



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: Health Workforce Well-Being Grants

Applications Due: Monday, January 20, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. CT

Supporting initiatives that conduct initial exploration, develop effective strategies and interventions, and test innovative ideas to serve as foundational components to AHW's Health Workforce Well-Being Landmark Initiative



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Overview

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment Overview

At the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW), we are driven by a vision for a healthier Wisconsin.

As Wisconsin's largest health philanthropy, AHW seeks to propel the most promising work and ideas to improve health and advance health equity in Wisconsin today, and for generations to come. From urban centers to rural and agricultural communities and self-governed tribal nations, we are committed to maximizing the health of ALL Wisconsinites. We do that by providing funding and resources to researchers, organizations, and communities devoted to the health and well-being of the people they serve.

We accelerate innovation, collaboration, and impact by fueling research- and community-identified opportunities. Learn more about [our story](#) and AHW's [areas of focus](#).

Funding Summary

At an AHW-hosted conference entitled "Advancing Health for ALL Wisconsinites" held in conjunction with AHW's 20th anniversary in June 2024, AHW Director Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, announced landmark investments in three key health challenges: hypertension control, childhood behavioral health, and health workforce well-being. These investments reflect AHW's commitment to addressing some of Wisconsin's most pressing health issues and creating sustainable, long-term improvements.

AHW's *Call for Applications: Health Workforce Well-Being Grants* supports community-driven efforts to design new strategies, test innovative ideas, and foster greater collaboration to address Wisconsin's leading health workforce well-being challenges and produce deeper impact on health and health equity in Wisconsin's communities.

Specifically, as one of AHW's three Landmark Initiatives, the *Health Workforce Well-Being initiative* will aim to address the ongoing challenges and opportunities related to the well-being of Wisconsin's health workforce.

Funding requests may be structured to run with a maximum duration of five years and may not exceed a maximum award amount of \$3,000,000 over the life of the award. Up to \$4,500,000 is available for selected projects, and AHW expects to fund at least two projects. However, the exact number of awards and the average award amount is not pre-determined, as final grant allocations will depend on the merit of proposals received and the amount requested by successful applicants.

Application and Review Process Timeline

November 2024 – January 2025

Consult with AHW to review proposed project scope and fit with the call for applications

January 20, 2025 (required)

Applications due by 5:00 p.m. CT via the online application form

Within three business days of signature request (required)

Electronic signatures due from key personnel via an AHW-initiated DocuSign process

February-April 2025

Review and approval process

May 2025

Notification of funding decisions

June 1, 2025

Project start date

Application Components

Please see pages 7-9 below for more details on the following required application components:

1. Online form
2. Narrative (attachment to online form)
3. Budget workbook (attachment to online form using AHW-provided form)
4. Budget justification (attachment to online form using AHW-provided form)
5. Non-supplanting attestations (attachments to online form using AHW-provided form)
6. Signatures (collected via DocuSign after the application is submitted)

Funding Details

Description

AHW's Health Workforce Well-Being Grants funding opportunity supports community-driven efforts to conduct initial exploration, develop effective strategies and interventions, and test innovative ideas to serve as foundational components to AHW's Health Workforce Well-Being Landmark Initiative. Collectively, these efforts will help lead to programs, services, and interventions to sustainably and meaningfully improve the well-being of our health workforce here in Wisconsin.

We are seeking proposals to focus on one of the following two key priorities related to AHW's Health Workforce Well-Being Landmark Initiative, and each proposal should only focus on a single area:

1. **Develop and launch a sustainable statewide program, inclusive of a majority of the state's healthcare delivery systems, in direct partnership with the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation to advance the well-being of Wisconsin's health workforce**

A thriving health workforce, both public and private, in the state of Wisconsin is critical for ensuring that the people in our state achieve their full potential. When health workers are supported, flourishing, and well, they can offer safer, higher-quality, and more patient-centered compassionate care. Prioritizing our health workforce well-being leads to better health outcomes for all in the state of Wisconsin.

Underappreciated and underfunded infrastructure and programs, statewide health workforce shortages, increased service demands and complexities from within our communities, and ongoing recognition of the increased rates of substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and suicide within various cohorts of our health workforce – these are just a few of the tremendous challenges and critical issues we currently face in the public health and healthcare sectors today in Wisconsin. It is imperative that we address these challenges immediately, as the health of Wisconsinites remains at significant risk if we fail to act.

AHW has selected the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation as a strategic partner to work in collaboration with the selected project to develop a statewide coalition of organizations committed to improving the well-being of Wisconsin's health workforce. AHW is looking for an eligible Wisconsin-based 501(c)3, 501(c)6, or governmental agency to partner with an MCW academic partner to launch and scale a sustainable statewide effort using the approaches developed by the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation.

2. Build a coalition of organizations that represent the health and public health community to develop a sustainable statewide Health Workforce Professional Services Program

Wisconsin is one of only three states that does not have a confidential Professional Health Services Program for physicians. Only one state in the nation has a confidential program that is available to a broader group of clinicians, including public health workers, advanced practice providers, social workers, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, or other health professionals working within the state. Compared to the general population, many health professions are faced with higher rates of various mental and behavioral health conditions, including substance use disorder and suicide. And yet, the stigma related to these conditions and their causes remains prevalent within and around the healthcare community. Confidential and safe access to appropriate mental health and well-being support services is imperative to a healthy and flourishing health workforce in the state of Wisconsin.

AHW intends to fund an eligible Wisconsin-based 501(c)3, 501(c)6, or governmental agency to partner with an MCW academic partner to develop a coalition and a model that can ultimately be launched in Wisconsin to service a wide and comprehensive breadth of the members of Wisconsin's health workforce. Such a program would ideally provide confidential care to a health professional patient through both the assessment and referral to treatment processes, while also providing the necessary resources to appropriately support and monitor the health professionals who are at most risk of impairment from mental illness, substance use disorder, and other health conditions. Ultimately, this program would provide confidential therapeutic alternatives to alternative disciplinary options, further supporting our valued health workforce and their retention in their positions. The program would provide the trusted accountability that is often needed, ideally with the broad and full support from our organized health and healthcare communities throughout the state.

Importantly, the program would provide advocacy, outreach, and education to the state's various health communities in support of the health workforce well-being within Wisconsin.

AHW is committed to supporting new and innovative ideas that advance health equity in Wisconsin. [Health equity \(CDC\)](#) is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.

Additional Proposal Considerations

- All applications must clearly demonstrate how the proposed project will positively affect health and/or health equity in Wisconsin in the long-term.
- All applications must be submitted by an eligible Wisconsin-based community organization who will be paired with an MCW academic partner upon funding to collaboratively carry out the proposed project.
- Project aims must be distinct from prior or existing funded projects.
- AHW funds operate through a cost-reimbursement model.
- It is not the intent of AHW funds to be used as bridge funding.

Applicant Eligibility

At AHW, we believe that we can go further together than we can alone. AHW is committed to supporting collaborative efforts that bring together teams with the necessary expertise, experience, and influence to address Wisconsin's leading health challenges and who together can advance health and health equity for all Wisconsin residents. All applications must be submitted by an eligible Wisconsin-based community organization. Upon funding, the funded community partner will be connected with an MCW academic partner to support the project to achieve its overall goal and advance health.

Primary Community Partner Organization

All projects must designate one primary community partner organization to serve as the fiscal agent for the project and one individual from that organization to serve as the primary contact for the project.

The primary community partner organization is responsible for the fiduciary and reporting requirements of the community portion of the project and project budget and is responsible for transferring all communications, notifications, and instructions from AHW to all members of the project team. Eligible community organizations must be a Wisconsin-based 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 organization, or a Wisconsin government-based entity or organization.

Collaborators

Collaborators are optional but encouraged and are not subject to the same eligibility requirements as the primary community partner organization. Collaborators may include additional partner organizations and contacts. Collaborators typically have a smaller role in the project than the primary community partner and may or may not receive salary support through AHW funding. Any MCW faculty or staff listed as collaborators cannot be included in the community partner budget request. Any individual and/or organization listed as a collaborator should be committed to the proposed project and ready to engage in the project based on their specified role, if funded.

Budget Requirements

AHW's investment in this funding opportunity will total approximately \$4,500,000 to support meritorious projects. The exact number of awards will depend on the merit of proposals received. Successful projects will demonstrate an appropriate budget and timeframe for their proposed scope of work in alignment with one of the two key priorities for this call for applications. Applicants will be required to provide a detailed budget with

justification for all personnel and project expenses. Funding request may be structured to run with a maximum duration of five (5) years and may not exceed a maximum award amount of \$3,000,000 over the life of the award.

- Project personnel salaries supported by AHW awards are subject to the applicable [NIH salary cap](#) at the project start date.
- At least one representative of the community partner is required to contribute effort to the project for the full award period.
- Award personnel may cost-share their effort with support from their organization or entities. Cost-sharing may support any or all salary put forth. AHW funds may not be used to cost-share effort on any other work.
- All personnel support must be justified, and specific project roles outlined in the budget justification. AHW funds cannot support general operational activities.

Supplanting Criteria

AHW was established as the result of a generous financial gift made by Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin to the people of Wisconsin, giving AHW the extraordinary responsibility to steward this financial gift on behalf of Wisconsin residents. As such, AHW adheres to requirements as defined in a March 28, 2000, Order of the Commissioner of Insurance which requires that AHW funds (the Funds) “may not be used to supplant funds or resources otherwise available.” AHW, via MCW, must report annually on its determination that the Funds do not supplant other resources that may be available to accomplish the same purposes. [Supplanting criteria](#) can be found on the AHW website.

Prior to final funding recommendations and approval, AHW and/or its oversight body, the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium), will assess whether other financial resources exist or are available for the project, including an assessment of whether the applicants have other financial resources available for the project. Applicants must certify that no financial resources will be supplanted and provide a complete listing of current funding sources for the project or similar other projects.

Allowable Expenses & Funding Restrictions

AHW uses a cost-reimbursement model. Funds can only be used for direct project-specific expenses, including salary and benefits for personnel directly involved in the project and direct expenses such as supplies, travel, etc.

Funds may not be used for:

- Projects conducted outside of Wisconsin
- Indirect costs such as ongoing operating expenses for routine functions and principal programs
- Debt reduction
- Entertainment or alcoholic beverages
- Lobbying
- Reimbursement solely for patient care or clinical service delivery
- Publishing fees to benefit education or research in general
- Stipends
- Supplanting

View a complete list of [Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#) on the AHW website.

Application and Review Process

This funding opportunity uses a one-stage application and multi-stage review process.

Application Process

Eligible applicants should submit an application via the online application form available on the [AHW website](#). Applications must be submitted via the online form by **5:00 p.m. CT on Monday, January 20, 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Please use the following instructions to prepare the application for final submission via the online form by the deadline. Applicants must answer all required fields and follow the restrictions set within the online form. No paper or emailed applications will be considered, and no attachments beyond those specifically requested in the following instructions will be accepted.

When filling out the online form, you may save your progress and resume at a later time by checking “Save my progress and resume later” in the upper right-hand corner of the form. If saving, please follow the system prompts to save and re-access the form. Only one applicant team member may begin and save the online form by creating a login (email address and password) that will allow that individual to return to saved work. We recommend you designate one individual to enter the completed application information online.

The application includes the following sections:

1. **Online Form**

The application form provides general project information and must be completed via the online form accessible on the [AHW website](#). The online form includes:

- Project title and goal statement
- Requested award amount and project duration
- Primary community partner contact information and optional demographic information
- Optional collaborator information
- AHW alignment information and geographic area impacted by the proposed project
- AHW project implementation plan

2. **Narrative** (attachment)

The narrative is the applicant team’s opportunity to describe their project in detail. Project narratives must be uploaded as an attachment in the indicated location within the online form. Responses to all sections of the narrative are required, and the narrative is limited to a maximum of four (4) pages, not including citations, using 0.5” margins and 11pt font, single-spaced.

Organize the narrative in the order specified below. Start each section with the appropriate section heading (bolded below), address each sub-point in your narrative response for that section, and use lay-friendly language as much as possible. We encourage applicants to be clear and concise, and insert graphics, tables, and charts when applicable and within the allowable page limit.

- **Project Need and Intended Impact**
 - Describe the health and/or health equity need that the project aims to address
 - Demonstrate why the identified need is a priority in Wisconsin
 - Describe the target population(s) within the health workforce to be impacted
 - State the larger vision and impact on both our health workforce and the health of Wisconsin’s people and communities that this project will contribute towards achieving
 - Outline how the applicant team envisions this project contributing to or growing into a broader endeavor in the future
- **Project Aims and Approach**
 - Describe in detail the key activities and processes to accomplish the project aims in alignment with the implementation plan
 - Describe how inclusivity of the broad health workforce will be embedded within your approach
- **Project Participants and Evaluation Strategies**
 - Outline how the project participants (i.e., survey respondents, focus group participants, pilot site enrollment, etc.) will be identified and engaged
 - Explain the evaluation strategies and key process and outcome metrics that will be used to assess the project outcomes to inform future efforts
- **Project Team**
 - State the roles and responsibilities of each community-based project team member
 - Briefly describe the experience or expertise for each project team member that makes them best suited to carry out their role on the proposed project
 - Describe how the project team will ensure a successful collaboration and how the applicants anticipate the partnership evolving during the project and beyond
- **Citations** (not included in the page limit)
 - Include all references cited in the narrative
 - Each reference should include the names of all authors, the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication
 - Applicants should be especially careful to follow scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials used in the preparation of the application

3. **Budget Workbook** (attachment using the AHW-provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))

Applicants must complete the Community Partner Budget table (tab 2) following the guidelines detailed in the Budget Instructions (tab 1) in the budget workbook (Excel).

The total budget amount on the Community Project Budget table must equal the amount requested for the project on the online form.

When developing the budget, please refer to the detailed Budget Instructions (tab 1), the complete list of Allowable and Unallowable Costs on the AHW website, and the Budget Requirements section above.

4. **Budget Justification** (attachment using the AHW-provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))

Applicants must complete the Community Partner Budget Justification and Total Project Budget Justification sections of the budget justification form (Word) and must include descriptions of all funded positions and all direct expense line items included in the budget workbook.

Applicants should follow the guidelines and descriptions provided in the Budget Instructions (tab 1) in the budget workbook.

5. **Non-Supplanting Attestations** (attachment using the AHW-provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))

Non-supplanting attestations are used to identify existing or available funding for the proposed project and to determine whether such existing or available funding would be replaced with financial support by AHW funds. A separate non-supplanting attestation form must be completed by all key project partners, including:

- Primary community partner organization
- Any additional project partners labeled as investigators within the application

6. **Signatures**

Following successful submission of the completed application through the online form and technical review, signatures will be required via an AHW-initiated DocuSign process from the following individuals to indicate their awareness and support of the submitted application:

- Primary community partner organization contact and an individual authorized signer, if applicable
- Any additional project partners labeled as investigators within the application and completing a non-supplanting attestation

Following submission and technical review, each of the individuals above will receive an email with instructions to complete and submit their electronic signature. Required signatures must be submitted within three business days of receiving the signature request to complete the submission and advance it for review.

Review Process

Technical Review

All submitted applications will undergo technical review by AHW staff to ensure that all requirements are met, including but not limited to eligibility criteria and adherence to the guidelines and restrictions. AHW will follow-up with all applicants as part of the technical review process. Applicant teams should be prepared to respond quickly to communications from AHW following the application deadline.

Consortium Review

The MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium) will review all applications that pass technical review and approve a slate of proposals to fund. AHW may request that applicants adjust their scope, budget, or timeline based on the outcome of the review process. If necessary, these applicants will be notified and asked to resubmit their adjusted application materials for further review. No negotiations or appeals will be accommodated. Final funding decisions will be advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for approval.

All applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

Impact

The proposed project:

- Demonstrates the potential to positively impact health and/or health equity in Wisconsin, either as a direct result of project activities or indirectly and/or over the long-term.
- Describes innovative approaches and planned evaluation or assessment to directly inform future efforts to advance health and/or health equity in the long-term.
- Provides convincing evidence that the project could lead to scaled, replicated, or continued efforts in the future.

Feasibility

The proposed project:

- Is led by a community partner and additional collaborators, as applicable, who appear to bring the necessary experience and expertise to carry out the project.
- Demonstrates high-quality, appropriate methods that appear likely to achieve the stated aims.
- Describes a scope which appears feasible to complete within the requested project budget and duration.

Reviewers will provide scores and written comments for each proposal. The scoring system uses a nine-point scale based on the rating scale used by the National Institutes of Health. The nine-point rating scale is anchored according to the following descriptions:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Exceptional (exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses) | High |
| 2. Outstanding (extremely strong with negligible weaknesses) | |
| 3. Excellent (very strong with only some minor weaknesses) | |
| 4. Very Good (strong but with numerous minor weaknesses) | Medium |
| 5. Good (strong but with at least one moderate weakness) | |
| 6. Satisfactory (some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses) | |
| 7. Fair (some strengths but with at least one major weakness) | Low |
| 8. Marginal (a few strengths and a few major weaknesses) | |
| 9. Poor (very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses) | |

- Minor Weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact
- Moderate Weakness: A weakness that lessens impact
- Major Weakness: A weakness that severely lessens impact

Award Determination

Following completion of the review process, notification of conditional award determination is anticipated to be shared with the primary community partner organization contact in May 2025.

Following award determination, funded community partner projects will be connected with AHW's workforce wellness faculty champion to serve as the academic partner and support collaboratively conducting the project by the community-MCW academic partner team. Requests for specific academic partners will be considered.