

Request for Proposals

2026 Economic Mobility
Environmental Scan



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About Us

Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) is the official business name of Valley Hospital Association, Inc., which shares ownership in Mat-Su Regional Medical Center (MSRMC). In this capacity, the MSHF board members and representatives actively participate in the governance of Mat-Su's community hospital and protect the community's interest in this important healthcare asset through board oversight. MSHF invests its share of Mat-Su Regional's profits into charitable works that improve the health and wellness of Alaskans living in Mat-Su.

Vision: A community where all persons have the opportunity for a healthy life

Mission: To Improve the Health and Wellness of Alaskans Living in the Mat-Su

Values: Belonging, Collaboration, Equity, Respect, Stewardship, and Transparency

Commitment to Health Equity

At MSHF, we believe health equity is achieved when everyone has access and opportunity to attain their full potential for health and well-being. We can work intentionally to reduce health disparities by understanding and addressing inequities and root causes. Engaging a variety of voices that reflect our unique community is instrumental in increasing health equity. As an organization and community partner, we are on a journey to learn and work toward health equity by understanding people's lived experiences, removing barriers, and improving opportunities for those marginalized by existing systems.

About Mat-Su

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (Mat-Su) is situated on the ancestral lands of the Ahtna and Dena'ina peoples in Southcentral Alaska about 40 miles northeast of Anchorage. The Mat-Su covers 25,258 square miles, about the size of West Virginia, and has a population of about 117,000 people. The borough includes three incorporated cities – Palmer, Wasilla, and Houston; 26 rural/remote unincorporated communities; and two federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes.

The Mat-Su Borough continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in Alaska and the only region with consistently positive net migration. The Mat-Su gained 22,757 residents from 2010 to 2020, becoming the second-most populous borough in Alaska. Mat-Su is also becoming more diverse. During the same period, the percentage of Mat-Su residents identifying as a race other than white increased from 15% to 22% of the total Mat-Su population. In terms of percentage change this was a 79% growth in population compared to 10% growth in the white population. Residents identifying as two or more races are the second largest group at 11.5% (114% change from 2010 to 2020) followed by American Indian and Alaska Native alone at 6.4%.

Additionally, of the most populated boroughs in Alaska, Mat-Su has the fastest growing older adult population. From 2012 to 2022, the population 60 and over grew by 72.4% in Mat-Su compared to 40.7% for Alaska, 28.2% for Anchorage, and 37% for Fairbanks North Star Borough. Mat-Su is home to 16% of Alaska’s veteran population, of which 26% experience a disability compared to 14% of the general population.

Background

Over the past year, the Mat-Su Health Foundation has been exploring and learning about economic mobility and its relevance to the health of people living in the Mat-Su. This includes exploring local data and lived experiences, relevant frameworks and resources, and visiting and learning from peer foundations. The 2025 Mat-Su Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) highlighted economic mobility and belonging as threads throughout the report. There are six top health priorities that were identified in the 2025 CHNA. Along with the top six health priorities, the steering committee also highlighted belonging and systemic barriers as important to addressing the top priorities.

2025 CHNA Top Health Priorities:

- Safe & Stable Housing
- Health Services for Every Resident
- Accessible & Affordable Childcare
- Safe, Reliable, & Affordable Transportation
- Nutritious Food
- Community Places & Spaces

Specific to economic mobility, the CHNA explored secondary data from the Opportunity Insights Opportunity Atlas as well as primary data through a household survey. It was learned that economic mobility has been declining in Mat-Su, which means it has become harder for people to move up the income ladder. The gap between the highest- and lowest-income earners has nearly doubled, growing by 99% in Mat-Su. This decline in mobility has been hardest on people from low-income households. Mat-Su residents born into the lowest-income families, had the largest decline in average income as adults, based on comparisons of people born in 1978 and people born in 1992.

In addition to the CHNA, the Foundation conducted interviews across 11 communities with over 60 residents experiencing financial hardship. The top challenges and solutions that emerged from the interviews aligned with much of what emerged in the CHNA (Table 1).

Table 1. Top Challenges and Solutions as Identified by Interviewees

Challenges	Solutions
Financial Hardships & Cost of Living Pressures	Transportation and Mobility
Transportation Barriers	Housing Affordability & Stability
Housing Instability & Unaffordability	Mental Health Services & Access
Mental Health Challenges & Access Gaps	Systems Navigation & Wraparound Services
Employment, Wages, & Economic Opportunity	Substance Use Treatment & Recovery Support

Purpose of this Assessment

MSHF seeks proposals from experienced consultants to collaborate in conducting an environmental scan and SWOT analysis related to economic mobility in the Mat-Su. The environmental scan and SWOT analysis are key inputs that will inform the Foundation's strategic plan and future systems-level work. The primary objective of the environmental scan is to systematically gather, analyze, and assess external environments to identify barriers and facilitators to upward mobility, health, and well-being across the Mat-Su Borough. The scan and SWOT should identify root causes and structural factors across five areas of interest – housing, workforce development, childcare, food security, and transportation – to identify strategic leverage points that impact upward mobility.

The preferred approach will include identifying macro environmental factors impacting health outcomes and upward mobility utilizing the STEEPLE framework. As such, the successful environmental scan will include factors influencing public health outcomes including examining broader social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal, and ethical trends and developments.

The resulting scan and analysis will be used, along with a SWOT analysis, for identifying new opportunities and prioritizing strategies that align with the Foundation's focus on upward mobility. The successful consultant will provide curated data, analysis, thought leadership, and recommendations to support the development and successful implementation of tools for strategic planning activities including goal setting, visioning, and prioritizing strategic initiatives.

Project Definitions:

Upward Mobility refers to the opportunity for individuals to improve their financial and economic situation over their lifetime and across generations. Urban Institute provides a three-part definition for Upward Mobility that is ground in evidence and includes three interconnected dimensions:

Dignity and Belonging: People feel the respect, dignity, and belonging that come from contributing to their family, work, and community and are valued for those contributions.

Economic Success: People have adequate income and assets to support their and their family's material well-being.

Power and Autonomy: People have control over their lives, can make choices, and exert influence over larger policies and actions that affect their future.

A STEEPLE analysis is a tool for scanning the external macro environment to understand the conditions and imagine new opportunities. It includes assessing the following components:

Social: Demographic shifts, cultural shifts, public health awareness, and changes in attitudes, preferences and lifestyle, especially across various generations.

Technological: Advancements in digital infrastructure, connectivity, and e-commerce.

Economic: Economic conditions, employment, funding for healthcare, economic disparities, food insecurity, housing insecurity, cost of transportation.

Environmental: Climate change, pollution, environmental health risks.

Political: Government policies, stability (like Medicaid expansion), public health policies.

Legal: Regulatory frameworks, healthcare laws, legal risks.

Ethical: Trends and shifts in social responsibility.

Scope of Work/Services

The selected contractor will work closely with the Executive Leadership Team, the Director of Evaluation and Learning, and the Senior Project Manager. Depending on contractor experience, expertise, and performance, they may be invited to continue with the next phase of this work focused on systems design and identifying effective interventions.

Service Area:

The service area for this project is the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Required Activities

The expected activities for this project include but are not limited to:

1. Participating in regular meetings with the MSHF team, including an initial kick-off meeting to finalize a detailed plan and timeline for assessment methods and deliverables.
2. Consulting with MSHF staff as needed and utilizing existing local and statewide assessments (e.g., the Mat-Su Community Health Needs Assessment, Economic Mobility Interviews, Food Assessment, and Housing Assessment) to inform the environmental scan and final deliverables.
3. Conducting an environmental scan using the STEEPLE framework to identify key actors, existing policies and programs, gaps, and opportunities related to upward mobility in the Mat-Su. The environmental scan should pay special attention to the following components of high importance to the strategic planning process
 - a. Social and Demographic Trends:
 - i. Identification of demographic trends, cultural shifts, and societal changes over set time period proposed by the consulting partner and agreed upon by the MSHF team
 - ii. Analysis of these trends and impact on upward mobility.
 - iii. Community feedback and analysis through qualitative and quantitative measures, only to fill gaps not covered in any existing assessment.
 - iv. Key stakeholder interviews representing people and communities from across the borough.
 - b. Technological Advancements:
 - i. Analysis of technological innovations and trends and impact on upward mobility in the Mat-Su.

- c. Economic Trends Analysis:
 - i. Identification and evaluation of economic indicators and market trends.
 - ii. Assessment of how these factors affect upward mobility and overall health and well-being.
- d. Environmental considerations:
 - i. Identification and assessment of environmental factors, including temperature-related effects, natural disasters, and pollution that affect the region and impact public health.
- e. Political Factors:
 - i. Identification of public health and related political issues such as labor or education policies impacting upward mobility, health, and well-being in the Mat-Su.
- f. Legal and Regulatory Environment:
 - i. Examination of legal and regulatory frameworks through the unique lens of a health service provider, funder, and nonprofit.
- g. Ethical Trends:
 - i. Identification of shifts in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors pertaining to social responsibility and values that impact upward mobility, health, and well-being.
- 4. Identifying emerging macro environmental threats and opportunities, inclusive of state and national challenges, that have the potential to impact the Mat-Su.
- 5. Identifying root causes and structural factors across five areas of interest – housing, workforce development, childcare, food security, and transportation – and identifying strategic leverage points that impact upward mobility, health, and well-being.
- 6. Synthesizing findings from the environmental scan including:
 - a. Sharing initial results with the executive leadership team
 - b. Developing recommendations based on the analysis
- 7. Planning a SWOT discussion and work session utilizing the results of the environmental scan.
- 8. Maintaining regular communication with the MSHF team and providing updates throughout the process on progress and roadblocks.
- 9. Collaborating with MSHF leadership to share results and guide conversation with the MSHF board of directors.

Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected for internal use with the executive leadership team:

1. An executive summary highlighting key findings, strategic implications, and recommendations

2. Detailed environmental scan inclusive of STEEPLE analysis, methods and data used, macro environmental factors, and analysis of the five areas interest (housing, workforce, childcare, food security, and transportation) with identification of leverage points for impact.
3. SWOT analysis overview, including summary process, MSHF programs, and populations served with associated concerns and recommendations.
4. Facilitated SWOT session with key stakeholders as identified by MSHF executive team.
5. Presentation to the MSHF board of directors and staff.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include responses to the seven sections outlined below. Proposals shall not exceed 10 pages, single-spaced, excluding the budget, resume/CVs of key personnel, references, and sample work product.

1. Assessment approach

Describe in detail your approach to fulfilling the scope of services, including:

- Processes for designing and informing the environmental scan
- Methodologies for conducting the environmental scan and identifying root causes
 - Methods may include ideas and innovations outside of what is required
- Considerations related to health equity and data equity
- Processes and systems to ensure data security

2. Qualifications and experience

Identify who will serve as project lead and the roles of any additional project team members. Describe the experiences and qualifications of the individual, team, and/or subcontractors who will engage in this work, including:

- Experience conducting environmental scans and identifying root causes and what sets you apart strategically to do this work with the MSHF.
- Experience in economics and an understanding of economic mobility, including an economic data analyst on the team.
- Experience working in Alaska and/or the Mat-Su.
- A resume or CV for key personnel, including any subcontractors who will make significant contributions to the work.
- A sample of a similar work product or report.

3. Engaging key stakeholders and priority populations

Briefly describe how you intend to engage key stakeholders (e.g., MSHF staff, partners) and a spectrum of diverse perspectives in the assessment development and process (e.g., low-income and ALICE populations, veterans, single parents, young adults, older adults, tribal partners).

4. Challenges and limitations

Briefly describe any anticipated challenges and limitations to completing the assessment and any proposed strategies to address or mitigate them.

5. Workplan

This project is anticipated to start on or before July 20 and end by December 31, 2026. Provide a workplan that identifies key activities, dates and timelines, and deliverables.

6. Budget

The proposal should include a realistic estimate for services conducted in 2026 and should be commensurate with the scope of work. Include a detailed project budget and justification. Include all direct and indirect costs, as well as the anticipated total number of hours at various hourly rates. For contractors outside the Mat-Su Borough, travel costs specifically related to this project are allowable as direct costs.

7. References

Include the name, organization, and contact information for a minimum of three references that can speak to the contractors' (subcontractors', if appropriate) experience.

RFP Timeline

Applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time, June 12, 2026. Please submit your application in PDF form via email with the subject line "MSHF Economic Mobility" to evaluations@healthymatsu.org.

Applications will be reviewed, and final candidates may be invited for an interview. We anticipate selecting a contractor by July 9, 2026 with the goal of having a signed contract in place on or before July 17, 2026.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Evaluation approach – 40 pts
 - Evaluation design and methodology (20 pts)
 - Demonstrated commitment to health equity (10 pts)
 - Data security processes and systems (10 pts)
- Qualifications and experience - 30 pts
 - Appropriate staffing structure for proposed scope (5 pts)
 - Experience with similar assessment projects (15 pts)
 - Experience relevant to Mat-Su (10 pts)
- Meaningful engagement with stakeholders and priority populations - 10 pts
- Workplan - 10 pts
- Cost Effectiveness - 10 pts

Questions

If you have questions or would like to discuss this RFP further, please contact Danielle Reed, Director of Evaluation and Learning, dreed@healthymatsu.org.