



Health Equity Fund

Promoting Health for All Boulder Community Members

What is the Health Equity Fund?

In Nov. 2016, City of Boulder voters approved a ballot measure that authorized the city to tax the distribution of sugar-sweetened beverages. The community-initiated measure, which went into effect in July 2017, was intended to improve community health and increase investment in programs designed to reduce health disparities. It specifically requires that tax revenues be used for health promotion; wellness programs and disease prevention among people experiencing health disparities.

The city established [the Health Equity Fund](#) (HEF) to allocate [sugar-sweetened beverage tax](#) (SSB Tax) revenue in alignment with the tax legislative intent. The city defines health equity as “the absence of systematic health disparities based on socio-economic factors, and the ability of all residents to reach their full health potential, regardless of their life circumstances.”

In Boulder, people experiencing health disparities include people who are:

- disproportionately impacted by diseases linked to sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption or disproportionately targeted by SSB marketing;
- experiencing systemic barriers to healthy food, safe water, quality health care, wellness information and health care services and systems;
- systemically disenfranchised due to race, ethnicity, income, age, ability, sexual orientation or gender identification.

Who can apply to the Health Equity Fund?

Non-profit organizations, agencies and institutions serving Boulder residents can request funding through an annual [competitive fund round](#), for programs that meet HEF criteria including:

- Benefitting people most affected by, or at increased risk from chronic disease linked to sugary drink consumption, or who generally experience health disparities;
- Demonstrating sound research or evidence-based best practices;
- Demonstrating strong and long-term evaluation of outcomes, or the potential for long-term evaluation; and
- Meaningfully engaging at-risk community members in the design, implementation and/or evaluation of the proposed program.

Typically, the city publishes a Request for Proposal (RFP) for each fund round. Due to unique COVID-19 challenges, the city did not issue a 2021 RFP but rather allocated funding to agencies among as many 2020 HEF grantees as possible.

City staff collect reporting information for each HEF-funded program, each year, and work with grantees to assess the detailed community impacts from their program activities.



Credit: "I Have A Dream" Foundation of Boulder Co.



Credit: Community Cycles



Credit: Growing Gardens



Credit: YWCA of Boulder County

How is the Health Equity Fund impacting our community?

The [HEF Theory of Change](#) describes the strategic goals and evaluation process to measure impact from HEF investments. The HEF long-term goal is to help reduce diseases (e.g. diabetes, obesity, heart disease) among community members experiencing health disparities. This requires achieving short-term goals such as increasing wellness behaviors and access to health and wellness services; and improving grantee agencies' understanding and implementation of health equity policies and practices.

Toward these goals, the city has awarded or allocated roughly \$17 Million to programs aimed at decreasing health disparities and increasing health equity in Boulder. HEF-funded programs include those that:

- Distribute fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods to Boulder's low-income and food-insecure populations;
- Provide physical activity programs for low-income children, teens and older adults;
- Provide dental exams, preventative diabetes screenings, mental and behavioral interventions and other direct health services for low-income and people of color residents;
- Research and advocate for access to clean household drinking water in mobile home communities;
- Conduct neighborhood outreach and education for health and wellness in Latinx communities; and
- Integrate wellness and health equity education activities into other social service programs.

How are funding decisions made?

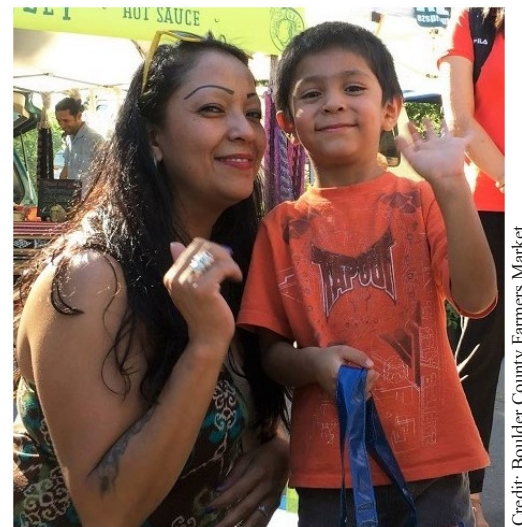
The [Health Equity Advisory Committee](#) (HEAC) is a nine-member committee comprised of community members with diverse expertise in health disparity and health equity issues. Committee members review funding applications, and make funding recommendations to staff and the city manager based on the HEF criteria and Theory of Change.

Specifically, the committee's purpose is to:

- Help define desired outcomes and key indicators that should be tracked to measure success;
- Provide recommendations on what existing city and community programs could be expanded with additional funding;
- Provide recommendations on what existing and new city and community programs should be funded in future years; and
- Provide input on effective strategies and programs to engage residents most affected by health disparities and lack of access to health services.

The city accepts applications for the HEAC on a rolling basis, for consideration as committee vacancies arise. To apply for the HEAC, visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/BoulderHEAC1> or contact HEF staff to request a paper application.



Credit: Boulder County Farmers Market



Credit: Clinica



Credit: El Centro Amistad



Credit: Boulder Parks and Recreation

For more information contact Elizabeth Crowe, Human Services Investments Manager at (303) 441-1928 or crowee@bouldercolorado.gov. Visit the HEF website at <http://bouldercolorado.gov/human-services/health-equity-fund>.