

FUNDING GUIDE

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Guide to Funding Your Community Health Initiative

The *County Health Rankings* illustrate that where we live, learn, work, and play matters to our health and that by working together we can improve the health of our communities. Moreover, the *Rankings* illustrate that all of us – from public health leaders, researchers, health care providers, community leaders, elected officials, and business owners – play a role in improving the health of our individual communities.

A common barrier many communities face is how to get the financial support for new community health policies, programs, or systems changes that are identified during community discussions or planning efforts. The purpose of this guide is to give your team tools for identifying and accessing funding resources for your community health initiative.

The guide has three sections:

- I. **Readiness Assessment** – A self-assessment to help you determine if you're ready to seek funding.
- II. **Developing Partnerships** – Tips for developing critical partnerships for your community health initiative.
- III. **Identifying and Accessing Funding Opportunities** – Where to look for funding opportunities and tips on accessing funding.

As you use this guide and identify additional ideas about ways to fund community health initiatives, please share suggestions for improvement with us by emailing us at info@countyhealthrankings.org.

Section I: Readiness Assessment

Community health improvement can be a large undertaking and often involves taking action in new ways. When beginning a new initiative, one of the first questions is: “How will we pay for this?” Before you tackle that question, take some time to ensure you have a solid plan in place and strengthen your ability to secure funding. This Readiness Assessment tool outlines what to address before you make a funding proposal.

Use this tool to assess where your community is in the process, what you already have in place, and what you still need to do. (Note that these activities may not occur in the order listed below and some may even be cyclical.)

Key Activities for Improving Community Health – How Ready is Your Community?

<i>Steps/Elements</i>	<i>Not Started</i>	<i>In-Process</i>	<i>Completed</i>
<u>Recruit diverse stakeholders from multiple sectors</u>			
<u>Decide on an organizational structure</u>			
<u>Identify community assets and resources</u>			
<u>Discuss and finalize priority issues</u>			
<u>Explore effective policies and programs</u>			
<u>Review and select policies and programs to implement</u>			
<u>Identify who you need to influence in order to implement your policy or program</u>			
<u>Understand your community’s political environment</u>			
<u>Create a specific action plan and budget</u>			
<u>Identify indicators and how to collect data to monitor progress</u>			
<u>Identify benchmarks for success</u>			

Section II: Developing Partnerships

Developing strong partnerships is an essential component for improving community health. With a shared vision and commitment to improved health, working together can yield better results than working alone. Working in partnership with other organizations can help with information sharing, coordinating efforts, sharing staff, cost-sharing, etc. In addition, you may not have to search for new money if you maximize how you collaborate with your partners. The [Work Together Guide](#) includes a number of helpful tools and resources for strengthening partnerships.

Checklist for Developing Effective Partnerships

Creating effective partnerships takes patience, time, and nurturing. Below is a checklist for developing an effective partnership to help guide your partnership work.

- Define the need for a partnership (e.g. improving the health of your community).
- Identify potential partners by researching other organizations with similar goals.
- Schedule time to meet with potential partners to discuss the goal of improving the health of the community and the opportunity to partner on such an activity/initiative.
- With partners, determine shared goals and activities of the community health initiative.
- Clearly identify what each partner brings to the table – what resource(s) does each partner have to offer? Where can partners cooperate or collaborate to reduce redundancy in services or bring together resources to enhance or increase programs or initiatives? Think broadly and beyond money. Consider personnel, equipment, space, marketing services or other specialized skills/services that could be offered in-kind.
- Develop and implement a shared action plan.
- Evaluate results.

Examples of Maximizing Partner Resources

Employee Time - An employee's time to coordinate an effort, write a grant, or produce and administer a survey.

Money - Several agencies could each commit a smaller amount of money to contract with an individual to lead a project or program. In one community, several groups wanted to do door-to-door outreach in a low-income immigrant community to connect with residents on a variety of public health issues. None of the organizations had enough money for an outreach worker, so each agency contributed money and together they funded a full time worker to provide outreach on the prevention of teen pregnancy, diabetes, and HIV.

Physical Space - In another community, a local school district offered its gym space and pool for a program to increase physical activity in the community after lack of low-cost options to exercise during the winter was identified as a barrier to physical activity for many community members.

Using the County Health Rankings to Engage Partners

You can use the *County Health Rankings* to bring partners to the table to invest in improving health and make a case for funding. Partners can:

- See how your county measures against the national benchmarks and against other counties in your state.
- Engage in conversations with you about the many factors that contribute to health and how they might play a role in improving one or more factors.
- Help you spur community interest and concern about health.
- Work with you to use data from the County Health Rankings to support applications for new funding opportunities.

Section III: Identifying and Accessing Funding Opportunities

Finding grant opportunities can be a daunting task – where do you even start? The good news is there are a lot of resources available, and this guide will help you navigate through some of them. This section provides an overview of the types of funding resources available, tips on how to identify and access resources, and information on funders of community health initiatives.

Types of Funding Resources

There are several types of funding resources throughout the nation, state, and in your community including government grants, foundation funds, corporate sponsorships, and service organization grants. Some organizations provide grants on a national or state level while others provide to particular projects within specific communities.

Federal and State Governments. Federal or state governmental agencies often put out calls for proposals on specific topic areas. They usually have a timeframe during which they accept proposals and make funding decisions. It is important to be aware of the timing for different grant opportunities. Where possible, you may want to sign up for email alerts to receive notices about new calls for proposals.

Foundations. Foundations can be a great source for funding projects, and finding the right foundation for your project is a critical first step in the application process. There are several types of foundations including community, family, and public foundations. Some are small and serve a specific community, while others may give millions of dollars to fund projects all over the country. There are several websites (some listed below) that can help you find a foundation that matches your initiative. Your local chamber of commerce, United Way and county Council of Governments are also great resources when looking for foundations that fund projects in your community.

Corporations. Many corporations offer grants through a foundation or philanthropic division – take a look at their website to see what types of programs and initiatives they typically fund. Companies tend to invest in the communities where they are located so investigating which corporations have headquarters or other corporate facilities in or near your community is a good place to start. Check out your local Chamber of Commerce or United Way for a list.

Service Organizations. Civic and service clubs, like Kiwanis, the Lions Club, the Junior League, and the Rotary may also have monetary or in-kind resources available. Members of service organizations represent many sectors (e.g. business, education, government, human services, or health) in your community, so engaging with their members can create great synergy with these sectors.

Identifying Funding Opportunities

Identifying and accessing funding is fundamentally a matter of staying abreast of upcoming funding opportunities by conducting regular internet research on funding opportunities and staying connected with your key partners to learn about funding opportunities.

There are a number of helpful resources for staying well-informed of upcoming funding opportunities.

- **[The Grantsmanship Center](#)** provides state-specific information about the top grantmaking foundations, community foundations, and corporate giving programs, as well as links state government homepages.
- **[The Foundation Center](#)** is a leading source on philanthropy worldwide and is supported by more than 550 foundations. They have five regional library/learning centers (New York, Washington DC, Atlanta, Cleveland and San Francisco) and also maintain an online database of the more than 100,000 foundations, corporate donors and grantmaking public charities. However, searching the directory requires a subscription, the most basic of which costs \$19.95/month.
- **[United Way](#)** is another great resource to assist in your search for funding opportunities. In 2008, the United Way initiated a 10 year plan with goals to improve education, help people achieve financial stability, and promote healthy lives. These [goals](#) with the socioeconomic factors and health behavior factors that are a significant part of the *County Health Rankings* model. Your local United Way can help connect you to other agencies and/or initiatives going on in your community to address these issues.
- **[Grants.gov](#)** includes grant opportunities from 26 federal grantmaking agencies, including the departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, and Transportation, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. You can also sign up to receive email alerts [here](#).
- **[The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)** issues announcements for Requests for Application (RFAs) for specific topics and has set timelines so it is advised that you read the RFA carefully to be sure your project fits into the scope. You can also sign up to receive email updates on the latest news and information from SAMHSA.
- **[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)**, which funds the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program, awards grants in several program areas including childhood obesity, health care coverage, human capital, public health, quality/equity and vulnerable populations. RWJF awards most of its grants through calls for proposals.
- **State government and universities** may be another possible source for grants. States may offer competitive grants to work on specific issue areas. Researchers at universities may be willing to work

with you to apply for research funds to implement and evaluate your new initiative or you may be able to tap into an existing research project in your area of interest.

Accessing Funds

Here are some key tips on accessing funds for your community health initiative:

- **Plan ahead and know your specific needs** – Clearly define resources you need to accomplish your initiative.
- **Clearly understand funding goals and guidelines** – Customize your proposal with the funder’s goals and objectives. Follow all technical guidelines as requested by the specific funder.
- **Have a clear picture of success** – What are the funders purchasing with their money? How will you deliver your product? How will you measure your progress toward reaching your goals?
- **Have measurable outcomes** – Who will benefit and how? How will your initiative be evaluated?
- **Plan for sustainability** – Funders want projects that will continue once the grant period is over. How will you sustain the program?

Health Factor and Funding Source Crosswalk

We populated this cross-walk with some of the foundation and corporate giving programs mentioned in this guide. As you find additional local resources that align with specific health factors, fill them in to create a more complete guide for funding opportunities in your community.

Health Factors

Private Grantmakers

<p><i>Health Behaviors, e.g.,</i> Alcohol Use Tobacco Use Diet and Exercise Sexual Activity</p>	<p>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>Ford Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>Daniels Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants
<p><i>Social & Economic Factors, e.g.,</i> Education Employment Income Family and Social Support Community Safety</p>	<p>W.K. Kellogg Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>Hearst Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>Ford Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants
<p><i>Clinical Care, e.g.,</i> Access to Care Quality of Care</p>	<p>Hearst Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants <p>David and Lucile Packard Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants (search database)
<p><i>Physical Environment, e.g.,</i> Environmental Quality Built Environment</p>	<p>David and Lucile Packard Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants (search database) <p>Charles Stewart Mott Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants (search database) <p>PepsiCo Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus areas and approved grants