

NEWS RELEASE

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For more information: Virginia Elliott, Vice President for Programs, 800-369-7191 or velliott@healthfund.org:

Health Fund to award \$500,000 in grants

RFPs invited for *Fit for Kansas Kids* initiative

Because of the escalating concern about child obesity, the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund has launched a Fit for Kansas Kids initiative backed with a half million dollars in funding for grants.

“Child obesity is a world-wide threat, and that definitely includes Kansas,” said Health Fund president Kim Moore. He cited research which indicates approximately 30% of children in Kansas are considered overweight.

In an effort to address factors influencing children’s weight issues at an early age, the Health Fund is seeking proposals for coordinated nutrition and physical fitness strategies targeting early childhood to intervene with obesity before it occurs.

The goal of this Health Fund initiative, as expressed in the Request for Proposals, is: “to develop community resources, practices, and policies supporting young children and their families in increased physical activity and healthy nutrition.” Prenatal to age six children, and their families, are the target beneficiaries.

Qualified organizations may apply for a grant of up to \$100,000. However, Moore said more modest requests are certainly encouraged. He stressed that applicants for the grants do not have to be affiliated with the United Methodist church, and described eligible grantees as existing collaborations in Kansas which are working on community health issues, desire to address the targets of this Request for Proposals, and have a 501(c)(3) public charity or governmental entity to serve as fiscal agent.

The deadline for submitting a Fit for Kansas Kids RFP to the Hutchinson-based funder is September 30, 2010.

Three informational webinars for interested parties are planned, with the possibility of more being added if needed. The current schedule has two webinars on June 30, at 10:00 and 1:00, and the third set for July 16 at 1:30. Reservations are required and can be made at www.healthfund.org. Those wanting to discuss a project idea and its relevance to this RFP may call Moore or Virginia Elliott, Vice President for Programs, at 800-369-7191.

Elliott said the decisions on Fit for Kansas Kids grant recipients will be made by November 15. The projects selected for funding are to start between January 1 and April 1, 2011, and can extend for a period of up to two years.

The United Methodist Health Ministry Fund makes grants each year totaling \$2.5 to \$3 million. Since it was founded in 1986, endowed by the Kansas West Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Health Fund has invested more than \$53 million in health, healing, and wholeness for Kansans. Additional information about its activities, as well as more details on the “Fit for Kansas Kids” RFP, is available online at www.healthfund.org.

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