

# INVEST HEALTH

*Strategies for Healthier Cities*

A Project of the  
*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*  
and *Reinvestment Fund*

Dear Colleagues,

*Invest Health* is an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Reinvestment Fund that seeks to fundamentally change the way cities improve opportunities for their citizens to live healthy lives. Teams of cross-sector leaders from 50 mid-sized cities across the country were selected to participate in *Invest Health*, an 18-month program designed to increase intentional collaboration at the intersection of community development and health.

Over the course of the initiative, *Invest Health* teams were supported as they developed strategies for improving resident well-being in neighborhoods facing the biggest barriers to health and opportunity. In this work, teams focused on one or more of the key social determinants of health (SDOH) (*e.g.*, housing, safety and resilience, local food systems and production, education and employment, and transportation). While each team has pursued an approach tailor-made to its local context, *Invest Health* aimed to address multiple outcomes including: creation of a long-term pipeline of projects that intentionally incorporate equitable community development strategies in support of resident health and well-being; development of collaborative infrastructure around an equitable vision for better health; and increased leveraging of private and public investments. Since July 2018, the national initiative was continued for a second iteration of work, including city team attendance at a 5th national convening to discuss learnings and align around the progress of building a national Culture of Health. Recently, the 50 cities were invited to apply for another year of funding and technical supports (up to 10 city proposals will be funded). More information about the national *Invest Health* initiative is available at [www.investhealth.org](http://www.investhealth.org).

RWJF and Reinvestment Fund are currently exploring how the national *Invest Health* learnings and resources might help inform and support a New Jersey facing initiative that can work with coalitions on neighborhood revitalization efforts in the built environment, impacting SDOH in low wealth communities most disparately affected by poor health outcomes. Through insights from the national initiative's evaluation findings, level-setting knowledge base on community investment resources, and possibly allocating some financial supports, RWJF and Reinvestment could leverage these assets to support the aligned work in several communities in the state. The goal of this exploratory phase is to determine the feasibility of the 'value add' proposition for stakeholders and gain insights from the various sectors, including healthcare anchors, who are looking to build and evolve the field towards consistently using a health lens for community investment with a focus on building more equitable and healthy communities.

Sincerely,

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