

**Social impact entrepreneurs: $1 million available to fund health equity solutions in the Twin Cities**

* *The Social Impact Fund will invest in community-led social and economic solutions to improve health disparities in under-resourced populations*
* *American Heart Association looking for Twin Cites metro community businesses and nonprofits addressing health disparities*

**Embargoed until 6 a.m. CT / November 30, 2020**

**Eagan, Minn., November 30, 2020** — Businesses and nonprofits that are working to sustainably address health disparities for residents in the Twin Cities may be eligible for $1 million in social impact funding through the American Heart Association’s [Social Impact Fund](http://www.heart.org/fund).

The nationwide fund invests financial resources in evidence-based, community-driven entrepreneurial solutions to local health equity challenges. This round of funding is focused on the Twin Cities and solutions addressing access to healthy and affordable food; economic empowerment and job creation; housing insecurity; and reducing the educational achievement gap. Formal expressions of interest for funding may be submitted at <https://heart-impactfund.fluxx.io/> through January 15, 2021.

A virtual informational “town hall” event will also be offered where community members will discuss the challenges and opportunities to addressing the focus area with American Heart Association staff to ensure funds are distributed to areas of greatest need and impact.

**The Twin Cities Social Impact Fund Town Hall will take place on December 9 at 1 p.m. Visit www.heart.org/socialimpactfund to register or learn more.**

“For many entrepreneurs and local startups, lack of access to immediate and substantial funding are barriers to their success and growth,” said Holly Messick, senior vice president of development and executive director for the American Heart Association in Minnesota. “Through the Social Impact Fund, social entrepreneurs will be able to accelerate the development of sustainable community-based solutions to make a meaningful, measurable impact on the health of people in the metro. And those entrepreneurs will gain access to immediate and substantial funding to help scale their businesses quickly, making a positive financial impact on their communities.”

“We like to think of the Twin Cities as a healthy, safe place to live, where everyone has an equal chance to thrive. But that’s not the reality. The civil unrest and impact of the pandemic has shone a spotlight on the immense health disparities right here in our community,” said Gary Ellis, longtime volunteer for the American Heart Association. Gary and Sue Ellis are the founding funders of the American Heart Association’s Social Impact Fund in Minnesota.  “The quality of and access to health and health care, education, housing, and neighborhood environments has a huge impact on heart health. We are proud to be a part of the community-led solutions that the Social Impact Fund will bring. This is the most important thing that the American Heart Association can do right now. It will allow us to move quickly to implement projects that make an immediate, tangible difference now. And will ultimately move the needle on health equity in the future.”

Since its launch, the Social Impact Fund has supported entrepreneurs and nonprofits in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Flint, Mich., New York City, Oakland, Calif., San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Learn more about the Social Impact Fund [here](https://www.heart.org/fund).

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**Additional Resources**

[AHA President’s Advisory: Structural racism causes poor health, premature death from heart disease and stroke](https://newsroom.heart.org/news/structural-racism-causes-poor-health-premature-death-from-heart-disease-and-stroke)

[Meet the innovator reaching those considered unreachable](https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/09/09/meet-the-innovator-reaching-those-considered-unreachable)

**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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[heart.org](http://www.heart.org/) and [strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org/)