



Pathways to a Healthy
Kansas

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas
Pathways to a Healthy Kansas Application
2027-2028 Grant Cycle
Frequently Asked Question**

- 1. What is the relationship between Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas and Pathways to a Healthy Kansas?** BCBSKS is conducting a number of activities under its Blue Health Initiatives umbrella in the 103 counties that make up the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas service area. The mission of Blue Health Initiatives is to invest in communities to create sustainable, healthy places where Kansans live, work and play in ways that improve the quality of their lives. Pathways to a Healthy Kansas is one of the Blue Health Initiatives activities, focused on taking a holistic approach to support communities through evidence-based solutions and promising practices to improve health across multiple sectors by providing community coalitions with tools and resources needed to remove barriers and engage their community.
- 2. What is the length of the grant period?** That grant period is two years running from Jan. 1, 2027 – Dec. 31, 2028.
- 3. What is the total amount available to communities over that two-year period?** The competitive coordination grant will be \$100,000 over two years (\$50,000 distributed annually). Once funded, communities will have access to noncompetitive implementation grant funds up to \$150,000 per community. The total per community will depend on which five packages the coalition selects to work on during the grant cycle.
- 4. What is the difference between the Coordination Grant and the Implementation Grants?** The coordination grant is the main component that is available through a competitive application process for up to 20 eligible communities. The implementation grants are then a secondary component of the coordination grant. Funds for the implementation grants are non-competitive and only available to the coordination-funded communities. Once a coalition is awarded the coordination grant, they will work with the Pathways Team to select five packages to work on with their community partners during the grant cycle. Each package completed is eligible for an implementation grant. These are non-competitive but are dependent on the coalition and partners meeting the minimum requirements for each package before an application can be submitted for the Implementation Grant.
- 5. How many communities will be funded?** Up to twenty (20) communities will be funded in the funding cycle, beginning Jan. 1, 2027, and running through Dec. 31, 2028. There will not be an additional funding cycle during this two-year period. However, we anticipate funding subsequent cycles of Pathways.



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6. **Are Tribal entities eligible to apply?** Yes. American Indian Tribe or Tribal entity recognized by the U.S. federal government or by the state of Kansas are eligible to apply for this grant as long as they are located within the 103-county BCBSKS service area.
7. **Are for-profit entities eligible to apply?** Yes, for-profit entities are eligible to apply as long as they are representing the community health coalition that will implement the work and they meet all other eligibility requirements.
8. **Can multiple entities apply from the same county?** Yes. Any applicants submitting an LOI from the same community as another applicant will be made aware of other applicants in the community so that coalitions can determine if they want to submit combined or separate applications.
9. **Are Letters of Intent (LOI) binding?** No, your LOI is non-binding.
10. **Is this application also for the implementation grants?** No, this application is for the coordination grant only. However, only the communities that are funded for the coordination grant will be eligible to apply for implementation grants and the packages selected in the application provides direction on what implementation grants the coalition would like to work towards.
11. **When are implementation grants available?** Implementation grants will be available on a rolling basis during the two-year coordination grant cycle in 2027-2028. To receive implementation grant funds, the coalition and their community partner must complete the minimum requirements for the selected packages. Then an application must be submitted for each implementation grant through the BCBSKS grant management system. Applications for implementation grants will be due no later than Sept. 30, 2028, to ensure they can be processed during the grant cycle.
12. **Will a community work on only one or a few of the five Community Pathways?** Coalitions awarded the coordination grant will be asked to select a package to work on from each of the five Pathways. Some exceptions can be made so that either two packages can be selected from one pathway instead of one from each (still a total of five) or if there is not a good fit, a coalition may choose to work on only four packages (one each from four pathways). Once the selected packages have been approved by BCBSKS, partners will work on all the approved packages during the grant cycle. However, the community is not guaranteed to get implementation funding for each package. The minimum requirements of the package, policy work and implementation plans must be completed prior to August 31, 2028, for a partner to be able to submit an implementation grant request. If this deadline is not met, the package will be considered discontinued for the grant cycle.



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- 13. Do we need to have a “shovel-ready” plan for each package when we apply?** No. For the grant application, you will need to select one package from each pathway and provide information on why your coalition is interested in working on the selected packages and what partners have been identified. Once the selected packages are approved by BCBSKS, communities will work with the Pathways Team on completing the package minimum requirements and developing an implementation plan during the grant cycle.
- 14. If our coalition worked on a package that was discontinued during the grant cycle, can we select the same package for the next cycle?** Yes, if the coalition is awarded a coordination grant in the next cycle, the discontinued package can be selected again. All packages will still be approved by BCBSKS before the coalition begins work in the next cycle.
- 15. Are the packages selected in the application process the only ones the coalition will be able to work on during the grant period?** No. The coalition will work with the Pathways Team to determine if the selected packages are the best fit before the packages are approved. If something changes in the community between the application and the start of the grant cycle, the coalition can select a different package.
- 16. What is the purpose of the pledge?** The pledges are a way to set clear expectations for partners about what the package work will entail. Additionally, pledges provide the opportunity for partner organizations to show public commitment to engage in the work. The pledges provide the coalition a mechanism to confirm commitment for their community partners, measure progress, organize resources and improve communication around the grant activities. The pledges are non-binding.
- 17. Are the pledges available for review?** The minimum requirements of the pledge are included in the Application Booklet. We can provide an example of the pledges. Please reach out to Blue.Health.Initiatives@bcbsks.com.
- 18. What is the purpose of the site visit?** The site visit is part of the selection process. This provides the BCBSKS Pathways Team the opportunity to meet with finalists to gain understanding about the community the applicant plans to serve. The site visit will help in determining community commitment, readiness and capacity to complete the cross-sector work required for this grant.
- 19. Does the fiscal agent have to be the same as the coalition?** The fiscal agent may be the coalition, if the coalition’s organizational status meets one of the criteria of the organizations eligible to apply, such as a 501(c)3. Or the fiscal agent may be a coalition member organization on behalf of the coalition. Fiscal sponsorship documentation will be required.
- 20. Our coalition has been fluid over the years. When it comes to meeting dates and coalition members for the Letter of Intent, there are gaps throughout the years depending on where we were in the work and overlap on membership. Do we still qualify as an active coalition? If**



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your coalition has been in existence for some time, but varied depending on grant funding and focus, please explain the gaps in the Coalition Description section of the LOI. You will be asked to submit current documentation such as bylaws, mission/vision/values, and fiscal oversight at the time of the application process, which will be factored into the application score during review.

26. Are there any urban/rural considerations in the selection process? No. Eligible communities of all sizes are encouraged to apply.

21. How much can be included in the budget for indirect costs? Indirect costs cannot exceed 10% of the overall direct costs in the coordination budget.

22. Can grant funds be used for travel? Yes, travel to the BCBSKS Pathways Spring and Fall Learning Session events should be included in the travel line item in the Coordination Budget. Additional in-state travel may also be budgeted if it supports grant activities.

23. Does the applicant organization have to be insured by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas to be funded? No. Pathways to a Healthy Kansas is an initiative to help improve the health of all Kansans and funding is not limited to only those entities who carry Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas insurance. The coalition or organization applying as the fiduciary agent does need to meet the criteria outlined in the RFA, including being within the BCBSKS 103-county service area, which does not include Johnson or Wyandotte counties.

24. Can one organization that works in two or more communities apply? If an organization wants to apply for a community that includes contiguous counties that is fine, but the counties are required to work together not as multiple coalitions.

27. Will preference be given to previously funded communities? Will returning applicants be judged equally with no consideration toward any prior Pathways work they may have completed previously? Previous grantees' work can be used as evidence of their capacity to do the work however they will be evaluated independent of being previous grantees. All applicants will be considered through an external review process. Reviewers will be selected that are not familiar with previous grantees to ensure a fair process.

28. How many FTE or hours are expected to be used monthly and or what kind of time commitment by how many people are needed? This is entirely dependent on how the coalitions feels they will have the most success and what packages are selected. The grant is a coordination grant, so the expectation is that the coordinator will not be the only person in the coalition completing the work for the grant packages.

29. Would this grant pay for a part-time person to coordinate efforts? The grant funds will distribute as \$50,000 per year, however, that includes travel and other costs they coalition



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must cover to coordinate the grant. How much of that can go toward a coordinator's salary will depend on community-specific factors. The grant was designed with the expectation that this is more than part time work, so match for the coordinator's salary should be covered by a partner organization for long-term sustainability.

- 30. Can communities have two co-coordinators?** Yes, it is possible that communities may have two coordinators. There should be no more than two coordinator contacts that would be communicating with BCBSKS. The coordinator position allows for a clear line of communication between the Pathways
- 31. Team and the coalition.**
- 32. Will technical assistance (TA) services be like previous grant cycles of Pathways, or will there be different/additional types of TA?** Technical assistance will be similar. The Pathways Team includes the Wichita State Community Engagement Institute, Seed 2 Roots, Kansas Health Institute, CML Collective and Thrive Kansas. Additional package specific TA partners, such as More Than Food, who provide TA for the Food Pantry/Food Reclamation package are also available.
- 33. Are there any required partners, given the specific social determinant pathways?** This will depend on your package selection. Additional details are provided in the Application Booklet.