

# Writing a New Book on Heart Health

## Opportunities for Public Libraries to Partner with the American Heart Association and Improve Community Health

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### Midwest Region Grant Opportunity

Receive up to \$2000\* for your efforts to improve health in your community

The American Heart Association's mission is to be a *relentless force for a world of longer healthier lives*. That mission is underscored by our Guiding Values which include "meeting people where they are" and "building powerful partnerships." Libraries – especially in rural communities – offer a tremendous opportunity to do both of those things and we want to collaborate with you to tackle health disparities in a comprehensive, sustainable way.



*Formal funding is limited to these 13 states but libraries in other states are still encouraged to submit your interest. Those who do so will receive offers of technical support/resources and local staff will be alerted to the possible need for finding additional funding.*

Among other health challenges, rural Americans face higher of [high blood pressure](#), [nutrition insecurity](#), [tobacco use](#), and more. At the same time, rural communities have strong assets – organizations and individuals who are dedicated to making a difference and thinking creatively to overcome challenges.

The American Heart Association has worked with rural libraries in various contexts to leverage our science, resources, and experience with their position of trust in and access to communities in need. And now we are hoping to do more of the same – in your community. (See Page 2 for more details on the work we've done).

While much of this work does not require expansive funding (project budgets are often well under \$1500), we do know that tangible resources are limited, and we want to help meet that need. Therefore, we are **offering up to \$10k in grants** to rural libraries to help build capacity for sustainable opportunities to address health concerns. A few notes:

- Use the [Am I Rural?](#) tool to confirm your eligibility
- Complete this [brief application/survey](#) by March 2<sup>nd</sup> (Dr. Suess Day) to officially apply.

If you have questions – or additional examples of existing work that you want to highlight – please contact [Tim Nikolai](#), Sr. Rural Health Director, American Heart Association, Midwest Region.

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### Examples of Existing Impact



Despite nearly a century of progress, cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death for Americans, a burden that is borne disproportionately by populations within a particular community. Those with lower income and/or educational attainment, Black, Brown, and other minority populations, along with rural residents often face greater health challenges and poorer health outcomes.

Many of those gaps ultimately stem from questions of access. Access to quality health care, healthy, affordable food, safe opportunities for physical activity and more. That is why among the [American Heart Association's](#) Guiding Values is a commitment to *meeting people where they are* and a focus on *forming powerful partnerships*.

Increasingly, examples of working with local libraries are helping the Association do just that. That's no surprise really, given that a 2013 [Pew Research Poll](#) revealed that 84% of Americans 16 or older had visited their local library or bookmobile and a report on [Minnesota Public Libraries](#) underscores, part of the value of libraries is a phenomenon known as the "living room" experience, meeting and conference rooms available, all-inclusive, safe and friendly environment. Combined, then with the trusted brand of the Association, and it's a powerful opportunity.

Examples of this collaboration have included:

- Helping empower library patrons to check their blood pressure in the library, learn basic information on how to change their health behaviors, and be referred to clinical care as needed. (San Diego and Racine, WI among others).
- Supporting efforts to help library staff efficiently and sensitively screen patrons for food insecurity and provide referral to resources to help meet that need (Kansas City among others).
- Facilitating a connection between the Boys and Girls Club and a library allowing the library to become a summer meal site and address nutrition security concerns for students (Pottsboro, TX).
- Providing Hands-Only CPR Training to their communities, sometimes with a specific focus on maternal health (New York)
- Working to help support free fitness classes in a library, with the possibility of having low-income patients in the area be "prescribed" participation. (Now developing in Galesburg, IL).



These ideas and others help scratch the surface of how American Heart Association resources and best practices in conjunction with the trusted, valued position libraries hold in their communities, can have a powerful, sustainable impact on health.