

# Unidos Contra Diabetes

(United Against Diabetes)

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### Creation of a Backbone to Coordinate a Collective Impact Effort Focus on Reducing Diabetes in the Rio Grande Valley

#### TIMELINE:

|                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| March 17, 2015   | RFP Released                  |
| March 26, 2015   | First Informational Call      |
| April 9, 2015    | Second Informational Call     |
| May 4, 2015      | Proposals Due                 |
| May 15, 2015     | Finalists Notified            |
| Early June, 2015 | Finalist In-Person Interviews |
| June 10, 2015    | Backbone Selected             |

**Purpose:** To select an organization or collaborative partnership to launch and sustain a “Backbone” that will coordinate implementation of a long-term, regional effort to prevent diabetes in the Rio Grande Valley.

## 1. DESCRIPTION OF RGV COLLECTIVE IMPACT EFFORT

During the summer of 2014, a group of local leaders came together to lay the groundwork for a community driven effort to prevent diabetes in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV or “the Valley”). The RGV is composed of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties in the south of Texas.

Currently, the Valley is suffering from an unprecedented diabetes epidemic – one which touches the lives of almost everyone who lives in and works in the RGV. Official estimates put the adult diabetes prevalence rate at 16% - but those studies undercount by only including those who know they have the disease.<sup>1</sup> Unofficial estimates have put the adult diabetes prevalence rate closer to 30% - and almost half of those individuals are unaware they have the disease.<sup>2</sup> Further distressing, people with diabetes and those at risk of the disease often have additional behavioral health issues such as depression and anxiety that can further exacerbate the burden.

Diabetes has been a growing problem in United States for several decades now, and the burden of diabetes is particularly acute for Hispanic populations. Research suggests that the demographics of Texas, with its large Hispanic population, will resemble the demographics of the RGV in the future. Understanding how to improve health for this community is imperative not just for the lives that can be changed today, but to ensure the prosperity of Texas, and the nation, in the future.

Recognizing the complexity of the challenge, this group of leaders chose the approach called [collective impact](#) as a means to prevent diabetes in a cross-sector, systemic way that also addresses the underlying behavioral health challenges that those suffering from, and at-risk of diabetes face. The effort is led by a steering committee comprised of community leaders from hospitals, community clinics, academia, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations. They are supported by Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc., the Meadows Foundation, and Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.

The Steering Committee has met regularly to identify assets and challenges in the RGV, choose guiding principles for their work, define the problem and select a shared goal for this work. The goal of this effort – now called Unidos Contra Diabetes - *“is to reduce the number of new cases of type II diabetes in 5 years, resulting in a 10% reduction in the prevalence of diabetes by 2030. We are committed to doing this by integrating primary and behavioral health for people at-risk for diabetes in our community, with a particular emphasis of meeting the needs of low-income and underserved populations.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Texas BRFSS

<sup>2</sup> Fisher-Hoch SP, Vatcheva KP, Laing ST, Hossain MM, Rahbar MH, Hanis CL, et al. Missed Opportunities for Diagnosis and Treatment of Diabetes, Hypertension, and Hypercholesterolemia in a Mexican American Population, Cameron County Hispanic Cohort, 2003–2008. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2012;9:110298. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd9.110298>.

The Steering Committee is in the process of founding four working groups and a data task force to lead implementation of the work in the following key strategic areas:<sup>3</sup>

1. *Use media and engage the community broadly to raise awareness of diabetes and create a culture of health.*
2. *Increase screening and testing of diabetes, and connect those at risk to prevention programs.*
3. *Provide diabetes education and lifestyle change programs for people with pre-diabetes.*
4. *Advance and integrate the medical system to better serve at risk individuals and families.*

Going forward, this collective impact effort will rapidly expand to be a powerful collaborative of health professionals, community leaders, businesses, nonprofits, funders and policymakers working together on linked activities and held accountable by shared goals in order to dramatically reduce the prevalence of diabetes in the RGV.

Serving as a Backbone of this initiative gives an organization an unprecedented opportunity to create impact in the RGV, and to be a part of systems change that will hopefully be learned from and replicated across Texas and the country.

## 2. BACKBONE RESPONSIBILITIES

Within this cross-sector, collaborative effort the Backbone will provide the supporting infrastructure to coordinate work among partners. The term Backbone refers to a set of dedicated staff whose job is to help facilitate and manage the work of the collaborative initiative. Prospective applicants are encouraged to carefully consider the following responsibilities of the Backbone before deciding to apply:

1. Serve as a **neutral convener** and facilitate effective dialogues while mediating any conflict among stakeholders. The Backbone will need to be seen as an honest broker working on behalf of the group, rather than promoting a single viewpoint.
2. Provide overall project **strategic coherence** by recognizing challenges needed to drive the effort's overarching strategy and long term goals.
3. Help **implement** the strategies of the initiative.
4. Manage **data collection and analysis**, and help other stakeholders use data for ongoing learning.
5. Support **community engagement** and build key relationships.
6. Develop effective **communications and advocacy** agendas that create urgency for change among participants, policymakers, funders, and the public.
7. Be able to **mobilize resources** to support the staff and associated costs needed for a Backbone function. The Steering Committee of Unidos Contra Diabetes has committed to funding the Backbone staff and related costs during an incubation period, which is

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<sup>3</sup> These areas are preliminary and subject to revision as the initiative evolves.

anticipated to last one to two years. During the incubation period the selected organization or partnership will need to staff the effort, beginning by identifying a Backbone Director. Through the incubation period the Backbone will grow, adding a Program Coordinator, Data Manager and administrative support as needed. At the end of the incubation period, funding for the Backbone staff salaries and other additional costs (including but not limited to, rent, IT costs, and miscellaneous overhead) will need to be sustained through fundraising efforts of the staff. Successful Backbones have multiple funding sources including local and national private foundations, corporate foundations, local businesses, United Way agencies, governments, community foundations and individual donors. The Steering Committee members will advocate for and support the fundraising efforts for the Backbone after the incubation period. It is expected that the staff will begin cultivating these funding relationships during the incubation period such that at the end of this period they will be fully responsible for leading these fundraising efforts.

## 2. BACKBONE STAFF ROLES

Backbones typically consist of at least three key staff positions. The most important of these roles is that of the Backbone Director. In order to successfully fill the Backbone role it is essential that the Backbone Director be a fully dedicated staff member, either as a new hire or a transition of existing staff. This hiring or transition should occur immediately after the selection of the Backbone organization or partnership.

### **Responsibilities of the Backbone Director are:**

- Champion and support the work of the Unidos Contra Diabetes Steering Committee
- Adapt plans and activities to the emergent landscape as needed in order to meet the goals and metrics of Unidos Contra Diabetes
- Ensure effective facilitation of Steering Committee and Working Group meetings
- Serving as the organizational ambassador and building public will
- Drawing connections across the initiative and between the initiative and related efforts in the community

The Backbone Director position must be confirmed by both the Backbone organization or partnership and the full Steering Committee of Unidos Contra Diabetes. The Backbone Director will jointly report to Steering Committee of Unidos Contra Diabetes and the Backbone organization or partnership. The details of this joint arrangement should be worked out in a Memorandum of Understanding after the Backbone has been chosen.

The Backbone Director, Steering Committee, and Backbone organization will determine future staffing needs. However, the two positions that will most likely be needed are a Program Coordinator and a Data Manager. The responsibilities for these positions are as follows:

### **Program Coordinator**

- Prepares materials and helps facilitate Steering Committee and Working Group meetings

- Support implementation of the strategies
- Builds relationships with community members and key partners

#### Data Manager

- Creates and executes a plan to collect, analyze, and communicate appropriate data
- Builds data infrastructure for the shared measurement system
- Facilitates stakeholders in using data strategically to make decisions and inform learning

### 3. APPLICATION TYPES

We are accepting two types of applications for the Backbone role:

- A. An **existing organization** may apply to take on the role of the Backbone
- B. A **partnership of organizations** may jointly apply to play the Backbone role

We want to make explicit that **both types of applicants are encouraged to apply.**

### 4. SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR INTERESTED APPLICANTS

The following questions are intended to assist applicants in assessing their own capacity and interest for serving as the Backbone. Your organization may be qualified if you answer “yes” to the majority of the questions listed below.

*Is your organization or collaborative partnership:*

- Currently **based in the Rio Grande Valley** or willing to develop a full-time presence there?
- Perceived as a **neutral convener or servant leader** as opposed to an advocate of specific viewpoints?
- Viewed as a **credible organization with deep relationships, partnerships, and knowledge** within the RGV?
- Culturally competent** in working with largely under-resourced, Hispanic communities such as those within the RGV?
- Experienced in the **skills** of strategy development, group facilitation, data analysis, and public and community advocacy and communication?
- Able to work with the Steering Committee to fundraise **sufficient financial resources** to sustain dedicated staff members?

### 5. SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Responses to the questions below should address the applicant’s approach to founding, operating, and sustaining a Backbone that fulfills the roles and responsibilities described in Section 2.

Aggregate responses should not exceed 2,500 words.

- Why** do you want to serve as the Backbone for this effort?
  - How does this **fit** with your existing work or mission?
  - What **obstacles** might you/your organization face functioning as the Backbone?

- c. What general **challenges** would you foresee in establishing the Backbone for this collective impact effort?
- II. Please **detail your expertise in the following key areas**:
- a. *Topical* expertise in health, with a focus on prevention and/or management of diabetes or other chronic diseases.
  - b. *Functional* expertise in strategy development, group facilitation, data analysis, and community advocacy and communication.
  - c. *Regional* expertise in the RGV, including level of knowledge, relationships, and partnerships with key stakeholders in the Valley.
  - d. *Cultural* expertise working with low-income, Hispanic, border, and/or bi-national populations.
- III. How would you **establish / maintain an identity as a neutral convener or servant leader**?
- IV. How would you plan to **launch and staff** a Backbone of 3+ FTEs?
- a. Please include a **time** estimate for how soon you could staff the effort and begin work if selected.
  - b. If you are not currently located in the RGV, please indicate how would you **establish a physical presence** as well as build key **relationships** in the Valley.
  - c. What **data capacity** do you currently have? How would you further develop that capacity to support this work?
- V. How would you develop and manage the effort's financial **sustainability plan**, particularly as the effort grows to 3+ FTEs plus associated costs?
- a. How might you identify and apply for **grant support** and/or **establish ongoing revenue sources**?
  - b. What do you see as other opportunities to **mobilize resources** for this effort?
  - c. If possible, please include a **recent financial statement** (e.g., Form 990) with your application.
- VI. *[For partnerships only]* How do you plan to partner to fill the Backbone role?
- a. As a partnership, how will you hire or assign a **Backbone Director** (e.g., will one organization lead this process or will it be co-lead; who will incorporate the Backbone director into their staff)?
  - b. As a partnership, how will you fill the **other staff roles** (e.g., which partner will help find and support a Data Manager, how will you identify a Project Coordinator)?
  - c. In what ways does this partnership use the **strengths of each partner** organizations to jointly support the Backbone function?
  - d. How would you **foster coordination** between partners so that the Backbone team functions as a cohesive team?

## 6. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All submissions should be emailed to [matt.duffy@fsg.org](mailto:matt.duffy@fsg.org) no later than **Monday, May 4th**. All applicants will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your proposal.

## 7. SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

Each applicant will be **evaluated using consistent criteria** developed from the roles and responsibilities of a Backbone outlined in Section 2 (including, but not limited to, neutrality, ability to collect and analyze data, effective communications and advocacy abilities, ability to mobilize resources). Following initial review by members of the Steering Committee, **a subset of applicants will be chosen as finalists**. Finalists will be invited to interview with Steering Committee members at a mutually convenient time, and the Steering Committee will select the Backbone applicant by **early June**.

## 8. QUESTIONS

All **questions** regarding this RFP may be emailed to [matt.duffy@fsg.org](mailto:matt.duffy@fsg.org).

Two **informational webinars** will be held for prospective applicants on **March 26<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-2:30PM** Central Time.. This webinar will be hosted by FSG, a mission-driven consulting firm who is helping the Unidos Contra Diabetes Steering Committee with the RFP process. The webinar will consist of a 30 minute presentation by FSG on the RFP process followed by 60 minutes of open Q&A from participants. The content will be the same on both dates. Participants can join by the webinar to see the presentation, or simply call into the conference line for audio-only participation. Details on joining the webinar sessions are as follows:

### Option 1:

Thursday, March 26, 2015 1:00 -2:30 PM CT

[Register here](#) for webinar or dial in using the following conference line information:

Conference line: 1-877-260-5774; Access code: 8716026651#

### Option 2:

Thursday April 9, 2015 1:00 – 2:30 PM CT

[Register here](#) for webinar or dial in using the following conference line information:

Conference line: 1-877-260-5774; Access code: 8716026651#

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Please contact [matt.duffy@fsg.org](mailto:matt.duffy@fsg.org) for any questions regarding the informational webinars.

Applicants may find the following, four-part blog series in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* – [Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact](#) – to be useful in understanding the experiences of other Backbones involved in similar efforts. The *Stanford Social*

*Innovation Review* articles, [Collective Impact](#) and [Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work](#) may also provide relevant background.