

**Financial grants are available for women in Minnesota who are social entrepreneurs working to address healthy equity for women**

American Heart Association’s EmPOWERED to Serve Business Accelerator – Minnesota applications now open at [www.empoweredtoserve.org/MN](http://www.empoweredtoserve.org/en/capital-access-grant-funding/business-accelerator-minnesota)

**November 1, 2020** — The American Heart Association, the world’s leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, is calling on social entrepreneurs in the Twin Cities Metro area to apply for EmPOWERED To Serve Business Accelerator™ financial grants to help improve underlying health conditions in underserved communities.

“Minnesota is one of the healthiest states, but we have some of the worst health disparities,” said Courtney Jordan Baechler, M.D. Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation and co-chair of Twin Cities Go Red for Women movement. “Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic challenges such as lack of access to quality health care, jobs, education and housing, contributed to disparities that appear to be exacerbating the devastating effects of COVID-19.”

According to World Health Organization data, people living in underserved communities have a higher risk of developing heart disease.[[1]](#footnote-2) For decades, the mortality rate due to cardiovascular disease and stroke has been higher among African Americans than all other ethnicities. Furthermore, Hispanics and Blacks are more likely to live with diabetes compared to non-Hispanic whites.[[2]](#footnote-3)

Applicants must be women over 18 year of age and provide proposed business solutions to specifically address and improve challenges presented by health inequities for women in the seven-county Twin Cities are (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington) Now through December 15, 2020, interested entrepreneurs may apply to the grant program at [empoweredtoserve.org/MN.](http://www.empoweredtoserve.org/en/capital-access-grant-funding/business-accelerator-minnesota)

“This is personal for me, said Tiffanie L. Boyd, of General Mills North America Retail and co-chair of Twin Cities Go Red for Women movement. “I’ve lost women I love to stroke. And I see too many Black women impacted by heart disease and stroke. I know that local groups led by women who look like them and have shared experiences can identify local solutions and motivate community members to make needed changes."

Ten finalists will be selected in late January and will be featured at the Go Red for Women Evening of Empowerment on February 11. They will begin four weeks of intensive, online MBA-style training before presenting their proposed business solutions to a panel of expert judges at the EmPOWERED to Serve Business Accelerator Finale in April. At that time, select candidates will have the opportunity to receive financial grants to operationalize models in their specific communities. Grants range from $2,500 to $15,000.

The Minnesota EmPOWERED To Serve Business Accelerator™ is presented by Mayo Clinic and Cheerios.

The Accelerator’s core curriculum offers formal instruction on design thinking, customer discovery, market positioning, brand development, fundraising and other essential business functions to help entrepreneurs enhance their business models and demonstrate the viability of projects.

Since 2017, the Accelerator program has trained 79 social entrepreneurs and 39 organizations and provided $510,000 in financial grants across the country. Business Accelerator alumni continue to support the lifesaving work of the American Heart Association by participating in local volunteer boards and serving as brand ambassadors at special events and in community meetings. Some Business Accelerator alumni have even adapted their business model in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

* [**Corrie Health**](http://www.corriehealth.com/) **(Boston)**, the first cardiology Apple Carekit app, is part of a $3.5 million grant from the American Heart Association to the Center for Mobile Technologies to Achieve Equity in Cardiovascular Health at Johns Hopkins University. The Center is focused on identifying solutions for cardiovascular disease and COVID-19 and is using the app’s platform to empower patients from diverse backgrounds in guideline-based prevention.

* [**Kitchenet**](https://kitchenet.org/) **(Chicago),** fresh fruit delivery for corporate offices, directs one-third of its proceeds to fund free delivery of fresh food in food deserts. In response to COVID-19, they are maintaining a steady food supply for the most vulnerable communities, health workers and organizations as Kitchenet founder and CEO Trista Li details in this AHA [Power Moment](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanHeart/videos/839071043239598/) video.
* [**TinyDocs**](https://www.tinydocs.co/patch-me-up-mindfulness) **(Chicago),** health *caretoons* for kids, helps children explore the world of health and wellness through cartoons. The Tiny Docs crew are streaming a free, online [video](https://www.tinydocs.co/patch-me-up-mindfulness) about mindfulness as well as a [comic book](https://www.tinydocs.co/covid/) to help children understand the coronavirus and ease any anxiety they may be feeling.
* [**The Link Market**](http://www.linkmarket.org) **(St. Louis)**, a non-profit grocery store provides access to healthy, affordable food to hungry people, is now delivering free groceries to senior centers in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The market also launched the [Food for the Frontlines](https://heart.sharepoint.com/sites/nat/communications/cmc/mc/COVID-19/ETSBA%20Alumni%20COVID-19/Food%20for%20the%20Frontlines.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=5DQZcc) campaign to provide essential healthcare workers with nutritious meals while giving local restaurants much-needed business.

To learn more, visit [empoweredtoserve.org](https://www.empoweredtoserve.org/).

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**About the American Heart Association**

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public’s health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on [heart.org](https://www.heart.org/en/), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanHeart), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/American_Heart) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

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1. [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Prevention. CDC. National Diabetes Statistics Report 2017; <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)