



Healthy Beginnings with Title V: Advancing Anti-Racism in Preterm Birth Prevention

Title V Request for Application

Deadline to Respond: Friday, June 4, 2021 by 11:59 pm EST

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) is currently accepting applications for participation in the Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice Cohort. See below for:

1. RFA Summary
2. Program Background
3. Program Elements and Expectations
4. Interest Form
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RFA SUMMARY

The Healthy Beginnings with Title V: Advancing Anti-Racism in Preterm Birth Prevention program will convene six teams comprised of state maternal and child health (MCH) agencies and community-based organizations, Tribal governments and Tribal organizations in an 18-month Learning and Practice cohort. The cohort will identify and address racism in policy, data and funding structures at the state level that sustain inequities in perinatal health, including preterm birth, in Black, Latine/x, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color.

Advancing Anti-Racism—Are You Ready to Join?

- ✓ Interest in improving support for Black, Latine/x, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color to advance anti-racism in perinatal health.
- ✓ Capacity and desire to be led by community-based organizations (CBOs), Tribal governments, or Tribal organizations, on how to equitably partner with and support activities to prevent preterm birth and protect positive birth outcomes and perinatal health in BIPOC communities.
- ✓ Interest in learning and collaborating with local organizations and other states to deconstruct racist policies, data, and funding structures.
- ✓ Interest in influencing racial equity at a state level to transform policies and programs to improve preterm birth prevention.

Quick Details

Request for Applications Released: Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Applications Due: Friday, June 4, 2021, by 11:59 pm ET

Selection Announcement: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Project Period: July 2021 – December 2022

Number of Participants: Up to 6 state MCH/CBO teams

Point of Contact: Jessica Stieger (jstieger@amchp.org); and Shanel Tage (stage@amchp.org).

Advancing Anti-Racism in MCH

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) is stepping up, and *we're all in*. AMCHP's mission is to lead and support programs nationally to protect and promote the optimal health of women, children, youth, families, and communities. We cannot fully achieve this goal unless we acknowledge that racism is a public health crisis and directly impacts the health outcomes of our communities and those we serve. AMCHP is committed to rolling up our sleeves with you to actively work to dismantle racism and bring about real change. We, in AMCHP, are focused on health equity and must infuse this in all that we do. Although we've made progress, there is much more to be done.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

AMCHP understands that our members within the State and territory Title V programs are seeking resources, guidance, and conversation for centering health equity and racial equity in efforts to improve maternal and infant health and halt the production of racial disparities in these outcomes. However, Title V programs cannot effectively do this without co-creation with the communities they serve and learning and practicing the principles of anti-racism. Through the support of Pritzker Children’s Initiative and W.K. Kellogg Foundation, AMCHP has convened a steering committee of racial equity champions and thought leaders who will select, pair and guide six state MCH agencies and local CBO/Tribal government or Tribal organization teams in an 18-month learning and practice cohort.

COMMUNITIES LEADING THE CHARGE

Title V programs should engage with community-based organizations that have staff and leadership who mirror the lived experience and culture of the people they serve and who are actively dismantling systemic inequities. CBOs meet the unique needs of the population they serve by addressing root causes of disparities in several ways. They disrupt toxic stress caused by racism and discrimination. They address intersectional factors such as housing and food insecurity, safety, and racial dislocation. They also provide social and community support that restores power. By providing culturally reflective care, community-centered programs deliver supportive services that are protective for a variety of health outcomes, including perinatal health. However, CBOs face consistent barriers. Public health agencies, health care systems, funders, and policymakers often do not recognize or lift up the work of CBOs. We want to change that.

Project Overview—The Big Picture

In July 2021, AMCHP will launch an 18-month capacity building project that will bring together teams from six states as a cohort to learn about and practice dismantling racism in state health department policies and practices. The goal of this project is to build transformational partnerships between Title V/ MCH agencies and CBOs and Tribal governments and organizations. These collaborative alliances will aim to dismantle policies and programs that perpetuate racism through inequities in funding and support the sustainment and spread of community innovations. The Learning and Practice cohort will be comprised of six state teams including MCH staff and birth justice community leaders supporting Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/ Latine/x, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other people of color, including distinct cultural groups marginalized by white supremacist culture. Together, they will affirm the state health agency’s commitment to an anti-racist agenda that will focus on increasing access to culturally reflective and community-rooted services demonstrated to improve birth outcomes.

The Goal—Target Outcomes

- Identify levels and impacts of racism in everyday MCH practice.
- Foster sustainable and equitable relationships between state MCH programs and CBOs.
- Develop action plans for the following:
 - Identify racist policies and programs that perpetuate inequities in MCH funding, such as barriers to the allocation and the distribution of funding to CBOs.
 - Identify actions the MCH program can take to support the investment in and sustainability of community solutions that protect birth outcomes for Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/ Latine/x, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other birthing people of color.

Communities Guiding Title V—*Putting Lessons into Practice*

[The Healthy Beginnings with Title V: Advancing Anti-Racism in Preterm Birth Prevention program](#) centers and values the expertise of on-the-ground leadership and lived experiences of community members. Through this program, we, as the Learning and Practice cohort, will hold each other accountable and acknowledge our collective and individual roles in directly or unintentionally enabling and/or supporting systems of inequity. Thus, we will be guided by Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/ Latine/x, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other birth justice community leaders to challenge state-level MCH agencies’ policies and practices to push forward strategies in dismantling racist and inequitable systems. Last March, we convened a Strategic Action to Prevent Preterm Birth meeting. During that meeting, we identified key strategies that serve as the drivers of this project’s objectives. Here are the ways we aim to transform state level policies and practices to be anti-racist:

ANTI-RACIST STRATEGIES FOR PRETERM BIRTH PREVENTION

Data	<p>1. Ensure perinatal and social determinants data are inclusive, relevant, and accessible to all stakeholders.</p> <hr/> <p>2. Invest in comprehensive perinatal data systems for states and community-based organizations</p>
Funding	<p>3. Restructure Title V funding requirements to support community-based organization and interdisciplinary perinatal providers with an anti-racist, equity-centered, reproductive justice framework.</p> <hr/> <p>4. Cover the costs of necessary supports to prevent preterm birth (clinical and non-clinical – the comprehensive perinatal workforce) with public and private funds (governmental and health insurance).</p>

PROGRAM ELEMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Eligibility Criteria—*Are You a Match?*

- ✓ Demonstrated, internal commitment to health equity. Yes No
- ✓ Ready and willing to reflect on your state’s institutional history and contributions to structural inequities, including racism. Yes No
- ✓ Endorsement of your state health official or other key approving entities for your application, and assurance from these decision-makers that your Title V program will be championed and supported in implementing the anti-racist strategies co-created with CBOs. Yes No
- ✓ Dedicated team to participate in the Learning and Practice cohort. Yes No

Commitment—*What to Expect*

1. **Virtual networking and discussion space**—The Learning and Practice cohort will have access to a virtual platform to share and discuss activities, pre-recorded learning content and other materials.
2. **Monthly virtual learning events**—Learning events will take place for 60 minutes approximately every month.
3. **Facilitated action planning and goal setting sessions**—Collaboration with the paired CBO/Tribal government/Tribal organization to identify key activities to support policy development and/or implementation.
4. **Time commitment**—Learning activities will vary month to month with at least one 60-minute meeting each month. In addition, dedicating oneself to an anti-racist practice means continually reflecting on the decisions you make every day, why you make those decisions, and considering how to do your work differently. The benefits of participating in this Learning and Practice cohort will increase based on the amount of time committed to practicing the skills and process of anti-racism.

Participant Benefits—*The Perks*

- ✓ Guidance from leaders and champions who support BIPOC birthing people in your state.
- ✓ Access to reproductive justice and racial equity experts via Steering Committee advisors.
- ✓ Establish and foster a sustainable relationship with a local community or tribal organization.
- ✓ Peer-to-peer connections and networking opportunities.
- ✓ Technical assistance from AMCHP, federal and national partners, and other subject matter experts.
- ✓ AMCHP staff support for your state’s submission of practices to [Innovation Hub](#).

Tentative Timeline

The Healthy Beginnings Learning & Practice cohort will commence on July 1, 2021 and end December 31, 2022 (18 months).

RFA Release: 5/4/2021

Q&A Call: 5/13/2021 @ 1PM EST

<http://bit.ly/QARFA>

RFA Submission Due: 6/4/2021

Teams Announced: 6/15/2021

Project Start: 7/1/2021

Application Instructions

To indicate your interest in participating in the Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice cohort, please complete the form below. For all questions related to the submission process, please contact [Jessica Stieger \(jsteiger@amchp.org\)](mailto:jsteiger@amchp.org) and [Shanel Tage \(stage@amchp.org\)](mailto:stage@amchp.org).

For updates and additional information regarding the Healthy Beginnings project, please visit the Healthy Beginnings [webpage](#) on AMCHP’s website.

Healthy Beginnings with Title V: Advancing Anti-Racism in Preterm Birth Prevention

APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the following application form and return to [Shanel Tague \(stage@amchp.org\)](mailto:stage@amchp.org) and [Jessica Stieger \(jstieger@amchp.org\)](mailto:jstieger@amchp.org) by Friday, June 4, 2021 by 11:59 pm ET

MCH Department			
Address			
Primary Contact		Secondary Contact	
Title/Role		Title/Role	
Phone		Phone	
Email		Email	
Racial/Ethnic Identity		Racial/Ethnic Identity	

Please submit a letter that addresses the following questions below, the above contact information, and signed statement of participation (below). Please also attach a letter of support from your state’s health official endorsing your department’s participation in the Learning and Practice cohort.

1. **Capacity**--Describe your Title V program’s familiarity with racial equity and any current work to be anti-racist in your programs and services. Provide any relevant organizational policies, plans, programs, or publications as attachments to this application.
2. **Community Connection**-- Share 2 stories or examples of partnerships with community-based organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latine/Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color. How were these partnerships important to you and your work? What did you learn from these partnerships?
3. **Participation Interest**--What excites you about participating in this cohort? What do you hope to gain through a deeper relationship with a CBO, Tribal government, or Tribal organization that provides perinatal services to Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latine/x, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other birthing people of color?
4. **Barriers**—What potential challenges, barriers, or resistance can you anticipate in engaging in work to deconstruct racism in Title V policies and practices within your organization?
5. **Community Identified Need**—Each team will be encouraged to focus on only one of the four anti-racist strategies to prevent preterm birth (see page 4). The ultimate selection of the strategy area will be through collaborative discussions with the matched CBO/Tribal government/Tribal organization. Please highlight the perceived need to focus on each of the strategy areas within your state.
6. **Team Composition**—Please provide information for each proposed team member (Please include at least your state’s MCH Director and Epidemiologist. Colleagues within perinatal health, home visiting, Medicaid/payment reform, FIMR or MMRC administration are highly encouraged to participate):

	Name	Title/Role	Email	Racial/Ethnic Identity
1		Title V Director		
2		Epidemiologist		
3				
4				
5				

STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION

Please read the statement of participation and provide a signature below.

Commitment to Collaboration –Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice Cohort

In the spirit of collaboration, AMCHP is committed to working with and supporting community-based organizations and tribal government and tribal organization teams. In this regard, AMCHP will provide the following to selected organizations:

- ✓ Creating an environment of respect, engagement, and co-creation between state health agencies and community-based organizations and tribal governments or organizations.
- ✓ Transparency and honesty.
- ✓ Virtual programming through a series of learning events.
- ✓ Facilitated virtual action planning and goal setting sessions with CBO/tribal government or organization teams.
- ✓ Peer-to-peer connections and networking opportunities.
- ✓ Sharing and dissemination of states’ resources and materials.
- ✓ Robust technical assistance from AMCHP, steering committee, and subject matter experts.

Commitment to Collaboration –State/Territory Team & CBO Partnership

In the spirit of collaboration, our team is committed to working with AMCHP, the steering committee, and our team CBO/Tribal government or Tribal organization. In this regard, our state MCH department agrees to:

- ✓ Identify at least 2 team members to represent our agency in cohort meetings and communication.
- ✓ Co-develop a state action plan with the selected CBO/Tribal government or Tribal organization in our state.
- ✓ Attend all required virtual meetings to the best of our ability.
- ✓ Actively participate in project evaluation activities, such as evaluations of individual learning events.

Title V Director: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLANNING AHEAD

Thank you for submitting your Application Form! We are excited to learn more about your department's work and hope that we can work with you in the Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice cohort. For updates and additional information, please visit the Healthy Beginnings [webpage](#) on AMCHP's website.

Please read the outline below to understand how we select ideal state MCH agencies for the Learning and Practice cohort.

Selection Priorities for State MCH Program Participation in Healthy Beginnings Cohort:

- ✓ Demonstrated, internal commitment to racial equity.
- ✓ Ready and willing to reflect on state's institutional history and contributions to structural inequities, including racism.
- ✓ Endorsement of their state health officials or other key approving entities for their application, and assurance from these decision-makers that they will be championed and supported in implementing the anti-racist strategies co-created with community-based organizations.
- ✓ Dedicated team to participate in Learning and Practice cohort.

In addition to this application, AMCHP also released an Expression of Interest to request CBOs, Tribal governments, and Tribal organizations to participate in the Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice cohort. State MCH departments, will only be selected if a local CBO/Tribal government or Tribal organization in your state also submits an Expression of Interest Form; and there is a strong match between the interests and capacity of the local organization and the state MCH program. Sharing this opportunity with local community organizations to participate is highly encouraged (Expression of interest: <https://bit.ly/HealthyBegEOI>). See the outline below to understand how we select ideal state and community partnerships for the cohort.

Selection Priorities for CBO/Tribal Government/Organization Participation in Cohort:

- ✓ Intentionally serve Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/ Latine/x, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other birthing people of color, including distinct cultural groups made marginalized by white supremacist culture.
- ✓ Organizational activities support birthing people during the perinatal period and are able to estimate the number of families/individuals who were reached as a result of funding support.
- ✓ Leadership is racially and ethnically diverse and is representative of the communities they serve.
- ✓ Has the capacity to directly receive or otherwise assign a fiscal agent to execute a contract between their organization and AMCHP (for disbursement of funds).

Tentative Timeline

The Learning and Practice cohort will commence on July 1, 2021 and end December 31, 2022 (18 months). AMCHP will release the Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice Cohort RFA on Tuesday, May 4, 2021. AMCHP will host a Q&A call Wednesday, May 13 at 1 PM EST <http://bit.ly/QARFA>. The deadline to submit the application form and letter of support is 11:59 pm ET on Friday, June 4, 2021. The six selected state MCH and CBO/Tribal government/Tribal organization teams will be announced by Tuesday, June 15, 2021.