



America's Promise Healthy Schools Fund

I. Overview

BACKGROUND

Creating healthy, successful schools for all youth

Every young person deserves a foundation of health to be able to grow and thrive. Good health—physical, emotional, and psychological—fuels a young person's development, learning, and progress toward adult success. Yet good health is out of reach for many young people. Social and environmental factors such as poverty, access to educational opportunity, and neighborhood conditions result in many young people being disproportionately exposed to adverse conditions, including trauma, food insecurity, stress, and pollutants. As a result, many young people experience chronic health issues, low academic performance, and a lower likelihood of thriving.

We must work to create the conditions that foster healthy development for *all* young people. Young people, when surrounded by familial and social networks and part of communities and school environments with access to the resources to build on their innate capabilities and support their needs, will experience optimal health. The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child ([WSCC](#)) model (Figure A) illustrates this concept. Only when families, schools and communities are working in concert can we ensure that all youth are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. That's why America's Promise Alliance seeks to bolster health at one of the most critical intersections of youth and their communities: school.



Figure A: [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model](#)

We believe when communities have healthy schools—in which each child is and feels safe; young people’s physical and emotional health are at the center of education; and schools work with the surrounding community to address the social determinants of health that hinder learning and development—young people will experience greater health, achieve better academic outcomes, and in turn, impact the entire community. By increasing the number of healthy schools, we can create the conditions for *every* child to have a healthy, successful life.

A locally driven, national initiative

America’s Promise Alliance is leading this effort as part of the **Together for Healthy and Successful Schools Initiative**, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The initiative is a collective effort to better understand the dynamics in diverse schools and communities that foster or stand in the way of creating healthier school environments. As a part of this initiative, America’s Promise seeks to activate and align existing and new stakeholders at both the local and national levels to support healthy school environments. Through national and local-level action, this effort will work to expand support from decision-makers, practitioners, and other key stakeholders who will ultimately be responsible for establishing policy, implementing best practices, and embracing school-change efforts that address the real conditions that support or impede children’s health and learning.

America’s Promise has partnered with five leading organizations to work with communities to learn about successfully supporting health and well-being in schools. We are interested in exploring the following questions, which will guide our collective work:

- What factors help or hinder schools in creating healthier school environments?
- What levers can influence local, state, and federal school health policies?
- What are the most effective ways to build public and political will to promote students’ health and well-being?

As a part of this initiative, America’s Promise seeks to affect change by:

- Using a health equity lens and enhancing the ability of local institutions to operate from this lens
- Creating the conditions in which youth and their families can champion change to advance healthy schools
- Accelerating progress of existing collaborative efforts by strengthening approaches that change the broader policies, practices, and systems associated with achieving healthy schools
- Uplifting learnings from locally-driven efforts
- Leveraging local and national partnerships to fuel the national movement for healthy schools

To learn more about the national initiative and supporting partners, please see the Together for Healthy and Successful Schools Initiative section below.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

America's Promise extends this grant opportunity to communities working to create healthier school environments for all children. Recognizing that school-centered health intersects with many areas outside of education—housing, employment, transportation, and food access— as well as many audiences, efforts should serve as a hub for cross-sector collaboration, youth and community engagement, and broader policy and systemic change.

America's Promise will award three to five grants of up to \$150,000 each per year for two years (for a total of up to \$300,000) to collaborative efforts that display alignment with this vision and a proven ability to accelerate positive change for young people in schools and their communities.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicant Organizations MUST:

- Be a public, private, or non-profit organization with an explicit mission to serve children, youth, and communities (e.g. community-based organization, foundation, government agency, school district, collective impact coalition);
- Be connected to multiple sectors (e.g. health, education, housing, economic development) and stakeholders across the community;
- Demonstrate evidence of prior collaboration with key stakeholders on health or education initiatives;
- Be active in one of the following states*: Alaska, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, or Washington;
- Have school district commitment as a partner to the initiative and evidence of a collaborative relationship with key district leaders/officials; If the applicant organization is a school district, it must have community partner commitment and evidence of a collaborative relationship with leaders in the community;
- Have commitment to health equity and to serving young people facing the greatest obstacles to thriving.

**The selection of these states is for the purpose of alignment across the Together for Healthy and Successful Schools Initiative.*

GRANTEE ACTIVITIES

By joining this effort, grantees will drive local change while serving as models for national awareness building and learning within the broader Together for Healthy and Successful Schools Initiative. Grant recipients will have the opportunity to engage in the following learning, partnership, and awareness-building activities to accelerate their work toward creating healthy schools:

Partnerships with content expert advisors

America's Promise has brought together five core partner organizations to help accelerate change at the local level and serve as the first front of a unified national movement for healthy children and healthy environments in schools. With capacity across the components of the [WSCC](#) framework, each of these core partners will offer their strengths and experience to help grantees create holistically healthy environments for young people. Grantees can expect to learn and collaborate with core partners throughout the course of the grant through virtual and in-person learning sessions, ad hoc capacity-building and support, and ongoing thought partnership. See Appendix 1 of the application for more information about the core partners.



Youth engagement expertise

Actively engaging youth as leaders is a critical part of this initiative. As such, America's Promise will provide support for authentic and consistent youth engagement. As a part of the vision for the grant, young people in each community will be involved in bringing new insights to the work, defining and executing change, as well as providing a broader understanding of young people's wellness. Young people engaged in this process will positively impact their community while increasing their skills, confidence, and self-agency for future leadership in positive social change.

National and local communications support

America's Promise Alliance and its partners will share learnings, key messages, and accomplishments from grantee work to the broader national landscape through original content generation, digital platforms, and traditional media channels. America's Promise will also provide communications support and capacity-building for grant recipients to engage in local communications campaigns.

Access to a learning community

America's Promise and the core partners place a high priority on growing the knowledge base of what it takes to make healthy school environments the norm for all students. Toward that end, grantees will participate in a learning community that will include all grantees, America's Promise, core partners, and others with a stake in this effort. Learning community events will take place primarily through virtual platforms, but there will also be two in-person convenings over the life of the grant.

GRANTEE EXPECTATIONS

To share the progress, success, and challenges during project implementation, grantees will be required to keep America's Promise informed about grant activities through grant reporting procedures which include:

- Interim and final narrative
- Financial grant reports
- Quarterly check-in calls
- Site visit(s)
- Participation in learning community

TIMELINE

Key milestones

November 13 th 2017	Application package released
November 28 th 2017	Informational webinar
December 7 th 2017	Informational webinar
January 22 nd 2018	Application deadline
March 14 th 2018	Announcement of funding decisions
April 2018	Grant start date
April 2020	Grant end date

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

America's Promise Alliance

America's Promise Alliance is the nation's largest network dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth. We bring together more than 400 national organizations and thousands of community leaders to focus the nation's attention on young people's lives and voices, lead bold campaigns to expand opportunity, conduct groundbreaking research on what young people need to thrive, and accelerate the adoption of strategies that help young people succeed.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are working with others to build a national Culture of Health enabling everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

Together for Healthy and Successful Schools Initiative

The **Together for Healthy and Successful Schools** Initiative, led by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, focuses on understanding the dynamics in diverse schools and communities that foster or stand in the way of creating healthier school environments; the policy levers available to promote change at the local, state, and federal levels; and possible ways to build public and political will to improve students' overall health and well-being in schools.

The initiative consists of three complementary work areas: Applied Research and Translation; Policy Analysis and Development; and Strategic Action and Alignment. The work areas are led by three organizations, respectively: Washington University in St. Louis, Child Trends, and America's Promise Alliance.

- **Washington University**, together with its community and research partners, will conduct research to determine the key relationships, messages and systems necessary to make schools healthy environments for learning and development within two high-need St. Louis area school districts. The team will develop and disseminate a toolkit detailing this process for other groups working to advance school health.
- **Child Trends** is a national nonprofit organization that develops and disseminates high-quality research focused on improving the lives of children and youth. They will conduct multiple analyses to identify, elevate and ultimately advance model policies at the local, state and federal levels that advance healthy school environments and find key leverage points for change. They will also monitor and influence the narrative seeking opportunities to advance a responsive track on policy.
- **America's Promise Alliance** is a unique partnership of hundreds of national nonprofits, businesses, communities, educators, and ordinary citizens dedicated to the idea of making the promise of America accessible to all young people. America's Promise has partnered with five leading organizations to work with communities to learn about successfully supporting health and well-being in schools. America's Promise will also leverage their expansive networks, communications assets, and convenings to build demand to make healthy schools the norm in the U.S.

II. Request for Proposals

SECTION A – Local Context and Collaborative Efforts to Date

- **Community Context.** Please provide an introduction to your community by describing relevant community demographics, key characteristics, and strengths. What are the persistent challenges that result in poor health and educational outcomes? What populations or groups in the community are most affected by the inequities you've described? How do educational and health inequities play out in the lives of young people? What are the greatest obstacles to educational advancement experienced by community youth? Describe community assets present in your community and how they may be leveraged to improve educational and health outcomes.
- **Collaborative Capacity of Lead Organization/Agency.** Please describe your organization's prior leadership in collective efforts to change how systems, institutions, and people interact. What systems have been targeted in the past to advance equity in education and/or health? Describe successful organizing strategies and tactics you have used in past change efforts, as well as resources and /or policies you have been able to leverage to further your work. How does data inform your work? Explain how your organization/agency has convened and successfully partnered with diverse stakeholders from different sectors of the community and what lessons were learned. What was challenging about these efforts? Describe how you have engaged schools and/or community partners to support and improve health and/or educational outcomes for young people.
- **Existing Processes for Direct Stakeholder Engagement.** Describe stakeholder engagement strategies you have used in the past. How were stakeholders identified? Describe the characteristics of stakeholder groups you have engaged in your work to promote equitable health and educational outcomes. What strategies do you use to engage populations most impacted by inequities in your work? Describe the role of the people most affected by health disparities and/or youth in past change initiatives you have led (please be specific in discussing the role of these two populations in decision-making in your efforts). Describe the extent to which youth and health disparate populations are integrated into the leadership structure of your collaborative effort.

SECTION B – Acceleration Vision and Plan

- **Acceleration Plan.** Please describe your vision for leveraging this grant to advance healthy schools in your community. What are your goals and key strategies? What will you do differently with additional support? How will this opportunity help accelerate progress toward alleviating the persistent challenges in your community (outlined in **Section A**)? How will equity be prioritized throughout this work?

- **Supportive Factors.** What external factors or community dynamics exist that could help move this work forward? Are there policy or political conditions in the community that lend positive momentum for this work?
- **Challenges.** Explain what you perceive to be the key challenges associated with this work. Looking across the next two years, is there anything happening in your community that could make it particularly difficult to do this work? What strategies will the organization employ to mitigate these challenges?
- **Whole Child Health.** How will the organization develop or focus on new content areas of whole child health (e.g., physical, social, emotional) or further develop existing work in content areas of whole child health? How will the approach utilized make more children healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged in their school and in their community? How will the organization engage and convene new partners or deepen relationships with existing partners to accomplish the proposed work?
- **Vision for Direct Stakeholder Engagement.** Describe the approach for initiating and/or expanding authentic community engagement. How will the applicant engage those in the community who are most impacted, including youth, in guiding this work? What role will youth and community members play in decision-making? How will you ensure sustained youth and community involvement throughout the planning and implementation process? Describe existing power dynamics that may impede or support efforts to engage youth and community residents in leading this effort. Describe assets and allies (organizational or individual) that can be leveraged to enhance youth and resident voice in this effort. What additional resources will your partnership need to ensure that youth and adults are co-developing and implementing a vision for advancing health schools in your community?
- **Support from America's Promise and Core Partners.** An important component of this work will be collaboration with the five core partners and America's Promise to help accelerate change locally and elevate learnings nationally to advance healthy schools at both levels. How will your organization use the expertise and offerings of America's Promise and the core partner organizations to advance your work? Please describe how you envision taking advantage of the expertise or potential offerings of one or several these organizations. See **Appendix 1** for more information about their capabilities.
- **Communications.** Describe your organization's communications capacity and strategy for raising awareness and sharing progress of this work. Identify the specific communications tools (including traditional, digital, and social media) that will be used and discuss any communication supports you anticipate needing. Describe and/or include media articles or broadcast links that highlight your work or are relevant to the work.