

## INNOVATION INCUBATOR 2024 FAQ

### About the Program

#### Why nutritious food?

Health centers have historically offered and inspired approaches to incorporating the principles of nutritious food into service delivery programs. The importance of integrating nutritious food into clinical care can slow or reverse the impacts of chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and/or heart disease.

NACHC recognizes the impact food access and food system innovation can have. The aim of the Innovation Incubator 2024 is to seek these innovative solutions tailored for medically underserved communities. Health centers also realize that nutritional intervention is doable. This is thanks to a long history of mobilizing community partnerships during times of emergency, and because of the centrality of access to nutrition in the efficacy of health care. The potential outcome of the work will generate invaluable insights and identify sustainable innovations.

#### What type of time commitment are selected health centers expected to commit to designing and testing their solutions?

Our team estimates all participating teams will spend about 57.5 hours total, or about 8.5 hours a month, or 2 hours per week. These dedicated hours include all participant meetings, time with your coach, self-paced modules, additional activities and homework, pitch practicing, the in-person pitch training, and the final pitch session.

This time does not take into consideration the time that you will spend engaging with patients, since that number widely varies from health center to health center.

### Application Process

#### I applied to the Innovation Incubator 2023 but was not selected. Can I still apply?

Yes!

#### What are some examples of potential solutions?

Consistent with human-centered design approaches, the solutions should be entirely driven by the needs of the target patient population.

Example – a health center may find that their patient population would benefit from partnerships to teach healthy food preparation in patient populations struggling with high rates of diabetes and obesity. Another example is collaborating with local farmers to create “farmacies” of fresh produce in “food deserts” where there is limited access to affordable and nutritious food.

## Is there a requirement that our solution has a technological element, since there is a technological utilization question on the application?

No, your solution does not need to have a technological component. We do encourage you to remain open to changes in your current solution as you might have different ideas throughout the process, which may include the help of existing technology. Do note, you will need a way to track and measure your progress.

## I already have a solution, can I apply?

We ask that health centers apply with a challenge. While you may already have a partnership with a Food Bank, you might be looking at how to close the referral loop. We encourage you to apply with the mindset of what challenge the current program is facing and how you think the Incubator program can help you design a solution.

## What should my organization's team consist of? Are staff required to attend virtual and in-person meetings?

Your organization's team can be made up of any position or level within your company. Cross-functional area teams are highly recommended as they spark challenging dialogue and innovative solutions (ex. team members from communications, grant writing departments, clinical, etc.). During 2023, we saw the core teams involve others in the health centers to incorporate other perspectives in the solution design.

Overall, we encourage teams to be made up of multiple people, **but at least two team members are required to attend the in-person pitch session training, June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (learn more below), and attend virtual meetings, including the virtual pitch that will be conducted in October.** The more people the easier it is to meet deadlines, but larger teams require close communication.

## Grant & Reimbursement

### What will NACHC be covering as far as costs for the Innovation Incubator work?

Selected health centers will be awarded \$30,000 in seed funding to ideate and test their sustainable solutions. This money may be used for staff time, to start new ideas, or purchase necessary tools to advance the solution. In addition, health centers will receive a travel stipend to attend in-person meetings and events.

### What does grant reporting look like, and how frequently does it occur?

The program functions based on assignments. All assignments are meant to be completed as a team, with the help of a NACHC Coach. Assignments are done throughout the project, and health centers are required to submit one final report by December 2024. All modules are meant to be completed by deadlines to alleviate large workloads. Furthermore, all assignments are designed to further your experience and give you the tools and information you need to have a successful pitch.



Throughout the program, we encourage health centers to keep track of their data. At the end of the program, health centers will be asked to report on some key data elements, such as number of patients engaged, and answer three final worksheets on final reporting, measurement, and sustainability.