Advocacy Evaluation Learning Initiative
2012 Funding Request

Purpose and Rationale

Advocacy for policy solutions to pressing health problems – such as the desperate need of thousands of residents in the Foundation’s service area to receive high quality and affordable health care – is one key strategy the Foundation uses to advance our organizational mission. The Foundation intentionally seeks ways to increase the impact of our investments, especially in the policy arena. In recent years the Foundation has extended our capacity building investments to organizations that are equipped to influence local and state policymaking through advocacy. This strategic decision to invest in expanding the capacity of health care advocacy organizations is rooted in two key observations: 1) researchers have noted that “very few big social changes happen without some form of advocacy. When these efforts succeed, the results can be transformative” (Teles & Schmitt, 2011) – consider health reform as a key example – the investments in past and current advocacy toward health policy changes related to health reform extends to hundreds of millions of dollars and the best chance in US history to see meaningful change in access and delivery of health care for millions of Americans; and 2) Investments in advocacy and community engagement toward policy change have a large and measurable impact on the resultant services and care that consumers receive.

A recent report from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (Ranghelli, 2012) found in a study of 110 organizations in 13 states, that these organizations “took in $231 million from foundations and other donors for advocacy and community engagement projects and leveraged it to create $26.6 billion in benefits for communities and taxpayers, often helping some of the most marginalized groups in society. That means every dollar that grantmakers and other donors provided reaped $115 in community benefit” (Ranghelli, 2012, p. 1). The Ranghelli study is one of the first produced that attempts to quantify the impact of investments in advocacy. Social sector funders are increasingly providing support to nonprofits engaged in health policy and advocacy but often lack a coherent framework for communicating expectations; coordinating across multiple advocacy and policy goals, initiatives, grantees and funders; and assessing the short- and long-term impact of philanthropic investments and advocacy efforts.

The purpose of the Foundation’s Advocacy Evaluation Learning Initiative is to deepen the potential of nonprofit organizations in Kansas to be effective in the execution and refinement of their health advocacy and public policy strategies. Through this initiative the REACH Foundation is taking a leadership role in our region and nationally to design a framework to guide multi-level capacity building as well as setting a quality threshold for evaluating the execution and effectiveness of advocacy efforts. The initiative will expand the capacity of leading advocacy organizations in Kansas to engage in meaningful and high quality evaluation of their public policy, advocacy and grassroots organizing campaigns and initiatives. An equally important purpose of the Advocacy Evaluation Learning Initiative is to expand the knowledge of Kansas healthcare foundation leaders and staff, local evaluators, and technical assistance providers in order to create a shared understanding, common language and evaluation framework that will strengthen our
collective capacity of how to consistently set expectations and goals for advocacy investments and judge the quality of the execution of the advocacy organizations and projects we fund. The proposed initiative is unique nationally in our intent to increase state-wide capacity, consistency and coordination across multiple sectors with multiple funders and multiple advocacy organizations.

**Background**

This initiative, originally conceived by REACH Foundation staff, was presented to other Kansas and Missouri-based healthcare foundations as an opportunity for partnership. In the early conceptualization phase REACH and United Methodist Health Ministries Fund agreed to collaborate based on our shared goals and the key objectives and intent of the initiative. After an invitational convening to invite additional healthcare foundations at the UMHMF offices in January, 2012, the Kansas Health Foundation formally joined the initiative as a funding partner with REACH and UMHMF. The Sunflower Foundation – already deeply involved in advocacy capacity building through their Advocacy Fellows program – declined to be a funding partner but has been, and wishes to continue to be, engaged. Subsequent conversations have positioned Sunflower’s participation as an initiative advisor with the future goal of seeking alignment between the Fellows program and the capacity building available through this initiative. In March, 2012 the three foundations invited the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City and two prominent evaluation/technical assistance organizations to a planning meeting at REACH offices with the goal of finalizing the initiative’s funding and technical partnership. At the conclusion of that meeting, HCFGKC declined to participate given their current investments in advocacy evaluation capacity building.

Two prominent national consulting organizations, the Center for Evaluation Innovation (CEI) and The TCC Group, have agreed to serve as the technical assistance (TA) team and to design and implement a framework for increasing the capacity of the leadership and staff of the three partner healthcare foundations, selected advocacy organizations, local evaluators and technical assistance providers. Below is a brief description of these two organizations and the individuals who would lead the TA team:

**Center for Evaluation Innovation** – CEI is a technical assistance provider organization focused on expanding the field of evaluation through innovations in practice and methodology. Much of their current work is focused on advocacy evaluation. This means commissioning and publishing new knowledge and tools. It also means developing and delivering training and learning opportunities for those who have a basic understanding of the field, but want to learn more so they can better apply it. CEI is also communicating and reaching out to the much larger group of individuals and organizations who still know very little about advocacy evaluation, but want to learn more about it.

_Tanya Beer_, CEI’s Associate Director will serve as the national expert and lead trainer for the Foundation’s Advocacy Evaluation Learning Initiative. At CEI she helps lead the Center’s work, with a particular focus in the areas of systems change and advocacy evaluation. Tanya has a broad range of evaluation experience in the philanthropic, nonprofit, and public sectors. Prior to joining the Center, she was Assistant Director of Research, Evaluation, and Strategic Learning at The Colorado Trust, a private foundation focused on improving the health and well being of all Coloradans. While there, she developed and managed Trust-funded evaluations, facilitated the application of evaluation and research data to
decision making, and supported knowledge sharing and learning within the foundation and with external audiences.

**TCC Group** - TCC Group's mission is to develop strategies and programs that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations, philanthropies, and corporate citizenship programs to achieve social impact. Founded as The Conservation Company in 1980, TCC Group has grown from a group of three consultants working in Philadelphia to a full-time consulting practice of more than 30 staff. With offices in New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, the firm works in local, national, and international settings. TCC Group is recognized as a leader in the design and implementation of capacity building for nonprofits and for their exceptional work in evaluation of advocacy organizations and programs.

**Jared Raynor**, TCC Group’s Director of Evaluation will lead direct technical assistance to advocacy organizations selected for this initiative. Prior to joining TCC, Raynor worked in a number of international organizations and U.S.-based development organizations. He worked for the International Rescue Committee in Azerbaijan, working with local communities and organizations affected by conflict. His work included design and evaluation for large integrated community development projects, youth program development, and enhancement of general organizational capacity for NGOs, local governments, and community-based organizations. Raynor has also worked for the United Nations in the NGO Section of the Department of Public Information, assisting with the development and implementation of several major conferences for NGOs, including post-conflict development, working on general outreach to NGOs, and coordinating media outreach efforts.

Two **Kansas-based evaluation/TA providers** have been identified to participate in this initiative – initially to be TA recipients – and in subsequent years to be key providers of evaluation/TA and training support to subsequent cohorts of participating advocacy organizations. The two individuals are both highly regarded individuals who have experience in Kansas program and policy development and implementation in health care, community development, and social services. **Dr. Brett Zollinger** is a Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Fort Hays State University. He is the past Director and a current Senior Policy Fellow of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University. **Dr. Adrienne Paine-Andrews** is a community psychologist and the former Associate Director at the KU Workgroup at the University of Kansas. She is highly regarded for her training and technical assistance skills and her proficiency in working at the community-level with local leaders, neighborhood groups, and evaluators to achieve positive change in communities.

**Scope of Work**

Best practices in advocacy evaluation place an emphasis on ongoing organizational learning, learning in the context of ongoing work, learning simultaneously from experienced practitioners and peers in a community of learners, and having an operational framework such as a theory of change for executing advocacy evaluation (see Welsh & Morariu, 2011; Weiss, 2007). Each of these best practices is reflected in the scope of work proposed for the initiative. The first year of the initiative is focused on creating an advocacy evaluation framework; piloting the framework; providing intensive training and technical assistance support to the participating funders, advocacy organizations, and community-level professionals;
and implementing a learning community. The following activities will be implemented during the first year of the initiative:

Each foundation has nominated up to 3 advocacy organizations that are current or former grantees for participation as a TA recipient. Available commitments by the partner foundations will allow for 6 TA Recipients in the first cohort. Leadership at the three foundations have had informal conversations with our short-list of Recipients and determined levels of interest. The final cohort of TA recipients will participate in the following activities in the first year of the initiative. The timing of events described below will be adjusted in collaboration with participating funders and TA providers:

- **Months 1-2: Foundation Capacity Building.** Foundation staff will form a funder’s community to learn together, create a shared vision and understanding, and common language. The community will meet two times during these months for a full day at the outset of the initiative. The community meetings will be led by Tanya Beer of the Center for Evaluation Innovation and supported by The TCC Group. Each foundation may select as many staff and board members as they wish to participate.

- **Month 1: Selection of TA Recipients.** Foundations will identify current or former advocacy grantees that have sufficient internal capacity, interest and motivation, and readiness to make a commitment to conducting advocacy evaluation. Eligible TA recipients must have a new or ongoing advocacy project that can be used as the framework for learning. Given the current budget commitments by the three participating foundations, the first cohort will include a maximum of 6 organizations to participate as TA recipients.

- **Month 3: TA Recipient Capacity Building and Planning.** TA Recipients and local evaluators will participate in a 1 day advocacy evaluation training where a shared vision is created, common language and understanding is developed, and cross-organization learning, sharing and cooperation can be forged. *Foundation staff and interested board members may participate as learners in this meeting.* The meeting will be facilitated by Tanya Beer of the Center for Evaluation Innovation and supported by The TCC Group.

- **Month 4: TA Recipient Plan Coaching and Review.** Building on the work begun during the Capacity Building session in Month 3, TA Recipients will work with the TA team and their organizational colleagues to complete and submit an advocacy evaluation plan to the TA team in advance of the first on-site coaching visit described below. The TA team will provide webinar and scheduled phone support (a total of four hours of support) focusing on their advocacy evaluation plan (strategies, action steps, implementation benchmarks, and metrics) for one project within the Recipient’s organization. Local evaluators will shadow the TA team by participating in plan coaching and review and phone support.

- **Months 5 through 10: Intensive Technical Assistance.** TA Recipients will implement the components of the advocacy evaluation plan and framework in their own organizations. Recipients
will benefit from two on-site half-day coaching visits from their designated technical assistance provider. In the interval between site visits, the TA team will provide 12 hours of direct phone support to each TA Recipient organization. A total of 20 hours of in-person and phone support is available to each TA Recipient organization. Local evaluators will shadow the TA provider at all site visits and participate in each scheduled phone support call. Each site visit agenda will include a meeting with the agency leader or leadership team as well as with program staff implementing the evaluation plan and framework.

- **Months 6 and 12: Network Meetings/Deepening Learning and Collaboration.** Foundation staff and grantees will come together and collectively share progress, successes, challenges and barriers to implementation of the principles and components of the advocacy evaluation framework. Sessions will be designed to be:

  - *informative* – to continue learning about the evaluation framework;
  - *collaborative* – cross-organization/affinity group sessions to learn from each other and problem solve together; and
  - *focused on implementation best practices*.

  These two full-day meetings will be led by the TA team at the mid-point and end of the first year of the initiative.

  Each TA Recipient organization will be asked to deliver a 10 minute presentation on progress, challenges, solutions, learnings, and next steps.

The TA team will prepare summaries of site visits for the leadership team to judge progress of TA Recipients and have two scheduled initiative check-in/progress update meetings with the funders. A final report summarizing the first year of the initiative as well as the specific learnings regarding progress, successes, challenges and barriers to implementation of the principles and components of the advocacy evaluation framework will be prepared by the TA team. The report will specifically address the first year success of the initiative in terms of achievement of the outcomes identified in the next section.

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<th>Outcome(s)/Impact</th>
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Leaders and staff from each foundation will engage in a collaborative planning process and technical assistance process to create 1) a common language and shared understanding of advocacy evaluation; 2) a common framework for the conduct of advocacy evaluation; 3) common metrics, data collection strategies and methods; 4) and tools.

The creation of a common framework and system will be useful for 1) crafting advocacy evaluation grant agreements, 2) scopes of work, and 3) advocacy measurement systems. With a common core approach and system foundations can more fully estimate the local and regional impact of their investments and look at systems change and impact across shared investment program areas. Further, a common system will be helpful for both foundations and grantees as they strive to align evaluation expectations, deliverables, and potential areas of collaboration and collective impact.
Participating advocacy organizations will be able to 1) actively plan for and engage in internal evaluations of their own efforts, 2) inform their constituents, the broader community, and their funders of progress and impact using a shared understanding and common language and framework for what to expect from advocacy using fully aligned measurement and evaluation metrics and systems; 3) and guide external evaluators who are engaged in evaluation of advocacy and public policy initiatives and programs on their behalf.

Alignment with REACH’s Theory of Change

The Advocacy Evaluation Learning Initiative will be designed to create capacity among Kansas grantmakers, advocacy organizations, and evaluation and technical assistance providers to effectively implement internal and external evaluations of local and state-wide advocacy campaigns and initiatives. Within the framework of REACH’s theory of change, consumer engagement and advocacy to advance local and state policies to improve health care access and quality is one of our priority investment targets. REACH’s theory of change anticipates that successful consumer engagement and advocacy will lead to increased access to quality and affordable healthcare services generating improvements and equity in health outcomes.

Lead Agency

TCC Group will serve as the lead technical assistance provider and will subcontract with the Center for Evaluation Innovation to provide a specific set of trainings for foundation leadership and staff and their boards of directors. TCC Group will collaborate with CEI in the design and provision of all convenings, network meetings, trainings and technical assistance to TA recipients, local evaluators and technical assistance providers.

Representatives of each partner foundation and the two TA providers will serve as the leadership team for this initiative. In subsequent years – should the three foundation partners’ boards choose to continue investing in the initiative – the initiative leadership team will expand to include three representatives from participating advocacy organizations.

REACH Request

The budget for the first phase for the Advocacy Evaluation Initiative is $127,500.00. REACH’s portion of the total costs will be $45,000.00. Kansas Health Foundation has committed $42,500.00; and UMHMF has committed $40,000.00. Each foundation will contract with The TCC Group in separate agreements. Funds for REACH’s portion of this initiative were included in the Board-approved 2012 budget.
## Budget

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<tr>
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<th>Year One-Initiative</th>
<th>REACH</th>
<th>UMHMF &amp; KHF</th>
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<td>$127,500</td>
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<td><strong>Personnel: Consultants &amp; Contracted Services</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Convening expenses for network meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>$82,500</td>
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### Budget Narrative

**Personnel: Consultant and Contract Services** – The TCC Group will serve as the lead organization for this initiative. The TCC Group is a for-profit organization and not eligible for a grant from the Foundation. Instead a contract for services will be executed. Center for Evaluation Innovation will serve as a subcontractor to The TCC Group. Contract services will allow the Advocacy Evaluation Learning Initiative to bring in expertise to inform and advise Foundation staff, and train and support TA Recipients, and local evaluators/TA providers throughout the first year of this initiative. These nationally recognized organizations are at the leading edge of advocacy evaluation and are among the key thought leaders advancing this new field of evaluation.

**Travel** – covers air, ground, hotel, and meal expenses associated with travel to and from Washington, DC where CEI is located and Philadelphia where The TCC Group is headquartered.

**Billable Hours/Expense Reimbursement for Local Evaluators** – In order to secure the participation of local evaluators/TA providers who would be participating on their own time or outside their primary job-related functions, the planned budget includes payment of a standard billable rate for their time ($75.00 per hour) for 48 hours of participation in meetings and shadowing the TA team. Expenses associated with travel, mileage, hotel, and meals are included.

**Convening Expenses** – covers meeting related expenses, communication expenses, and other support services for network meetings.

**Miscellaneous** – any additional costs associated with copying, long-distance calls with the foundations, or postage.