” The vision of the Partnership is that “Erie County is to be an ideal model of personal well-being, health equity and barrier free access to care.”

The BZP clearly links to the vision and mission of the Partnership. It is a comprehensive community health improvement strategy that is nationally recognized as a public health evidenced-based strategy. The BZP is a model practice that has already been financially sponsored in Corry by mobilizing the leading healthcare entities in Erie County. The BZP is designed to improve the personal well-being of individuals and provide health equity by making systematic and policy changes at the community level.

Brief project or program description*

What are you trying to accomplish?

There is significant work being done to improve region’s economic prospects. While the economy is important, the health of Erie’s citizen’s is vital and needs attention in concert with the economic development efforts. Erie’s health is often an afterthought. The Blue Zones (BZ) Project is designed to change that dialogue and shift toward a focus on health as a complimentary priority.

A Blue Zones Project makes permanent and semi-permanent changes through policy and built environments where we live, work, worship, learn and play. To make these changes, Blue Zones would collaborate with work-sites, schools, grocery stores, restaurants, faith-based organizations, government, individuals and other initiatives such as Erie Refocused and neighborhood revitalization projects. The Blue Zones Project is not in addition to all the other great work occurring in Erie, it is a force multiplier that aligns with the projects currently underway. Blue Zones prioritizes using current community initiatives and leverages national resources and grant opportunities to augment the work to ensure it results in positive health outcomes for the community. Ultimately, every decision is analyzed using a health lens.

The BZP in Corry was launched in November of 2018. The goal of the BZP is to change peoples’ environment and make the healthy choice the easy choice. The ultimate goal is to reach BZ community certification by demonstrating measurable improvement in the overall health and well-being of Corry. Certification is achieved by accomplishing the following goals:

- #1: Adopt significant policy changes that impact health outcomes such as: obesity, chronic disease, tobacco use, physical activity and nutrition
- #2: Change/Improve food choices available in communities; provide and market healthier options to consumers
- #3: Engage a critical mass, at least 15% of the identified population in healthy BZ activities

The project requires a systematic approach to improve well-being by focusing on people, places and policy within the community. It is designed to make permanent or semi-permanent changes to the environment.

BZP requires three full-time staff to implement the activities in the Corry area through a two phase approach. The discovery and foundation phase is nearing completion.

Discovery and Foundation Stage (4 months -January-April):

- Hire and train locally based BZP staff
- Assemble and train the local leadership on the project and blueprint design phase
- Recruit, coach and train 100+ core volunteers about committees and strategies
- Set the Well-being Index baseline and identify 8 to 16 unique metrics for Corry
- Select strategies to adopt changes in food policy, tobacco policy, and built environments (ex: bike and walkability).

Community Transformation Phase 1 (3 years- May 2019-April 2022):

Project kicks off with announcement of blueprint that contains at least 8 sectors and 5 initiatives

-8 sectors include:

Engage

- city, township and municipal government to adopt policies and practices
- faith-based community to adopt healthier behaviors
- restaurants to become BZ approved that nudge customers to healthier behaviors
- grocery stores to become BZ approved that promote healthier purchases
- corner stores in BZ Project area to make healthier choices easier
- Schools to become BZ approved by adopting policies and practices that prioritize physical activity,

nutrition and educational outcomes

- employers to become BZ approved worksites thus increasing productivity and wellness and decreasing healthcare costs

Start walking school buses

-5 Initiatives include:

- Engage individuals to sign pledges and take action to change health behaviors
- Create small groups focused on healthy behaviors known as Moais
- Develop purpose workshops so people identify their purpose
- Create, train and support the volunteer force to keep BZ active in the community
- Launch and sustain public awareness and media campaign

The final phase of the project is complete transformation to sustain the efforts that were created during the implementation phase. A sustainability plan is developed during phase 1, in which ongoing strategies are identified for the community to continue to build upon. The community leaders and blue zones sites will continue to have access to evaluations, blue zones experts, summits and the institutes for best practice, tools, materials and resources.

All of the work of the Corry BZP is orchestrated by the full time staff and supported by formal Governance, Steering and Sector committees. These committees are comprised of community leaders, change agents and influential community members.

Why is this Pilot Project needed?*

Describe why the project is needed in the community. Are there other funding sources including your organization that could fund your project?

The health in Erie County is abysmal. Obesity rates climb, physical activity declines, consumption of fruits and vegetable couldn't get much worse and mental health/poor health days are not improving. Erie County's rates of overweight or obese children have increased dramatically and have surpassed state and national averages at an alarming rate. This is a red flag for future generations that will be plagued with chronic disease and shorter life-spans than their parents.

Physical inactivity, poor nutrition, stress, alcohol and substance abuse are causative factors of significant and unacceptable levels of chronic diseases such as: obesity, diabetes, cancer, mental health, heart disease, lung disease and chronic pain documented within the 2018 Health Needs Assessment and on Vital Signs. This results in poor quality of life, increased healthcare costs, decreased productivity in the workplace and reduced achievement and education retention in schools.

Funding sources totaling three million dollars over a three year period have been secured from the three healthcare systems for the Corry BZP. The funding requested from ECGRA is to assist with final funding needed of \$500,000.

Additional funding is currently being sought from the following organizations, foundations or agencies: Corry Community Foundation, Arlene Smith Foundation, American Heart Association, Erie Insurance, Aetna, United Healthcare, The Black Family Foundation , PNC, PenFirst Energy Foundation, National Fuel Foundation and Northwest Saving Bank.

Project Timeline

When will the project begin? Can this project be completed within 12 months of a grant award?

The project is currently underway. The foundation and discovery phase began in January 2019 and will finish at the end of April 2019. The Blueprint of the projected work will be created in May 2019 and the official Kick-off Event is scheduled for June 23, 2019. The work will then take place over the next three years to achieve BZ certification.

What is the amount of your grant request?*

\$100,000.00

What is the total project budget?*

\$3,500,000.00

Will there be a 1:1 cash match?*

No

What is the source of the cash match?

NA

Is the match secured or committed?*

NA

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

No files were uploaded