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Open Invitation to Organizations in Pittsburgh, PA to Participate in the Pittsburgh Oasis Jumpstart Pilot

Issued: March 16, 2018

Overview

The nonprofit organization, PlantPure Communities, Inc., invites nonprofits, community-based organizations, volunteer neighborhood groups, and medical entities in the Pittsburgh area to apply to participate as a local coordinating Group in an exciting health initiative. Through the PlantPure Communities Oasis Jumpstart Program, healthy meals and nutrition education will be made available in a selected underserved neighborhood in Pittsburgh at affordable and subsidized prices. ('Underserved' is defined as low-income and/or food desert neighborhoods). The Oasis Program brings the 10-day Jumpstart, developed by PlantPure, Inc. (as seen in the 2015 documentary *PlantPure Nation*—now [available for free on YouTube](#)), to people who otherwise would not have access and/or could not afford it. It empowers participants with knowledge and tools to take control of their health through nutrition by enabling them to experience the benefits of a whole food, plant-based (WFPB) diet first-hand. The 10-day Jumpstart serves as the anchor of a 13-week support program and longer term community support initiative.

To date, several [Pilots](#) have been completed. Oasis participants have seen dramatic health changes in a short amount of time and are inspired to make the lifestyle changes permanent. Biometric testing is done on the day before the 10-day Jumpstart commences and again on the day after the completion of the 10-day Jumpstart. The following biomarkers are measured: height, weight, body mass index, blood pressure, total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, fasting blood glucose, and triglycerides. PlantPure Communities (PPC) provides the program structure and participant forms, reduced pricing on plant-based meals, nutrition education, and project management support to the local coordinating Group that will be selected to coordinate this Pilot on-the-ground. The goals of the Oasis Jumpstart Program include both short-term impact and long-term, lasting change. The intensive 10-day Jumpstart period is intended to empower motivated participants.

The local PPC Pod, *Pittsburgh Plant-Based Support Group*, and other local community resources will be an integral part of the Pittsburgh Oasis Jumpstart Pilot, with an eye toward helping 30 participants achieve long-term change. (For more information about the PlantPure Communities Pod Network, see [the Pod Network page on PPC's website](#)). It is anticipated that members of the Pittsburgh Plant-Based Support

Group Pod will serve as mentors to Oasis participants, providing support during and after the 10-day Jumpstart period. Pod members also will coordinate activities such as potluck meals, plant-based cooking demonstrations, and discussion groups about shopping, reading food labels, and eating on a budget.

Benefits to Selected Community Groups

The goal of the Oasis Program is to help participants make their neighborhoods stronger, healthier, and more sustainable. This begins with the individual. Community members who experience chronic health challenges due to poor nutrition have a direct impact on local, state, and national economies. For example, they are more likely to miss work and generate increased healthcare costs. Evidence-based nutrition research has shown that a whole food, plant-based diet is effective in preventing, arresting, and even reversing many chronic disease. The Oasis Program empowers participants with the knowledge and resources they need to decrease or eliminate the need for medications, improve their levels of mental and physical fitness, and institutionalize neighborhood-based support for long-term success. Benefits also include:

- Nutrition education that covers breakfast and snack tips, dining out, plant-based eating on a budget, and the fundamentals of transitioning to a plant-based diet;
- Financial support (partial) for biometric testing, if not available pro bono;
- Reduced-cost WFPB meals from PlantPure, Inc. during the 10-day Jumpstart;
- Strengthened capacity to carry out short-term and long-term food/nutrition initiatives;
- Improved self-sustainability via a gardening workshop on the Square Foot Gardening Method;
- Assistance developing relationships with local philanthropic sources for long-term support; and
- Energized Pod members for long term community building and support.

Selection Process and Criteria

The demographics, need, mission alignment, and access to local support resources will be important factors in determining whether an entity is selected to participate as the local coordinating Group. A high level of support and commitment by the applicant group must be documented, including a resolution passed by the senior management or board of the applicant entity; and a description of the leadership team that will be carrying out the Pilot, including the resume of the local Program Coordinator. The local Program Coordinator may be paid staff or a volunteer, but it must be a person who has the willingness and time to facilitate the program, as well as the trust and direct, easy access to the selected group's leadership.

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Need - as determined by demographics, such as income level and access to fresh food (food deserts), as well as the prevalence of chronic diseases and other relevant data.

Local Interest - 30 - 35 highly committed participants is optimal for an Oasis Jumpstart. Documented evidence of the breadth of the community's interest in participating in the Oasis Jumpstart will be an important factor. Some communities have found it useful to screen the *PlantPure Nation* film prior to application and participant registration in order to gauge community interest. A pre-registration list reflecting interest by community members would greatly strengthen an application, but is not required.

Strength/capacity of local leadership - There are many factors that contribute to a successful Oasis Jumpstart. Local groups that already have some depth/capacity are better positioned to achieve success. At a minimum, the applicant group should have a thorough understanding of what is required and a preliminary plan to secure the capacity if not available in-house. Therefore, the applicant's existing or potential ability to manage each of the following will be important:

- The organization's ability to manage day-to-day logistics, and their knowledge of a whole food, plant-based lifestyle;
- The organization's mission alignment, reputation, and track record in the food, nutrition, & health arena;
- The organization's experience or existing relationship with entities that conduct biometric testing, data collection, and their ability to comply with federal HIPAA requirements;
- The organization's track record and relationships that support their ability to raise funds for the Pilot and beyond, and also their ability to acquire pro bono and/or reduced cost services and other resources to support the Pilot.
- The organization's ability to support the local Program Coordinator. This person can be a volunteer or paid staff, and must be able to devote a significant portion of time during the 10-day Jumpstart, 13-week supplemental support program, and long-term Pod support. During the two-week preparation period leading up to the 10-Day Jumpstart and the 10-day jumpstart period, as much as 50-75% of the Coordinator's time may be required.
- A relationship with an entity, such as a faith-based organization or food bank, that can help coordinate receipt of a pallet of food containing 600 frozen meals. (This is a requirement when using the pallet of frozen meals. Note: part of the cost reduction is due to reduced delivery fees connected to ordering a full pallet of meals.)
 - There must be a loading dock at the drop off location.
 - There must be sufficient room for a 40' semi-truck and container at the drop-off location.
 - Logistics must allow for storage of food for short periods of time.
- A relationship with a local healthcare professional that is willing to participate on a pro bono advisory basis, and offer general information and guidance on plant-based nutrition and the biomarker testing process. The main task for the local healthcare professional is to make a presentation at the beginning of the 10-day Jumpstart.
- Access to meeting space that allows for cooking demos, movie screenings and monthly meetings.

Cost

The cost of each Oasis Jumpstart will vary based on each community's goals and needs, between \$8,000 and \$18,000. A generous donor has already committed \$6,000 to this Pittsburgh Oasis Jumpstart. No funding commitment from the selected local Group is required, only a commitment of staff and also a willingness to work with PlantPure Communities and others to help secure additional resources for the Pilot.

Deadlines

Open Invitation Issued: [March 16, 2018](#)

Response Due: [April 30, 2018](#)

Applications may be completed and submitted to PlantPure Communities online [using this link](#).

Any questions should be emailed to info@plantpurecommunities.org.

Appendix

Explanatory Notes for Supplemental Application Form PPC Oasis Program Open Invitation

This document provides Oasis Jumpstart applicants with directions on how to fill out the required [Supplemental Application Form](#) connected to the Open Invitation for the PlantPure Communities Oasis Program.

Letter of Commitment from Applicant Organization's Leadership: (REQUIRED) - A letter from the organization's leadership expressing their full commitment and support of the Oasis Pilot must be submitted with the application.

Meeting Space: The applicant will be able to secure space to host the following events associated with the Oasis Jumpstart and supplemental activities:

1. Biometric testing that will last up to four hours on day one and day 11 of the Jumpstart.
2. Group discussions on nutrition education, cooking demos, and support at least once a month.
3. Screenings of [PlantPure Nation](#) or the [PlantPure Nation Jumpstart video](#).

Healthcare Resource Person: The role of the Healthcare Resource Person is to offer general information and guidance on plant-based nutrition and the biomarker testing process to Oasis Pilot participants. This person should be a healthcare professional who is very familiar with the benefits of a plant-based diet as well as an advocate for the diet. The main task is to make a presentation at the beginning of the 10-day Jumpstart. This presentation should be consistent with [PPC's culinary philosophy](#) and include but not be limited to the following:

1. Encouraging participants to consult with their own physicians, particularly if they are taking medications for diabetes, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure.
2. Making participants aware of the powerful benefits of a whole food, plant-based (WFPB) lifestyle and how it can affect their health very quickly.
3. Offering an explanation of the biomarker data, and particularly:
 - at what point is a person pre-diabetic?
 - at what point is a person diabetic?
 - at what point does a person need to consult with a physician for high blood pressure?
 - at what point is a person considered to have high cholesterol?
4. Providing information of the importance of taking a Vitamin B12 supplement.
5. Providing referrals to [doctors who understand the benefits of a WFPB lifestyle](#) for those who do not have a physician.
6. If the Healthcare Resource Person is open to new patients/clients, let participants know how they can become a patient/client.
7. Answering questions the participants may have.

Biometric Testing: At the heart of the Oasis Jumpstart Program is the personal empowerment experienced by participants when they see the first-hand evidence, via biomarker testing, of the power of diet/lifestyle changes in their health and well-being. To this end, biomarker testing will be taken two times for each program participant. The first test will be taken prior to the first day of the 10-day Jumpstart (ideally the day before) and the second test will be taken on the morning after the 10th day of the Jumpstart. The applicant must be either able to perform tests for the following biomarkers in-house or willing to work with PPC to find a certified individual or organization that can do so:

- Lipid profile (HDL, LDL, triglycerides)
- Height, weight, and BMI
- Blood pressure
- Fasting blood glucose (best if water fast is done for 12 hours before test)

Nutrition Education, Cooking Demos, and Grocery Shopping Tours: While PPC provides a compendium of documents on its website under Oasis Resources to provide participants with fundamentals on adopting and maintaining a whole food, plant-based lifestyle, it is very beneficial for participants to have access to an individual or group of individuals who can provide answers to questions they are likely to have. In addition, providing an environment where participants can learn how to prepare whole food, plant-based meals will help create long-term change. Because it is a common myth that it is more expensive to eat a whole food, plant-based diet, teaching participants how to shop for healthy foods is essential. It will be helpful to find a certified plant-based health educator to conduct nutrition education, a grocery shopping tour, and plant-based cooking demonstrations. Here is a list of individuals, programs, and organizations that can potentially conduct the classes for free or at a reduced rate for participants in your area:

1. [Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine Food for Life](#)
2. [Plant-based physicians, clinicians, and health professionals](#)
3. Local food bank

Square Foot Gardening: The Square Foot Gardening (SFG) Foundation teaches self-sustainability and self-reliance through gardening via the SFG method. The SFG method offers a simple system that can be implemented in just about any home (even those with extremely limited access to green space). Integrating the SFG method into the Oasis Program will provide participants and their families with locally grown, fresh, nutritious, organic food and help them become self-sustainable. Integrating the SFG method into the larger 13-week Oasis Program will powerfully reinforce the connection between health and food and increase the likelihood of achieving long-term success and lasting changes. A workshop on the SFG method should be conducted within a week (probably on the weekend) following the initial 10 days of the Jumpstart. A one-hour Square Foot Gardening (SFG) workshop is recommended and ideally it will be facilitated by a local individual (ideally [a SFG Certified Instructor](#)) or organization representative familiar with the method. Family owned and run garden centers, as well as stores with building and gardening departments like Home Depot, Lowe's and Costco, are sometimes able to donate materials for a project like this. Consider asking building contractors, pediatricians, hospitals, and community groups like Kiwanis or Knights of Columbus, who support health & wellness programs for youth, veterans, elderly and inner city initiatives for their support. For more information see: <http://www.squarefootgardening.org/>.

Mindfulness/Meditation: Research has shown that the practice of mindfulness can have dramatic, positive effects on health. It is recommended that participants take instruction in mindfulness-based stress reduction one day a week for at least four weeks. This could include courses in meditation, yoga, or other activities like Tai Chi. Applicants should look to the following organizations to provide instruction in mindfulness for free or a discounted rate:

- Meditation center
- Local community centers
- Yoga studios

Financial Literacy: Workshops on financial literacy can be helpful to those with limited incomes. Applicants should seek instructors who can help participants manage their finances, which will provide the added benefit of helping to decrease stress. Here is a list of potential resources that may be available to help conduct financial literacy classes in your area for free or at a reduced rate:

- [Bridges Out of Poverty](#)
- Local CPAs who wish to donate their time.
- [Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University course](#)

Movement/Fitness: It is recommended that participants receive physical fitness training as part of the program. For example, this may include a fitness class, yoga class, or culturally appropriate dance class one day a week. Participants should also be encouraged to develop their own individual fitness goals and practices. Here is a list of potential resources that may be available to conduct fitness classes for Oasis participants for free or at a reduced rate:

- Fitness center
- Yoga studio
- YMCA/YWCA or community center