



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

TEST KITCHEN

Released: November 14, 2019
Proposals Due: January 20, 2020



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Purpose: To identify and test promising ideas and practices designed to answer the question: *How might we ensure that more kids in rural communities have access to food in the summer?*

Goals: Participation in The Test Kitchen allows organizations to test their own ideas, contribute to ongoing research related to summer hunger, develop expertise related to innovation and pilot design, and build relationships with other organizations working to solve similar challenges.

Eligibility: Organizations must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations currently in good standing or recognized by the IRS as eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. Additionally, organizations must be able to attend a mandatory in-person planning retreat. All proposals should be for new concepts, rather than existing bodies of work.

Planning Retreat: A required in-person planning retreat will take place on April 2, 2020, in Columbus, Ohio. Please hold this date.

Optional Convening: Prior to the planning retreat, organizations are encouraged to attend the Rural Child Hunger Summit hosted by No Kid Hungry. Scheduled for the Tuesday and Wednesday proceeding the planning retreat, attendees at the Summit will have the chance to connect with a diverse set of stakeholders focused on addressing challenges unique to rural communities and learn from researchers, educators, and program providers. The Summit will take place in Columbus, Ohio and there is no fee associated with attendance.

Financial Support: Selected organizations will receive \$10,000 to support pilot implementation and receive a reimbursement that covers travel to Columbus, Ohio, and lodging for up to three people.

Proposals Due: January 20, 2020, by 5:00 pm EST via email

Contact: Kirsten Craft
Senior Innovation Manager, Share Our Strength
kcrafft@strength.org or (202) 715-6676

No Kid Hungry

No child should go hungry in America. But 1 in 7 kids will face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger through effective programs that provide kids with the food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty.

The Test Kitchen

The Test Kitchen is a concept accelerator designed to help nonprofits, schools, faith organizations, and local governments turn their best ideas into validated strategies and promising practices. The focus of each cohort is different, as selected innovation teams work concurrently to develop and test new ideas that may help reduce childhood hunger. Now in its second year, this year's focus is on ending childhood hunger in rural communities in the summer. Selected teams will receive grant funds and technical assistance to support a pilot to test their idea and have the opportunity to build relationships with other innovative organizations at an in-person planning retreat.

Purpose

Hunger is a complex social problem that lacks one easy solution. We know that organizations like yours are taking creative approaches to tackle this issue. We also know that sometimes trying something new can seem impossible. Funding constraints and internal capacity often prevent great ideas from becoming a reality.

This is a problem. Progress requires understanding communities' needs, something local partners know best. When current approaches to providing children with access to meals fail to reach enough kids, experimentation at the local level helps push improvement forward. That is why we launched The Test Kitchen, a concept accelerator designed to help organizations like yours turn their best ideas into validated strategies and promising practices.

Selected organizations will receive \$10,000 and technical assistance from No Kid Hungry (NKH) to test a new model, strategy, or program designed to reach more kids in rural communities with food in the summer. With this support, organizations will have the opportunity to test out ideas they have dreamed of and receive the support required to ensure that if successful, they are positioned for scale. While each organization will be responsible for managing their own pilot, they will join a cohort of like-minded individuals who are doing similar work. Through the cohort-based model, organizations will be able to get additional perspective on their work from other leaders in the industry and accelerate their own learning.

Summer Meals for Kids

The 2020 cohort will come together to test concepts that answer the question: **How might we ensure that more kids in rural communities have access to food in the summer?** Why summer? The national summer meals program is a lifeline for children in need, but it does not reach many of the kids who need help. This is especially true in rural places, where lack of public transportation, the high cost of personal car ownership, and a limited number of summer meal sites all create unique hurdles for families who are unable to put food on the table.

We are interested in ideas that could operate within existing federal guidelines, as well as ideas that may not be reimbursable under current law. Through The Test Kitchen, we hope to identify and test innovative promising ideas and practices. While improving and strengthening a traditional summer meal program is important and something we fund through other means, this is not the focus of this request.

The following are examples of work that **will not** be considered for this opportunity:

- Expanding meal service through additional summer meal sites
- Starting a traditional mobile meals summer program
- Making incremental improvements to an existing program such as extending operational hours or serving an additional meal-type at a site.

Experience

Organizations selected for the accelerator will work in partnership with NKH to finalize and test their idea. The process starts with an in-person planning retreat in Columbus, Ohio on April 2, 2020. At the planning retreat, organizations will work with staff from NKH's Program Innovation team to discuss pilot ideas, planning, and evaluation.

Prior to the in-person planning retreat, organizations are invited to join No Kid Hungry for the second Rural Child Hunger Summit in Columbus from March 31 to April 1, 2020. Attendees at this year's Summit will continue to explore the disparities driving child hunger in rural communities and identify promising policies and practices that may help reduce the incidence of rural poverty. Organizations selected for The Test Kitchen are encouraged, but not required, to attend the Summit. There is no fee associated with attending the Summit, and any additional nights of lodging will be covered as part of the travel reimbursement.

Following the planning process, partner organizations will be responsible for implementing the pilot. While the pilot is running, NKH will be on standby to help as needed. During the last weeks of the pilot, NKH will conduct a site visit to observe the pilot in action. Based on conversations during the planning process, this may include providing additional support around pilot evaluation.

At the conclusion of the program, partners will submit a final report that details their work and experience with the program. The report will include a short summary of the model tested and lessons learned from the pilot, all data from the evaluation, and key learnings and recommendations from the work. Each pilot report will vary and will be guided by conversations at the in-person planning retreat. Learnings and results from all pilots will be shared with the cohort through a closeout webinar to facilitate further discussion and learning.

Process

Organizations may only submit one proposal and proposals must be submitted by January 20, 2020, by 5:00 pm EST. Please assemble all materials into a single PDF and return proposals to Kirsten Craft via email at kcraft@strength.org. An interview may be requested with top organizations to answer additional questions. Organizations selected for The Test Kitchen will be notified via email by January 31, 2020.

Interested organizations must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations currently in good standing, or recognized by the IRS as eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions and available for the in-person planning retreat on April 2, 2020. To receive funding, all proposals submitted should be for new concepts, rather than existing bodies of work. The purpose of this program is to test new ideas. Proposals will be evaluated on ingenuity, viability, and completeness of response.

Proposal Requirements

The proposal should be **no more than five pages** in its entirety and include the following:

Cover Sheet. (5 points)

Identify the organization and team leader, including his or her contact information.

Statement of Interest. One page maximum. (20 points)

Explain your interest in the program by answering the following questions:

- Why is your organization interested in this program?
- What do you hope your organization would learn from participation in this program?
- Who at your organization will lead this work? What makes them qualified to lead this pilot?
- In order to implement this pilot, what supports would be most helpful?

Concept Proposal. Two pages maximum. (50 points)

Please explain the concept you would like to test. To the best of your ability, please ensure that your proposal provides answers to the below questions:

- What is your idea?
- Why do you think this idea will be effective?
- Why is your community the best place to test this idea?
- Best case scenario, what do you imagine will be the results of your pilot?
- Why is this concept innovative?
- What steps will your organization need to take to implement this pilot?
- What challenges might you face in implementation?

Feedback Summary. One page maximum. (10 points)

It is important to get feedback from others about your concept. Identify three people who could provide helpful feedback and have a conversation with each of these individuals. For example, program beneficiaries may be able to tell you whether they would participate and why or why not. Volunteers may be able to tell you whether they would volunteer to help with this project. Community leaders could point you toward possible partners for collaboration.

Concept Budget. (10 points)

Submit a budget that details the expected costs associated with piloting your concept.

Team Members. (5 points)

List the name, organization, positions, phone number, and email address for each member of the team you will work with on the pilot and describe the role that each individual will play. Teams should consist of three to five individuals and may consist of individuals from one or multiple organizations. At least two individuals from each team are required to attend the planning retreat. Please identify the team members that will attend in your proposal.

Expectations

Teams selected should expect the following:

Grant Agreement

Selected organizations will receive an intent to participate letter and grant agreement at the time of acceptance.

In-person Planning Retreat

Prior to the launch of each pilot, selected organizations will convene in Columbus, Ohio for an in-person planning retreat. At least two team members must attend. Additional funds will be provided to cover transportation and lodging expenses for up to three team members. All funds will be dispersed as a reimbursement. Teams are welcome to bring additional team members to the planning retreat if they are willing to cover the cost.

Pilot Site Visit

Once pilots are in operation NKH will conduct a site visit to observe the pilot in action. Selected organizations are responsible for ensuring a successful evaluation and site visit. Depending on the nature of the pilot, NKH will provide an evaluation plan and technical assistance related to evaluation. Components of an evaluation plan may include conducting interviews with program participants and staff, developing and seeking feedback from program participants through surveys, or closely tracking relevant program metrics such as meals served, meal preferences, and attitudes about the program.

Data Collection and Sharing

Selected organizations are responsible for working with NKH to collect appropriate data during the pilot to allow for successful measurement. Organizations should expect to share all raw data and any relevant baseline data with NKH to allow for a complete evaluation. In the event that an idea delivers exemplary results, NKH may wish to work with the organization to further test or socialize the concept.