

The Connecticut Project

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Connecticut Benefits Utilization Study

Issue Date: Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Proposal Deadline: Monday, February 26, 2024*

Through TCP's commitment to equity and understanding that organizations face many competing priorities, an organization may request additional time to submit a proposal which would not impact the weight of their submission

Virtual Information Session (Optional): Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlf-qhpzkhHdGn8ZRrWXDw4R12qTOEHt1w>

Selection Notification: Targeted for March 15, 2024

Project Summary:

The Connecticut Project concentrates our efforts on issues that improve families' abilities to achieve long-term social and economic mobility and success: increasing access to safe and affordable housing; ensuring every child has access to an affordable and high-quality early childhood education; increasing economic opportunity by improving access to financial safety net programs, well-paying, stable jobs, and wealth-building supports; and ensuring our state's governance and resources are responsive to and supportive of the needs of low-income and asset-limited people. Additionally, we support intersectional issues facing low-income and asset-limited households, including healthcare access, the criminal legal system, and the specific needs of immigrants. To learn more about The Connecticut Project, visit [here](#).

The Connecticut Project seeks a partner to identify public benefits that provide the greatest benefit, monetary and otherwise, to the greatest number of people, and which may be underutilized, and thus ripe for enrollment support in Connecticut. This study aims to gain comprehensive insights into 1) the opportunities to improve public benefit utilization in CT, including initial assessment of the effectiveness of the largest existing public assistance offerings, 2) barriers to utilization, and 3) recommended approaches to enhance accessibility and support for Connecticut's low-income asset-limited residents.

Scope of Work

Phase 1 – Discovery (Estimated 3 months)

1. **Research and collect public benefits data.** The goal of Phase 1 is to capture

comprehensive information about the opportunity to improve access to existing public benefits for low-income, asset-limited residents in Connecticut. Disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, etc., this information may include:

- a. Benefit overview,
 - b. Administering agency details, and organizations that support enrollment,
 - c. Eligibility criteria, noting differences in state and federal criteria for that funding stream,
 - d. Application methods,
 - e. Documentation and administering agency processing,
 - f. Recertification process,
 - g. Current number of enrolled individuals, total and per capita average benefit,
 - h. Difference between the number of participants and qualified individuals,
 - i. Estimation of impact if there was full benefit participation on key economic indicators (supplemental FPL, family income, or other proposed measure),
 - j. Preliminary recommendations for TCP follow-up work on low utilization, high-impact benefits for population groups,
 - k. Preliminary identification of barriers and challenges in the application process that clients might have to overcome,
 - l. Recommendations inclusive of policy suggestions to streamline application processes and increase benefit accessibility when applicable, and
 - m. Citations.
2. The selected partner will provide TCP with sample templates at the beginning of the engagement to reach an agreement as to the type of program data to be collected and the organization of the data. TCP will work with the organization to prioritize the benefits most relevant to TCP's goals and objectives.
 3. **Technical assistance to operationalize the Connecticut Benefits data.** The selected partner will provide TCP technical assistance to (a) identify where there is the biggest mismatch between uptake and need and (b) share insights on how to improve benefit uptake. As TCP and the selected partner learn more about the benefits landscape in Connecticut, these options may be redefined by the consent of both parties.

Deliverable Phase 1: For this phase, we are interested in an internal document and discussions that will be used to shape TCP's strategy development and subsequent work in the benefits utilization area.

Optional Phase 2 Follow-Ups: TBD based on Phase 1

4. **Draft Public Materials regarding access to benefits in Connecticut.** research partners

could propose a final project public form, which would be accessible and clearly communicate to diverse audiences. For example, this may take the form of an interactive web page, dynamic report, or series of shorter pieces. TCP and the selected partner will determine the appropriate audience for various elements of the study and how to share the elements of the study with relevant community partners.

5. **Detailed Benefit Exploration and Recommendations:** Identification of the greatest needs and opportunities, which will inform recommendations for targeted programs, policies, and services. This assessment should include, but is not limited to:
- a. **Prioritization:** Identification of priority benefit streams for detailed follow-up
 - b. **Resource allocation:** What state/municipal and philanthropic investments and other resources can be directed to increase benefits utilization for those currently qualified?
 - c. **Service delivery enhancement:** How can the implementation of services most effectively increase utilization, including questions of cultural appropriateness and accessibility?
 - d. **Amplifying stakeholder voices:** What opportunities exist for greater awareness of benefits and activation of benefit recipients?
 - e. **Case Studies:** Analysis/list of good practices underway across the country that have led to increased utilization toward the goal and outcome of reducing poverty rates

*Recognizing the need to ensure the project scope is realistic and feasible, the research partner will also advise TCP on project design and how best to structure, including consideration of how the two phases might work together. *

Deliverable Phase 2: This will be determined based on the focus and details of Phase 1 of the project.

Please note: an organization may choose to submit a proposal for only the first phase or may also include proposals for deliverables in phase 2.

Proposal Format and Contents:

Proposals shall be submitted via email to nordiasavage@ctproject.org and include:

- A Project Plan including a description of activities and a draft timeline including key milestones and project deliverables.
- Steps that will be taken to acquire data that can provide credible estimates that may not be readily/publicly available.
- Short description of 2-3 examples of experience carrying out similar work.

- Project Budget.

Criteria for Selection:

- Demonstrated expertise working with, and on projects focused on, benefits access and utilization.
- Prior experience conducting benefits utilization quantification, including experience taking a multimethod, community-based approach to data collection, analysis, and synthesis.
- Strong communication skills and the ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders.
- Capacity to complete the scope of services in accordance with the timeline provided.
- Knowledge and experience working with Connecticut-based communities.

Budget/Compensation:

While cost competitiveness is appreciated, we encourage proposals that will achieve the greatest impact with the greatest feasibility and pace.

About The Connecticut Project

CT Project Mission: Founded in September 2021, The Connecticut Project (TCP) is a social change organization that mobilizes communities and resources around ideas to improve systems and generate real-world outcomes for people who are lower-income or asset-limited. We work for a just, thriving, and optimistic Connecticut where race, gender, income, geography, and other circumstances no longer predetermine opportunity.

CT Project Theory of Change: The Connecticut Project is working to transform today's Connecticut into a state in which everyone can thrive. We believe that if low-income and asset-limited people are supported and engaged, if organizations, policymakers, philanthropies, and other stakeholders work together, and if effective and sustainable programs and policies are identified and implemented, then there will be positive, lasting change in people's lives and the systems that impact them.