Diagnostic Excellence–Age-Friendly Health Systems (DxEx–AFHS) Seed Grant Program

Improving Diagnosis for Older Adults

**Request for Proposals
Cohort 2: 2025**

Contents

Introduction

The Diagnostic Excellence−Age-Friendly Health Systems (DxEx−AFHS) Seed Grant Program, Cohort 2, is an initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) through support of The John A. Hartford Foundation.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is a leading, globally recognized not-for-profit health care improvement organization that has been applying evidence-based quality improvement methods to meet current and future health care challenges for more than 30 years. IHI provides millions of people in health care with methods, tools, and resources to make care better, safer, and more equitable; convenes experts to enable knowledge sharing and peer-learning; and advises health systems and hospitals of all sizes in improving their systems and outcomes at scale. IHI's mission is to innovate and lead transformational improvement in health and health care worldwide.

Request for Proposals

This DxEx−AFHS Cohort 2 Request for Proposals is seeking to identify novel ways to improve the care and outcomes of older adults (age 65+ years) through the reliable implementation of best practices and innovations in system and process designs supporting age-friendly diagnostic practices. The Age-Friendly Health Systems (AFHS) initiative focuses on reliably providing a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care to older adults, known as the 4Ms: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility. The 4Ms will also serve as the approach to improvement in diagnosis for older adults.

IHI, with the support of The John A. Hartford Foundation, will award up to eight (8) grants of up to $75,000 each to health care organizations to pilot-test new interventions and practices using improvement and/or implementation science that identify and test the methods, infrastructure, staff, and/or training necessary to improve diagnosis for older adults.

What is the purpose of the Seed Grant Program?

The purpose of the Seed Grant Program is to stimulate innovation in the field of diagnostic excellence and to elevate the importance of addressing related system designs within health care delivery systems. Building on prior success of the Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine (SIDM) DxQI Seed Grant Program (that funded annual cohorts totaling 52 grants), the program is now administered by IHI, maintaining the focus on research with quality improvement and implementation science in the context of age-friendly practices. View a description of the previous grant projects online.

Who is eligible to apply?

Organizations that deliver direct patient care with experience in improving diagnosis (e.g., successful in obtaining external funding for improving diagnosis) and have prior experience in enhancing care for older adults — such as achieving Age-Friendly Health Systems recognition at the Participant or Committed to Care Excellence level — are invited to apply. Preference will be given to organizations and/or health systems (whether a whole health system or a smaller facility within it) that have not received a DxEx seed grant in the past two years.

NOTE: Organizations that do NOT provide direct patient care, such as medical equipment companies, educational institutions, physician management organizations, or state hospital associations, are NOT eligible to apply for a seed grant but can partner with an eligible entity as a supporting organization. While international locations are eligible to receive a grant, you will be asked to address the importance of the problem and its potential solution to the US health care system in your proposal. To be considered, proposals must demonstrate problem importance and intervention applicability.

What are we looking for?

We are seeking proposals that focus on innovations blending the 4Ms and diagnostic excellence in a novel approach to develop reliable systems and/or processes using quality improvement (QI) and/or implementation science methods such as Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA), Six Sigma, or Lean. Successful proposals will identify and test best practice processes that integrate these two frameworks in an approach that will support non-geriatricians across all practice settings in improving diagnosis and providing excellent care for older adults. This cohort will focus its interventions on any aspects of 4Ms in the diagnostic process. Proposals must address equity, partnership with patient and families, complexity confounding the diagnostic process, and/or ageism. Organizations may propose projects in one element or one aspect of an element of the 4Ms, and/or propose a set of innovative strategies to address more than one as well as their interrelationships.

Meaningful partnership with patients and family members, in addition to incorporation of processes that seek to improve equity and mitigate disparities (including by age, race/ethnicity, gender, and/or social determinants of health), should be included in the proposal. Preference will be given to non-traditional proposing organizations and to organizations that care for historically underserved populations.

At the conclusion of the Cohort 2 seed grant period, up to two (2) grant projects will be chosen for case study development. The case studies will then be disseminated via the Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative to facilitate adoption of the innovations undertaken and evidence of effectiveness as identified through the DxEx–AFHS Seed Grant Program.

We are NOT looking for projects that:

- Measure the burden or causes of diagnostic error without offering an intervention.
- Develop new interventions in a laboratory or other isolated setting without testing them for patient care outcomes.

- Focus on new diagnostic tests without a QI intervention that emphasizes reduction in diagnostic error.
- Are retrospective case studies with no planned QI intervention.
- Evaluate the efficacy of a medical treatment or modality.
- Are primarily scientific research with no operational quality improvement implementation process planned at the system level.

What is the length of the grant period?

Awardees will have **15 months** to complete their projects.

Important dates

Application Portal Opens	September 25, 2024
Informational Webinar	October 17, 2024 12 PM ET **Register for the webinar**
Application Deadline	November 8, 2024, 11:59 PM ET
Award Announcement	December 18, 2024
Project Start	January 2025
Project Completion	June 2026

Program participation requirements

- Participate in the Cohort Kickoff virtual webinar after grant awards are announced (to be held in January 2025).
- Participate in a half-day, in-person network session to be held in March 2025 (date and time TBD) at the IHI Patient Safety Congress in San Diego, CA. Applicant must commit to attending to be eligible for a grant award.
- Ensure that appropriate team members are actively engaged in project activities.
- Participate in quarterly learning network webinars.
- Submit quarterly status reports, a formal mid-cohort report, and final year-end reports.
- Participate in a second half-day, in-person network session to be held in conjunction with the closing and celebratory event at the close of the grant project period.
- Participate in cohort collaboration and networking activities.
- Participate in team coaching calls with an IHI Improvement Advisor and faculty.
- Ensure that your organization's institutional review board (IRB) is aware of the proposed project, if required by your organization, and appropriate authorization is obtained prior to the start of project activities.

- Work with an IHI Improvement Advisor and writer to develop a case study describing your work and results, including team participation in an interview and review and approval of case study drafts.
- Identify an Executive Sponsor who will provide ongoing leadership and support throughout the entire grant period.
- **Budget for travel expenses** for two (2) in-person events for one (1) attendee per organization are required (at least $5,500 recommended).

What do I need to submit?

Please submit the following materials by **November 8, 2024, 11:59 PM ET.**

View the application step-by-step guide

A completed application that includes, among other requirements:
1. Statement of aims/goals of proposed innovation strategy.
2. Detailed description of project plan.
3. Description of meaningful patient or family engagement (PFE). Proposals that lack meaningful PFE components will NOT be considered.
4. Description of processes to improve equity and mitigate disparities. Proposals that lack meaningful equity components will NOT be considered.
5. The name and contact information of the Project Lead and other core team members and their roles. Ideally, the project team includes a leader in diagnostic excellence and a leader in geriatric medicine.
6. Detailed budget that addresses personnel, project costs, and attendance at in-person events.
7. A short bibliography.
8. Identify in the "Crosswalk of the 4Ms of Age-Friendly Care and the Principles of Diagnostic Excellence" diagram the area(s) this innovation will impact.
9. Name and contact information of an Executive Sponsor. The Executive Sponsor should be an individual who has the leadership authority to ensure that the grant work obtains the resources it needs to ensure its completion and success over the course of the grant period, and that all the requirements of the grant including submission of final reports are met.
10. A Letter of Support from any third-party partner that is deemed critical to the success of the project, such as a vendor or other for-profit entity, medical school, state hospital, etc.

Program funding

Stipend disbursement for grantees, described in the grant agreement contract, will be divided into two payments with 50 percent at the beginning of the grant period and 50 percent after submission and acceptance of a nine-month report.

How to Apply

Step 1: Join informational webinar (optional)

Interested applicants are encouraged to participate in a webinar on **October 17, 2024**.

[Register for the webinar](#)

Step 2: Apply online

Applications must be submitted online by **November 8, 2024, 11:59 PM ET**.

[View the grant application and apply](#)

For questions, please contact jstcyr@ihi.org.