

2023 Merck Regional Access to Health Grants Opportunity | Social Business Innovation Program Announcement & Application Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

For more than 130 years, Merck has brought hope to humanity through the development of important medicines and vaccines. We aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world — and today, we are at the forefront of research to deliver innovative health solutions that advance the prevention and treatment of diseases in people and animals. As part of Merck’s [Environmental, Social, and Governance \(ESG\) strategy](#), the company has set a public commitment to advance access to health for people in low- and middle-income countries and for underserved populations in high-income countries.

In 2023, Merck is launching [the inaugural round of a social impact grants program, Solutions for Healthy Communities](#).

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS & TEMPLATE

Please review the information below to confirm if this funding opportunity is the best fit for your project and then click link to find additional details.

To apply, complete the [regional grant application](#). The application includes instructions for submission.

Applications will be due by 5 PM ET on June 2, 2023. Contracts will be fully executed, and work commenced no later than December 2023.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Solutions for Healthy Communities Grant Program aims to catalyze innovation in community solutions that facilitate access to quality health care for underserved populations in areas where Merck operates. The program will invest in solutions that are designed and led by local stakeholders to meet local needs and priorities.

The Solutions for Healthy Communities Program will consider grant applications consistent with the following areas of interest. Successful proposals will seek to expand access to quality health care via community-based solutions that reach populations that are historically underserved by the healthcare system. These populations include, but are not limited to:

- Black, indigenous, and other people of color
- People experiencing poverty
- People living in rural areas
- Migrant populations
- People with diverse gender identities and/or sexual orientations
- People living with disabilities

Solutions should include approaches that are new and innovative for the relevant community, in an effort to improve the reach and impact of community health services – for example, by expanding health services offered in community settings, growing the capacity of community health organizations, or testing new models to address the social determinants of health for patient populations. Sample interventions could include efforts to:

- Strengthen community-based healthcare systems or service delivery organizations
- Optimize mobile clinics or telemedicine solutions to better reach rural communities
- Grow capacity and reach of community health workers
- Develop and/or strengthen partnerships that bridge across community and clinical settings to improve outreach to underserved populations

Proposals should seek to have impact across therapeutic areas, including but not limited to Merck's key focus areas - oncology, vaccines, infectious disease, and diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Proposals that can impact a range of therapeutic areas will be prioritized.

Grants will cover two years of project implementation, and awards will range in size from \$50,000 - \$300,000 for two years.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Non-profit organizations operating within 50 miles of a U.S. Merck site (*see map below*) will be eligible for this program.

- Kenilworth, NJ
- Rahway, NJ
- West Point, PA
- Upper Gwynedd, PA
- Danville, PA
- Durham, NC
- Wilson, NC
- Elkton, VA
- Boston, MA
- Millsboro, DE
- Elkhorn, NE
- Puerto Rico
- South San Francisco, CA



The following organizations or projects are NOT eligible for support:

- Organizations or other entities which purchase, recommend, use, reimburse or prescribe Merck products or have the ability to influence the purchase, utilization, prescribing, formulary position, pricing, reimbursement, referral, or recommendation of or payment for Merck products, such as patients, health care professionals (HCPs), or payers.
- Projects that directly influence or advance Merck’s business, including the purchase, utilization, prescribing, formulary position, pricing, reimbursement, referral, or recommendation of or payment for its products
- Project funds being used to pay HCPs who are licensed to prescribe medication
- Project funds being used to buy computers or laptops (these may be rented instead)
- Individuals (including travel support for individuals to meetings)
- For-profit organizations
- Political organizations, campaigns, and activities
- Fraternal or labor organizations and activities
- Religious organizations or groups whose activities are primarily sectarian in purpose
- Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, caste, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, national origin, veteran's status, or disability
- Capital campaigns, including new construction/renovation of facilities and endowments

- Basic or clinical research projects, including epidemiological studies, clinical trials, or other pharmaceutical studies
- Purchase of supplies or equipment unrelated to the proposed project
- Direct medical care or services, including medical screening or testing, direct telehealth services family planning services, purchase of medicines, contraceptive supplies, vaccines, or medical devices
- Development of new drugs or medical devices
- Fundraising events, such as benefit dinners or galas
- Meetings/symposia/or conferences that do not have or are not associated with long-term project objectives
- Payment of staff salaries not aligned with the proposed project
- Organizations that request a grant greater than 50% of their current annual budget

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

a. Proposed Project

- Clarity of proposal with clear objectives and outcomes that link to evidence
- Demonstrated understanding of locally relevant barriers to access to health for specific underserved population groups
- A focus on reducing disparities in health care access and health outcomes across therapeutic areas
- Inclusion of innovative, creative, and promising community-led and community-based solutions to improve health care access

b. Organizational Experience

- Overall experience and expertise in community health
- Demonstrated capacity and capabilities to carry out proposed activities (e.g., technical expertise, relationships with relevant stakeholders)
- Experience communicating and disseminating results to key audiences (e.g., media, government stakeholders)

c. Potential for Impact and Sustainability

- Ability to effectively test and/or scale new community health approaches in the project timeframe

- Opportunities to leverage, scale and sustain efforts beyond this grant (e.g., attracting co-funding, influencing policy change or insurance reimbursement, integrating into existing local or national program)

CONTRACTING & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As a condition to receiving a grant award, the recipient organization must agree to use the funds in the manner and for the purpose(s) for which the grant is intended. The recipient will also be asked to agree to other appropriate terms and conditions in a contract, including completion of progress reporting as specified in the contract, sharing interim/final results and lessons learned as well as participation in a targeted number of virtual learning events. Grant recipients will be asked to report on the following each year of the grant:

- Impact of the project to date (i.e., progress towards intended outcomes of proposed project, number of people directly reached through intervention, healthcare workers trained through intervention)
- Description of project accomplishments and outcomes as well as lessons learned
- Communication plans, if any, for disseminating project achievements and results more widely through presentations, publications, etc.
- Beneficiary stories that can be included in wider Merck communications materials
- Description of how the grant funds were spent to date, with major expenditures (budget line items) indicated.
- Project deliverable(s), if appropriate

TRANSPARENCY

Issuance of this request for proposals does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Merck nor does it commit to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of applications. Further, Merck reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Award commitments are subject to final legal & compliance clearance.

Merck is committed to disclosing publicly its grants or contributions to third party organizations. Merck will report information including the name of the grantee, a brief description of the program/project and the amount of the grant award. Merck plans to update this information periodically and post this information on www.merck.com.