

## 2018 Health Equity Fund

In October 2016, Louisville/Jefferson County was awarded the Culture of Health prize for the collaborative efforts between and among sectors that advance health equity. Along with the national recognition, Louisville received \$25,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Because of the generous donations by Community Foundation of Louisville, The Humana Foundation, Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence, and Metro United Way, the initial prize money was leveraged to raise a total of \$150,000 to start the Louisville Health Equity Fund (HEF).

### Equity in Practice

Although the Culture of Health prize is a phenomenal celebration of the hard work in Louisville, the 2017 Health Equity Report shows that, depending on where you live or who you are, there is still a 12.6 year difference in life expectancy among populations. The HEF seeks to highlight what it can look like to practice equity in a meaningful way.

In Jefferson County, health equity means a Louisville where everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy and reach their full potential. Although the work of Public Health and Wellness' Center for Health Equity is framed through the lens of *health* equity, the work to advance equity extends to every sector of our community. Equity in practice understands that, in order to have equitable life outcomes in Louisville, it is imperative for all institutions engaged with public service to embed equitable practices of engagement and decision-making into the daily work of their organization.

### About the Topic: Education

In January 2018, the Center for Health Equity engaged nearly 200 residents from numerous community groups and asked them prioritize which of the 11 root causes highlighted in the 2017 Health Equity Report should be funded in the first round of the Health Equity Fund. When given a chance to have a voice in deciding where community dollars were spent, residents were well prepared with lots of stories and meaningful life experiences that informed their decisions. In addition, they gave suggestions for the subsequent rounds of funding and ways to increase community decision-making.

They were also very aware that, because there is such a strong relationship between root causes, each one deserves to be the focus but the topic of **education** was a clear priority (employment and income were second).

For residents, education is inclusive of early childhood-through postgraduate-education and is intricately linked to other root causes. For example, concerns were raised about students being hungry, having limited access to needed technology, or feeling unsafe due to bullying. People were intrigued by the idea of collaborations between the education sector and nonprofits in the community to address barriers so students can achieve their full educational potential.

There were also concerns about lack of student representation within decision-making processes and choosing curriculum content. Residents recognized that engaging young people in an equitable way is a skillset that adults may not have, and were open to grant money being used for equity skillset development for education professionals. Finally, residents were clear that education does not solely occur within the formal schooling context, and appreciated that there are opportunities to develop partnerships in which formal and informal education collaborate with one another to improve outcomes for students.

### **Eligibility for 2018 Health Innovation Fund Grant**

- Nonprofit organizations working in Jefferson County, KY to address barriers that prevent students from reaching their full educational potential
- Have equity as a core value of its work
- Propose a use of funds that will strengthen the organization's ability to address barriers that prevent students from achieving their full educational potential

Grant funds may be used to pay for the costs of consulting services, technology upgrades (hardware, software or website updates), costs associated with professional development (including conference/training fees, travel, lodging). Grants may also be used to pay for a reasonable portion of staff time for work on the designated project.

Grants may not be used to fund a staff person solely to complete duties described in her/his job description. Grants may not be used to pay debt or expenses incurred prior to the grant award date.

The Health Equity Fund will award two grants, up to \$20,000 each, in March 2018. The HEF will fully fund selected grant requests (it will not provide partial awards) and must be spent by December 31, 2018. Grantees will be required to submit a mid-term and final project report, and participate in two "Advancing Racial Equity" trainings, hosted by the Center for Health Equity.