

Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation

# Strategic Framework, Funding Portfolio and Grant Guidelines

## Beyond 2020

Updated January 2023







## Mission:

Strengthen and transform the health and smiles of all Iowans.

# Strategic Framework / Vision

## Our History:

Throughout our history the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation has been a leader in promoting oral health across Iowa. Our work has catalyzed efforts to promote improved oral health for the state's most vulnerable people.

- ▶ We partnered with stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors as part of our effort to lower barriers to access oral health care for older adults.
- ▶ We worked with partners to innovate new models in pursuit of our vision that every Iowa child be cavity free and every older Iowan have access to care.
- ▶ We supported the efforts of practitioners, schools, researchers, nonprofit organizations, and many other stakeholders as part of our goal of eliminating the incidence of cavities among Iowa youth.

The work we engaged in elevated the profile of oral health within the philanthropic sector, improved health outcomes for thousands of Iowans, and established the Foundation as a leader in oral health philanthropy in Iowa.

## Beyond 2020 - How We Approach Our Work:

Our new strategy is intended to build on our past success and reach into related areas that correspond to Delta Dental's growth as a company. In an era where health care practices are increasingly integrated and in which patients seek holistic health care solutions, the Foundation will extend its grant making to areas of wellness and vision and in ways that relate to oral health, which will, as always, remain at the center of what we do.

## 2025 Strategic Vision:

Robust community systems and partnerships empower and engage all Iowans to have optimal dental, vision and overall health.



## Our approach

The Foundation adopts a system change approach to its work. The Foundation will pursue this mission over the next five years through investments in oral health, oral health and overall health integration, and overall health, all through an equity lens. We also understand the best outcomes result through the connection of oral health and overall health. The Foundation will direct funding through three strategic focus areas: education and advocacy, access and prevention, and policy and research.

## Values

Our values will guide our actions, thinking, and funding:

### All Iowans



All Iowans deserve to be healthy. We address barriers within health care systems and strive for statewide reach with an equity lens.

### Systems Change



We focus on strengthening and transforming systems. We pursue our mission to shift conditions to improve health.

### Partnerships



We recognize that our grantees' and partners' success IS our success, and we are committed to engaging with partners in a spirit of transparency and goodwill.

### Leadership



We are a leader in the sector. We aim to be a catalyst for change, a builder and an innovator. We actively engage partners in the philanthropic, public, and private sectors to advance our mission.

## How we define our work:

**Oral health** - Projects that promote healthy smiles for all Iowans.

**Oral and overall health integration** - Projects that strengthen connections between dental, physical, and emotional health.

**Overall health** - Wellness, vision, and related activities that enable Iowans to live healthy and active lives.



# Guiding Principles

The health and vitality of our nonprofit partners is crucial to our success. We are interested in **building the capacity of the sector**, enhancing relationships between organizations, and supporting general operations.



As a systems funder, we understand that the changes we seek may require time.



Because our reach is statewide, we recognize that we serve and support a **broad spectrum of stakeholders** that show up in their communities in diverse ways.



Given the range of oral and overall health issues that lowans face, we understand that **working in partnership with others is how we will achieve change**. We believe the achievement of real change within and across systems requires the coordinated action of multiple stakeholders.



Grantmaking is one of the many tools we utilize in our work - we also aim to support collaboration within and across sectors, to curate opportunities for transformation, and deploy our relationship capital in support of our work. **As a leader in the field, it is our responsibility to step up.**



As a catalytic funder, **we seek to spark change**. In doing so we are open to building and piloting new ideas.



We work on behalf of all lowans, with a particular focus on those who fall between the cracks of the various systems that provide them care. **We know that optimal oral and overall health of lowans is only possible if it is a goal that everyone can achieve.**



## Health Equity Statement

*The Foundation envisions a world where health equity is a reality. Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to attain their full health potential. To achieve this goal, the Foundation will focus on building and supporting systemic solutions to address health inequities to create fair and just opportunities to health for all lowans.*

The Foundation identified four critical areas in which we can advance our focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, which are outlined below:

- ▶ **Work to become a strong equity focused funder.** Continue to refine, center and advance our diversity, equity and inclusion work through our mission and goals while recognizing this is an ongoing process and daily practice.
- ▶ **Work to become a trust-based funder.** Pursue more trust-based and open funding practices that seek to advance the work of community-based organizations that lead diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across Iowa and support racial justice and equity.
- ▶ **Work to become representative and transparent.** Through board and staff education and an ongoing opportunity to seek more reflective representation of the communities and partners we seek to support; we will seek opportunities to be representative and transparent.
- ▶ **Engage in and commit to thoughtful, ongoing equity journey, self-reflection and action.**



# Grant Guidelines

Based on the Foundation Values the following key criteria will be applied in determining funding:



**Geography:** Focus on the oral and overall health of lowans. At times, an investment in a national learning collaborative or project may have an impact on lowans, so this funding may be considered.



**Equity Focus:** With a focus on marginalized lowans, describe in detail what conditions exist impacting equity and provide data that supports the identified area of need.



**Systems Approach:** Impact the oral and/or overall health system and shift the conditions that currently exist at the local and/or statewide level. Projects will identify how lessons learned can impact the oral and/or overall health system.



**Leadership:** Be a catalyst for change, a builder and an innovator.



**Partners (Shared Approach):** Engage with other partners and organizations to achieve identified goals. Adopt a shared approach to success.



**Success:** Measure success and impact while aligning with the Foundation dashboard and goals.



**Policy:** Identify and address opportunities for policy analysis and public education.

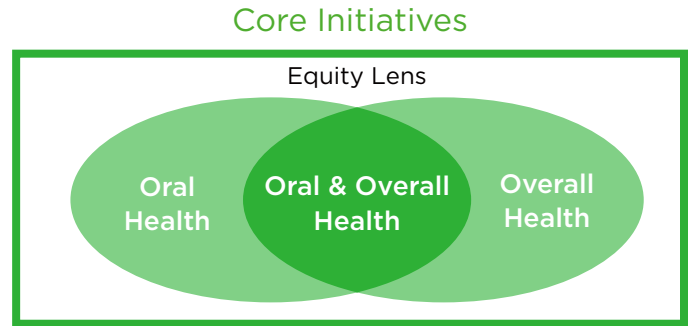
## In general, the Foundation does not fund:

- ▶ Direct dental services
- ▶ Grants to individuals
- ▶ Projects that do not have a direct or indirect impact on health and smiles of lowans
- ▶ Political campaigns and lobbying
- ▶ Religious purposes
- ▶ Sponsorships
- ▶ Ongoing or emergency food assistance requests
- ▶ Toothbrush donation requests without strong oral health education component



# Funding Portfolio

The Foundation will invest in projects that promote health and smiles for all Iowans through our core initiatives, **oral health**, **oral and overall health integration**, and **overall health** through an equity lens. Funds are invested in programs that align with one of the following three strategic areas of focus: **education and advocacy**, **access and prevention**, and **policy and research**.



**Funds will be distributed through the grant programs outlined below.**

**Smile Grants:** \$5,000 or less, to support projects that are primarily educational in nature such as providing educational materials or supplies related to our core initiatives. Applications open in January and are accepted on an ongoing basis until all funds are allocated.

**Community of Health Grants: \$5,001 - \$50,000, due March 1 and September 1**

Partnering with others who share our mission and values is necessary to strengthen and transform the health and smiles of all Iowans. The Foundation will make investments in projects that advance our core initiatives, align within the three strategic areas of focus, and with one of the following priority funding areas:

- ▶ **Innovation:** support for initiatives that pilot new approaches, solutions, spark new learnings or a larger initiative focused on strengthening and/or transforming our core initiatives.
- ▶ **Strengthening the Sector:** support for nonprofit organizations and coalitions focused on addressing oral and overall health inequities, through projects to assist organizational strategy and operational planning as well as other capacity building efforts of marginalized groups. Examples include public health, oral, vision and mental health systems, federally qualified health centers, rural communities, and health engagement efforts of LGBTQ+, culturally specific, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color).
- ▶ **Community Change:** support for grassroots, collaborative, community-led systems change efforts focused on solving key issues identified by the community, that align with the Foundation's core initiatives. The intent of this grant is to elevate the work of community stakeholders to engage in a way that provides greater scale and impact.

**System and Capacity Building Grants: over \$50,000, letters of interest (LOI) due March 1 and September 1.**

Large grants to support infrastructure and major system change efforts related to the Foundation's core initiatives. Following a review by a grant committee, proposals approved to move forward will be invited to present to the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation Board of Directors.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation team to learn more prior to applying at [IA\\_Foundation@deltadentalia.com](mailto:IA_Foundation@deltadentalia.com).

# Three Strategic Areas of Focus

Education and Advocacy	Access and Prevention	Policy and Research
<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To establish or strengthen a multi-disciplinary group of stakeholders that work together to improve the health and smiles of all lowans</li> <li>▶ An educated population that is actively engaged in achieving positive oral and overall health outcomes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All lowans can access quality oral, vision and health care</li> <li>▶ All lowans have access to tools that facilitate healthy activities/behaviors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A stronger connection between oral and overall health within public policy and health care practice</li> <li>▶ Strengthen the capacity of the nonprofit sector to engage in policy development, analysis, and public education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level of Intervention</b></p> <p>“Connections between systems.”</p>	<p><b>Level of Intervention</b></p> <p>“Discrete parts of the system.”</p>	<p><b>Level of Intervention</b></p> <p>“The system as a whole”</p>
<p><b>Activities supported</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Relationship-building and convenings that tighten the intersections between the oral health and overall health communities</li> <li>▶ Efforts to educate the public about the importance of oral health, vision, and wellness and its relationship to overall health</li> <li>▶ Consumer education that equips lowans to become engaged and proactive in their health care and wellness</li> <li>▶ Coalition-building that fosters a community of advocates committed to strengthening the connections between dental and overall health</li> </ul>	<p><b>Activities supported</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Improvements in the capacity of the health care system to deliver quality care and prevention</li> <li>▶ Innovations in health care practice that integrate and/or connect dental care delivery with primary care</li> <li>▶ Efforts that ensure under- or uninsured lowans can access quality oral and vision care</li> <li>▶ Advances in the health care workforce that improve the capacity of the system to deliver high-quality oral health care and prevention</li> <li>▶ Efforts that ensure the accessibility of healthy choices in communities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Activities supported</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Analysis of the impacts of potential policy changes on coverage and health outcomes</li> <li>▶ Development of policies that can improve access to coverage, preventive measures and outcomes</li> <li>▶ Research into the integration of medical and dental health</li> <li>▶ Research into policy options that would improve health access and quality, while increasing prevention</li> <li>▶ Research into the advancement of dental innovation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Desired outcomes</b></p> <p>The Foundation evaluates this program area relative to measurements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stronger and more diverse relationships between stakeholders</li> <li>▶ Increased and more robust consumer engagement</li> <li>▶ A consensus among practitioners, policymakers, and the public about the importance of stronger connections between oral and overall health</li> </ul>	<p><b>Desired outcomes</b></p> <p>The Foundation evaluates this program area relative to measurements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Changes in utilization</li> <li>▶ Changes in the incidence, or rate of acute conditions</li> <li>▶ Number of activities generated</li> <li>▶ Changes in the shape and character of the workforce</li> <li>▶ Number of healthy tools distributed</li> <li>▶ Identification, utilization and sharing of best practices among partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Desired outcomes</b></p> <p>The Foundation evaluates this program area relative to measurements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stronger nonprofit capacity for policy analysis and public education</li> <li>▶ Policies implemented that improve access to coverage and prevention</li> <li>▶ Robust public discussion and engagement of various policy options</li> <li>▶ Reports/literature published or tools developed that contribute to system-wide knowledge</li> </ul>

## Evaluation Vision Statement:

*Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation fosters a collaborative learning environment that engages our partners in the work of identifying and evaluating sustainable strategies toward building capacity and large scale system change that strengthens and transforms the health and smiles of all Iowans.*

*The Foundation strives to collaborate with partners to ensure initiatives can continue to grow, endure challenges, and are supported by multiple funding sources.*

## How to Apply for Funding

To apply for funding or for more information on a specific program, visit [deltadentalia.com/foundation](http://deltadentalia.com/foundation) or contact the Foundation at [IA\\_Foundation@deltadentalia.com](mailto:IA_Foundation@deltadentalia.com).

## Foundation Team



**Suzanne Heckenlaible**  
Executive Director



**Beth Jones**  
Director of  
Community Impact



**Maren Lenhart**  
Community Impact  
Analyst



**Anna Nalean**  
Community Impact  
Coordinator



**Megan Navara**  
Executive Assistant,  
Public Affairs

### Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation

9000 Northpark Drive

Johnston, IA 50131

[deltadentalia.com/foundation](http://deltadentalia.com/foundation)

