

Insights for Your RWJF Award for Health Equity Application

Here's some information to help you complete a nomination for the RWJF Award for Health Equity.

WHAT POPULATIONS NEED HEALTH EQUITY?

Most American communities are home to groups of older adults who face significant barriers to living healthy lives. Those vulnerable groups include, but aren't limited to:

- Older people living in poverty.
- Older people of color.
- Older people who don't speak English as their first language.
- Older people with low health literacy.
- Older people who are socially isolated.
- Older people who are LGBTQ+.

Nominees for the RWJF Award for Health Equity should demonstrate that they have sought a way to increase access to services, supports, and opportunities that enable these or other vulnerable older adults to lead healthy lives.

WHAT ACTIONS ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY?

LeadingAge members implement many programs and initiatives that promote health equity for older adults. Here are just a few examples of efforts that might promote opportunities for older adults to be healthier:

- Help older adults navigate the health care or insurance system, understand a doctor's orders, or take steps to manage a chronic disease.
- Reduce isolation that often leads to physical and mental health issues.
- Address cultural barriers to using needed physical or mental health services.
- Improve access to physical fitness activities that can help older adults maintain or improve function and mobility.
- Offer nutrition programs that provide access to healthy foods or teach older adults how to prepare nutritious meals that could help them prevent or manage chronic disease.
- Enhance the quality, safety, and accessibility of housing.
- Ensure that the needs of vulnerable older adults are included in local conversations about community planning or public health.
- Ensure providers serving or assisting older adults are providing accessible and equitable care to all who they serve.

Programs or efforts developed by nominees will often:

- Involve community partners or cross-sector collaboration.
- Seek sustainable change.
- Have the potential to be adopted and scaled.

PAST WINNERS OF THE AWARD FOR HEALTH EQUITY

This will be the sixth year that LeadingAge has presented the RWJF Award for Health Equity.

In 2017, the RWJF award went to [Sarah Schoeder and Kate West](#) of Eaton Senior Communities in Lakewood, CO. Schoeder and West won the award for a wellness-coaching initiative they launched among older residents at Eaton and are now working to spread to other affordable senior housing communities.

In 2018, the Award for Health Equity was presented to [Terry Allton Spitznagel](#) of National Church Residences for her role in developing the organization's Home for Life program, which provides non-clinical care coordination to older adults, many of whom are homeowners living in the state's poorest and most isolated areas.

In 2019, [Michael Klein and Gabriel Sanders](#) of Kavod Senior Life in Denver, CO, received the award for their efforts to reduce social isolation among older Denver residents with low incomes.

In 2020, [Linda Coleman](#) of HumanGood received the award for her efforts to forge partnerships with health plans and providers to bring health and wellness opportunities to affordable housing residents and engage affordable housing in health planning at the community level.

In 2021, [Erica Thrash-Sall](#), executive director of McFarlan Villages Corporation, received the award for her work to establish a culture of health and wellness among older adults facing barriers that are deeply rooted in poverty and racism.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Award for Health Equity:

- Read [Official Rules: RWJF Award for Health Equity Presented by LeadingAge](#)
- Email [Alex Hennessee](#), research associate at LeadingAge, or call 202-508-1210