

The Financial Opportunity Center® network in the city of Houston is growing. Beginning with the piloting of two sites located in the Near Northside and Alief neighborhoods, Houston LISC plans to expand the network into six additional neighborhoods: Fifth Ward, Gulfton, Independence Heights, Magnolia Park, Sunnyside, and Third Ward.

Becoming a FOC

What does it mean to become a FOC?

FOC is a designation that is given to organizations that offer bundled, financial and workforce services to low-to-moderate income families according to the FOC evidence based practice model. It also includes comprehensive outcomes tracking, data-driven program management, and a broader focus on the development of the community within which they work.

What characteristics do successful applications for FOC Designation possess?

Organizations that become FOCs usually exhibit a number of traits and capabilities:

- Entrepreneurial and nimble
- Data-driven and results-oriented
- Long-term and trusting relationships with families they serve
- Have most of the core services already in place or available through partnerships –so that FOC is about combining services in a more effective way
- Build strategic partnerships to “fill out” services
- Committed to helping families achieve economic success
- Committed to broader policy and systems change
- Committed to advancement of the neighborhood where they work.

Do LISC and United Way THRIVE provide assistance to sites seeking FOC Designation?

Yes. It takes a “stretch” for a typical local program to become a FOC. Houston LISC in partnership with United Way THRIVE provide technical support, infrastructure and program guidance to prospective sites to assist them in becoming a FOC. As intermediaries, we also play a major role in coordinating partnerships and resources to maximize leveraging. Prospective sites will interface directly with Houston LISC Program Officer for support.

Seeking FOC Designation

FOC Readiness as a first step

Houston LISC seeks to increase the organizational and programmatic capacity of existing programs in targeted neighborhoods to provide enhanced financial and workforce services. If your program is not quite ready to attain FOC Designation, Houston LISC can work with you to become ready through targeted trainings, consulting, program evaluation and peer learning.



In order to participate in FOC Readiness, Houston LISC requires that interested organizations submit an application. The acceptance into FOC Readiness is considered on a rolling basis through out the year. This process seeks to determine quality of existing programs, history of outcomes tracking and building strategic partnerships, ability to adapt and take an active leadership role in community and policy level issues.

Is your site ready? Apply now for FOC Designation!

If you believe your site is ready to attain FOC Designation, Houston LISC requires a written proposal to make the case for the organization's readiness and plan for a successful implementation. Proposals mirror a business plan with information about existing programs, outcomes, history of collaboration, proof of leadership's support, plan for integration and support from leadership. Special emphasis will be made on ensuring the organization's ability and willingness to engage the neighborhood community as clients and to support community development efforts.

FOC Designated sites are eligible for increased levels of funding and have high levels of accountability for data tracking, quality assurance and outcomes. Proposals are considered on a limited basis and may be limited to a specific window of opportunity for submissions.

Benefits of FOC Designation

- Ongoing technical assistance and national peer learning network for enhancing outcomes
- Access to national program evaluation and outcomes tracking tool
- Shared costs of infrastructure and technological systems
- Collaborative fund development and access to national pools of funding as a network
- Funding opportunities for enhancing your workforce development program, staff development, and for implementing financial service program
- Expanded network of relationships in private, public and non-profit sectors

Primary Benefit ... Enhanced client outcomes

Process

Whether submitting an application for FOC Readiness or a proposal for FOC Designation, it is highly recommended to meet with Houston LISC Program Officer for Financial Opportunity Centers prior to submitting. The Program Officer can provide guidance for a successful submission.

Application and Proposal Template are available online at www.lisc.org/houston
Contact Houston LISC Program Officer Berenice Tostado, 713-334-5700, btostado@lisc.org

LISC is helping neighborhoods *Build Sustainable Communities*, which are good places to work, do business and raise children. It is the embodiment of both *community* and *development*.

Financial Opportunity Centers®

are an initiative of LISC in strategic partnership with United Way THRIVE.

