

Solutions for Healthy Communities Grant Program | Social Impact and Sustainability

Program Description & Application Guidelines for Merck's Regional Access to Health Grants

Opportunity

External Use

Solutions for Healthy Communities is not currently accepting grant applications. The most recent RFP closed February 28, 2025. We anticipate the next call for proposals will be released in early 2027. At that time, the Solutions for Healthy Communities page on Merck.com (www.merck.com/shc) will be updated with specific dates and application links for that cycle. Those guidelines will supersede information in this document.

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.

Solutions for Healthy Communities (SHC), Merck's community health grants program, advances [Access to Health](#) for communities facing long-standing barriers. SHC intentionally recognizes and invests in community expertise, supporting innovative, community-led solutions that address local priorities.

SHC funds programs that reflect locally identified needs. Selection prioritizes projects that seek to drive measurable improvements in access to health care in communities where Merck operates, and to integrate local health expertise and community leadership into project design and implementation.

Grantees are embedded in the communities they serve and leverage local knowledge to increase access to care. Activities aim to empower people and communities, build health workforce capacity and close gaps in care.

While more specific guidelines will be shared once a new RFP is released, below are some general guidelines for the program. These are the guidelines for U.S.-based organizations. For guidelines for organizations based outside the United States, please visit www.msd.com/SHC.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Global Impact Investing and Giving (GIIG) is Merck's primary strategic philanthropy platform. GIIG seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of underserved populations across Merck's global communities through impact-driven program investments, product donations and innovative partnerships.

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 invests in solutions that are designed and led by local stakeholders to meet local needs and priorities.

PROGRAM AREAS OF STRATEGIC INTEREST

The information and guidance below are not meant to be limiting. The GIIG team recognizes that organizations know the health needs of their community best and will assess grant proposals based on the information communicated in the proposal.

The Solutions for Healthy Communities Program considers grant applications that seek to impact access to health through one or more of the following ways:

- Empowering people and communities with health knowledge
- Designing, testing and/or implementing models of care
- Building capacity of health workers
- Strengthening health systems and sustainability

Successful proposals seek to expand access to quality health care via community-led solutions that reach populations that are historically underserved by the healthcare system.

Solutions should include approaches that are new and innovative for the relevant community or population, in an effort to improve the reach and impact of community health services.

Prioritized proposals will share their own definitions of success to demonstrate how their intervention has impact on local or community-based health systems strengthening efforts.

Sample interventions could include efforts to:

- Strengthen community-based healthcare systems or service delivery organizations
- Optimize mobile clinics or telemedicine solutions to better reach underserved 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 supporting communities within 50 miles of a U.S. Merck site (*see map below*) are 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



Please note, organizations based in the U.S. and operate globally are eligible to apply. However, organizations based in the regions where they provide services will be prioritized during application review. (For guidelines for organizations based outside the United States, please visit www.msd.com/SHC.)

The following organizations or projects are NOT eligible for support:

- Projects that directly influence or advance our company's business, including the purchase, utilization, prescribing, formulary position, pricing, reimbursement, referral or recommendation of or payment for its products
- Individuals (including travel support for individuals to attend meetings or conferences)
- 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, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, national origin, veteran's status or disability
- Capital campaigns, including new construction, renovation of facilities and endowments
- Unrestricted general operating support
- Organizations that request a grant amount greater than 50% of their current annual budget
- Basic or clinical research projects, including epidemiological studies, clinical trials, outcomes research or other pharmaceutical studies
- Purchase of supplies or equipment unrelated to a specific project or program
- Direct medical care or services, including medical screening or testing
- Purchase of or discounts on medications, medical devices or biologics
- Fundraising events, such as concerts, sporting events, annual appeals or membership drives and benefit dinners or galas (unrelated to organizations whose mission reflects SIS/Foundation giving priorities)
- Media products, such as radio, TV, film, webcasts, that are not part of a specific project or program
- Meetings, symposia or conferences that do not have or are not associated with long-term program objectives
- Payment of staff salaries not aligned with a specific project or program
- Individual fellowship/tuition support for training purposes that are not part of a larger fellowship program
- Organizations *currently* holding grants from Solutions for Healthy Communities

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals are 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, 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 (e.g., progress toward 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.