



2023

RWJF Culture of Health Prize

Call for Applications

Application Submissions:

February 13 to March 29, 2023 (3 p.m. ET)



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation



Past Winners

Read about these Prize-winning communities [here](#).

2020 and 2021 Winners

Addison, IL
 Alamosa County, CO
 Chickaloon Native Village
 Drew, MS
 Howard County, MD
 National City, CA
 Palm Beach County, FL
 Rocky Mount, NC
 Thunder Valley Community,
 Oglala Lakota Nation
 (Oceti Sakowin Territory)
 Worcester, MA

2019 Winners

Broward County, FL
 Gonzales, CA
 Greenville County, SC
 Lake County, CO
 Sitka, AK

2018 Winners

Cicero, IL
 Eatonville, FL
 Klamath County, OR
 San Antonio, TX

2017 Winners

Algoma, WI
 Allen County, KS
 Chelsea, MA
 Garrett County, MD
 Richmond, VA
 San Pablo, CA
 Seneca Nation of
 Indians
 Vicksburg, MS

2016 Winners

24:1 Community, MO
 Columbia Gorge Region,
 ORWA
 Louisville, KY
 Manchester, NH
 Miami-Dade County, FL
 Santa Monica, CA
 Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe

2015 Winners

Bridgeport, CT
 Bronx, NY
 Everett, MA
 Kansas City, MO
 Lawrence, MA
 Menominee Nation
 Spartanburg County, SC
 Waaswaaganing
 Anishinaabeg (Lac du
 Flambeau Tribe)

2014 Winners

Brownsville, TX
 Buncombe County, NC
 Durham County, NC
 Spokane County, WA
 Taos Pueblo
 Williamson, WV

2013 Winners

Cambridge, MA
 Fall River, MA
 Manistique, MI
 Minneapolis, MN
 New Orleans, LA
 Santa Cruz County, CA

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize (“the Prize”) honors the work of communities that foster health and wellbeing for all by addressing systemic inequities. In the 10 years since it launched, the Prize has recognized more than 50 communities across the country that are at the forefront of advancing health, opportunity, and equity for all. The Prize serves to inspire change and highlight community-led solutions that are breaking down the barriers to health and wellbeing caused by structural racism and other forms of discrimination, even if communities don’t use those terms.



Across the country, people who experience health inequities are challenging and changing the conditions driving those realities. In Drew, Mississippi, communities are addressing the lack of safe and affordable housing by tearing down deteriorating buildings and rebuilding new, accessible homes. National City, California, is championing efforts to let residents, regardless of their immigration status, determine the city’s growth. Dozens of community partners and hundreds of residents helped shape the city’s new Paradise Creek apartments and park complex, which brings food, transportation, and environmental justice to a part of the city where many people had felt left behind. The work of past Prize winners shows us that addressing structural racism and other structural barriers is critical to creating the community conditions to establish health equity, and progress is most powerful when the people leading change share their own stories and solutions to the issues they see.

The Prize shines a light on communities that are paving the way to health equity, from cities and counties to tribes and regions. Every community’s journey and strategies are unique, but across the board, Prize communities create and sustain a Culture of Health through deep cross-sector partnerships, efforts led by those directly affected by inequities, and sustainable solutions that address policy, systems, and environmental factors.

In 2023, RWJF will select up to 10 winning communities through a competitive selection process to receive a range of resources and supports including the following:

- **A \$250,000 prize**
- **National and local promotion of communities’ stories** that will inspire others’ efforts.
- **Training to enhance outreach** to media, policymakers, advocacy networks, and grassroots organizations.
- **Opportunities to expand networks** by connecting with other Prize communities as well as national and local leaders working to build a Culture of Health.
- Access to **technical assistance, coaching, and workshops** to enable Prize winners to accelerate their progress.

This call for applications seeks communities that exemplify the six Prize selection criteria (described on pages 5 and 6). These criteria illustrate important aspects of what it takes for communities to build a Culture of Health.



Who Is Eligible to Apply for the RWJF Culture of Health Prize?

The following eligibility criteria reflect that the RWJF Culture of Health Prize honors the work of communities that bring health equity to life by addressing systemic inequities. First and foremost, the Prize recognizes diverse, cross-sector partnerships that center people who are most impacted by local or regional health inequities and the opportunities they see to improve health and wellbeing. Some examples are economic opportunity, housing justice, healthcare access, criminal legal reform, and many other topics. The Prize is awarded to either whole cities, towns, tribes, reservations, or counties.

Eligible applicants must represent one of the following:

- City, town, village, borough, or other municipality with a publicly elected governing body;
- County or parish;
- Federally recognized tribe or a state-designated American Indian reservation;
- Native Hawaiian organization serving and representing the interests of Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders in Hawaii;
- Region, defined as geographically contiguous municipalities, counties, and/or reservations.

Partnership within communities is at the heart of the Prize. To be eligible, applicants should represent multiple unique organizations whose partnership predates the Prize application.

Types of organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Businesses
- Community coalitions
- Community development organizations
- Government agencies or departments
- Grassroots and advocacy organizations
- Hospital or healthcare organizations
- Local and regional foundations
- Nonprofit community-based organizations
- Resident groups
- Schools



To be eligible for the Prize, applications must designate a local U.S. government entity or tax-exempt 501(c)(3) public charity operating within the community to accept the \$250,000 Prize on the community's behalf should they win. Community partners can decide together how to use the unrestricted funds to benefit the community; budget reports on Prize expenditures are not required.



What Are Reviewers Looking For (Selection Criteria)?

Communities are best positioned to define for themselves the solutions they need in order to make health equity a reality. As such, the Prize selection criteria intentionally focuses on the journey—including strategies and other guideposts of progress—as much as the results your community has achieved together and the indicators you are tracking.

Reviewers use the following six Prize selection criteria as the lens to evaluate all submissions throughout the process, with a particular focus on the first three criteria.

1 Addressing structural racism and other structural injustices to create conditions that advance health equity

... means dismantling the systems that cause health disparities and cultivating pathways that support wellbeing. We encourage communities to show how they respond to challenges and build on strengths to address health inequities. Strategies addressing structural racism and other obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and healthcare—and focusing on positive solutions—are considered crucial to achieving a Culture of Health.

2 Committing to sustainable policy, systems, environmental, and cultural changes

... means making thoughtful, data-informed decisions that are designed to last and to increase power, wellbeing, and opportunity of those most impacted by health inequities. Examples include building participatory budgeting practices that put decisionmaking power about resources in the hands of people most affected by those decisions, or establishing meaningful and effective community advisory boards for relevant policies and programs. It takes interconnected, mutually reinforcing processes that are practiced regularly across community initiatives, rather than as discrete or isolated activities, to shift communities toward a Culture of Health. We encourage communities to demonstrate how residents, leaders, and organizations are collectively identifying policy, systems, environmental, and cultural priorities; addressing major factors that influence health; making space for what works; and taking coordinated action to implement solutions that have staying power.

3 Working alongside partners across sectors, and elevating the expertise and solutions held by people with firsthand experiences of health inequities

... means that people and organizations across disciplines and sectors (public and private) are working together—from grassroots organizations to businesses, including and especially those that plan, govern, and finance communities. Building community power, voice, and participation, and ultimately achieving a Culture of Health, requires the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color; people with firsthand experience of health inequities; and those who are navigating resource-scarce environments. We encourage communities to show how they approach redistributing power, such as through visible and meaningfully compensated roles and leadership positions, and/or deep engagement with community organizers or other power-building organizations.

4 Engaging in cultural work that celebrates community and envisions and advances a more just future

... means communities are actively engaged in cultivating and maintaining relevant cultural touchstones to celebrate and preserve community culture in ways that cultivate belonging and shared meaning. Creative, cultural practices that cultivate a sense of belonging and invite community members to experience their interconnectedness are the bedrock to healing and repair from structural racism and other forms of structural injustices that have created, and still perpetuate, health inequities. We encourage communities to show how they are inspiring others and sharing collective dreams for a future beyond structural racism and status quo power structures.

5 Making the most of available community resources and fostering sustainability

... means building on community assets and designing the work so that it can continue over time. This includes making equitable decisions about how to invest resources. We encourage communities to demonstrate how they are centering sustainability through the generation, allocation, and alignment of diverse financial and nonfinancial resources, such as network-building and knowledge sharing to improve health equity in the community.

6 Measuring and sharing qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress in culturally relevant ways

... means establishing shared goals across sectors and partners; agreeing on definitions of success; identifying measurable indicators of progress that include process as well as outcomes; and continuously using data to improve processes, track outcomes, and change course when necessary. This criterion recognizes the rigor and validity of culturally relevant forms of qualitative measurement; that many communities have experienced a historical lack of investment, which has resulted in insufficient data infrastructure and capacity; and that meaningful progress takes steps that are complicated to measure, such as the development of trusted relationships. Measuring and sharing progress is a form of embracing community accountability and requires local and cultural context.

What Should Communities Know Before Applying?

To be competitive, Prize applicants must showcase the breadth of work and collaboration happening across the entire community and across different sectors. There are two phases of the selection process, and this communitywide approach should be reflected throughout each phase. Communities should understand they are applying for a prize and not a grant. The Prize recognizes work that has already been accomplished and therefore there is no required workplan, budget, or follow-up reporting.



Application Details

The application and selection process has two distinct phases that are further detailed in the timeline below:

Phase I (February 13 to March 29, 2023)— Application submissions.

Phase II (May 15 to August 15, 2023)—

We will invite up to 15 communities to advance in the process and engage in site visits. We will provide detailed guidance to selected communities at that time. A review team will conduct site visits with selected finalist applicant communities to further discuss their applications and how their accomplishments align with the Prize selection criteria. Site visits will be in person, pending any necessary virtual accommodations depending on COVID-19 and other public health safety measures at that time.

In fall 2023, we will announce and have a celebration of the Prize-winning communities. Following the selection process, Prize-winning communities will collaborate with RWJF, Health Resources in Action (HRiA), and Spitfire Strategies staff to prepare for the national announcement and celebration of Prize winners.

How Do Communities Apply?

Eligible community partnerships are encouraged to submit either written essays (maximum four pages combined, single-spaced) or videos (maximum 20 minutes combined) that include the following two sections:

Section 1 is a one-page written essay or video up to five minutes in length introducing your community.

Who is your community?

Please describe:

- Key community demographics, historical and cultural context, characteristics, strengths, assets and challenges, including who in the community is most affected by structural racism and other forms of structural injustices, and what root causes are driving community health conditions.
- How your community's Culture of Health journey began (even if you don't call it that) and what catalyzed collective action (such as an event, opportunity, or decision).
- Anything else you think is important for us to understand about your community's context and journey.

Additional Guidance: This is an opportunity to provide reviewers with important context regarding your community's makeup and history, shared priorities, and strategies used to create health equity. Include information on the frontline communities facing systemic inequities that lead to poor health outcomes and how they have driven solutions or proactively engaged in your community's efforts and successes.



Section 2 is a three-page written essay or video up to 15 minutes in length that highlights three to six accomplishments by your community in reference to the six Prize selection criteria.

What did you accomplish? How did you accomplish it, and with whom?

Please use the six Prize selection criteria above to guide your submission for this section, keeping in mind that we are weighing criteria 1, 2, and 3 most heavily. Feel free to approach your examples and the criteria however you wish. You may choose to provide one example for each criterion or provide examples that address multiple criteria.

Additional Guidance: The Prize recognizes communities who think and act beyond individual organizations, work collaboratively, and contribute to systems-level change. You may highlight accomplishments that are standalone efforts or an aligned and coordinated collection of policies, programs, or activities.

Essays should be submitted as PDF documents and videos may be submitted with a Vimeo or YouTube link.

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system.

Visit <http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/prize10> and use the "Apply Online" link. One representative from each applicant community will be required to register at my.rwjf.org in order to begin the application process.

Site visits: Up to 15 communities will advance as finalists in the selection process and will be invited to host a site visit that will include representatives from RWJF, [Health Resources in Action](#), and the Prize National Advisory Committee. Detailed guidance will be provided to finalist communities invited to participate in this stage of the selection process. Site visits will be in person, pending any necessary virtual accommodations depending on COVID-19 and other public health safety measures at that time.



Frequently Asked Questions

We strongly encourage applicant communities to fully review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) located on the Prize website as they develop their applications. Key questions below address aspects around eligibility criteria:

Are communities within U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico eligible to apply?

Communities within U.S. territories are welcome to apply. If you have any questions about eligibility within U.S. territories, or definitions of communities based on the eligibility criteria, please contact the Prize program at the contact information below well in advance of the application deadline.

Are applications representing the work of a single organization eligible to apply?

No, the Prize is awarded to whole communities and eligible applications represent the work of multiple organizations. Successful applicants think and act beyond their own individual organizations and initiatives, and an application should reflect communitywide partnerships. We request that all applicants identify two community members, preferably from two different organizations or entities, to serve as contacts on the application.

Please direct inquiries to:

Health Resources in Action

Email: cultureofhealthprize@hria.org

All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of applications submitted.

This program will have a review committee that makes recommendations about Prize awards to Foundation staff. RWJF will make all final award decisions.

Are states or neighborhoods eligible to apply?

No, states or neighborhoods are not eligible to apply.

Is there a minimum or maximum population size for communities that apply?

No, the program invites applications from all communities that meet the eligibility requirements regardless of population size.

Are previous Prize-winning communities eligible to apply?

No, communities that have previously received the RWJF Culture of Health Prize are not eligible to apply.

Program Direction

Management and technical assistance for this program are provided by Health Resources in Action:

Health Resources in Action
2 Boylston Street, 4th floor
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: (617) 451-0049

Email: cultureofhealthprize@hria.org

Website: www.rwjf.org/prize

Responsible staff members at Health Resources in Action:

- Ana Maria De La Rosa, MPH, co-managing director, Healthy & Equitable Communities
- Albaney Gray, MPH, program coordinator, Healthy & Equitable Communities
- Heidi Klein, MS, co-managing director, Healthy & Equitable Communities

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation:

- Katrina E. Badger, MPH, MSW, program officer
- Abbey K. Cofsky, MPH, managing director
- Katie Corbit, MPH, program associate
- Elías Enenbach, MA, MPhil, senior communications officer
- Christine Phares, program financial analyst

Strategic communication partners at Spitfire Strategies:

- Michael Crawford, vice president
- Claire de Leon, MPH, vice president
- Ellie Klerlein, senior vice president

Key Dates and Deadlines

February 16, 2023 (2 p.m. ET)

Optional applicant webinar. Registration is available through [this link](#). A recording of the webinar will be available on the RWJF website for interested applicants who are not able to attend the live session.

March 29, 2023 (3 p.m. ET)

All applications due. Please direct any technological inquiries to [HRiA](#) at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline.

Week of May 8, 2023

Applicants will be notified whether or not they have been selected as finalists. Interviews will be scheduled with those selected.

June 2023

Site visits will be conducted by a review team with selected finalist applicant communities.

October/November 2023

National announcement and celebration of winners.

Applicant Deadline Policy

All applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system.

Visit <http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/prize10> and use the “Apply Online” link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at my.rwjf.org before you begin the application process.

All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online application requirements well before the final submission deadline. Please note that, in the 24-hour period leading up to the application deadline, staff may not be able to assist all applicants with any system-related issues. Therefore, we encourage you to submit your application well before the deadline so that any unforeseen difficulties or technical problems may be addressed in advance.

Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason. While late submissions will not be accepted, RWJF may choose, at its sole discretion, to extend the application deadline for all applicants. Such extensions generally will be granted only in the event of (1) a verified issue with the RWJF application system that prevented completion and submission of applications; or (2) a disaster, emergency, or significant internet outage that affects one or more regions. For purposes of this policy, a region is generally considered to be one or more states. RWJF strives to give all applicants any support needed to successfully submit their application prior to the deadline. Submission is defined as all sections completed, marked “Finished,” the application “Submit” button used, and the application status shows as “Submitted.” If the deadline is extended for any reason, the extension will be posted on the funding opportunity page at [rwjf.org](https://www.rwjf.org). In addition, an email will be sent to all individuals that have started an application in the RWJF online system.

Applicant Survey Process

The project director of each community’s application may be contacted after the submission deadline by SSRS, an independent research firm. The project director will be asked to complete a brief online survey about the application process and applicant community characteristics. This voluntary questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Responses provided to SSRS will not impact the Prize award decision in any way.

SSRS will protect the confidentiality of your responses. RWJF will not receive any data that links applicants’ names to survey responses.



Funding Details

- **Type of Award:** Awards funded under this opportunity will be structured as a prize for accomplishments previously completed. Since the Prize is not a grant, there are no programmatic requirements or deliverables required of winners once it is awarded.
- **Number of Awards:** Up to 10
- **Amount of Each Award:** \$250,000
- **Award Duration:** A one-time Prize will be awarded in fall 2023.
- **Use of Funds:** Award funds are distributed as a prize and do not have any specific budgetary requirements. Funds may be used at the discretion of the recipient with the following exceptions: funds may not be used for political election activities. Additional budget guidelines are provided in the online application materials.
- **Payment of Awards:** The Prize will be paid in full to winners upon awardee selection by the Foundation and completion of necessary documentation.

EQUALITY:

Everyone gets the same – regardless if it's needed or right for them.



EQUITY:

Everyone gets what they need – understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.



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Our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commitment

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is committed to building a Culture of Health that provides everyone in America a fair and just opportunity for health and wellbeing. Achieving this goal requires focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion. To that end, we are committed to fostering diverse perspectives. We recognize that individuals' perspectives are shaped by a host of factors, such as their race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, familial status, education, religion, legal status, military service, political affiliation, geography, and other personal and professional experiences.

We know that the presence of diverse perspectives alone is not sufficient. Therefore, we also are committed to creating inclusive environments where all individuals are encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences. We believe that only through valuing our differences and similarities, and remaining vigilant in advancing equity, will we be able to maintain an equitable workplace and actively pursue equity in all aspects of our work. We commit to being continuous learners and working alongside others to cultivate equity, diversity, and inclusion.

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to improving health and health equity in the United States. In partnership with others, we are working to develop a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they have. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at <http://www.rwjf.org/emailsубscriptions>.

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