

# Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana



Louisiana has one of the nation's highest obesity rates, which increases the risk for type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, depression and other serious health problems. When we reduce obesity, we not only reduce the risk for these diseases, but we also reduce our state's healthcare costs by building a healthier population.

That's why, in 2011, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation issued a challenge to nonprofits across the state: Team up with other organizations to create innovative ways for building healthier communities, and we'll provide a grant of up to \$1 million — which has to be matched by other organizations involved in the project.

We called it the Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana, the first program of its kind in the state.

**12**  
collaborative  
projects

In September 2012, an expert panel of local and national leaders in public health selected 12 nonprofit projects to receive \$10.2 million in Foundation grants. These projects, bringing multiple organizations to the table, are creating broad community changes that foster healthy lifestyles.

**\$27**  
million in  
total impact

The Foundation's grants sparked \$16.8 million in matching funds from other community organizations, resulting in \$27 million in targeted funding to improve the health of Louisiana communities.

**Pennington  
partnership**

We're partnering with Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, known for its work in combating obesity, to administer the grants, measure their effectiveness and monitor progress of the projects.

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## Power in numbers

PROJECT NAME	APPLICANT	REGION	FOUNDATION GRANT	MATCHING FUNDS	TOTAL IMPACT
Central Louisiana Local Foods Initiative	Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance	Alexandria	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1 million
Fresh Beginnings	Mayor's Healthy City Initiative	Baton Rouge	\$1 million	\$1.2 million	\$2.2 million
Capital Area Pathways Project and Mobile Playground	BREC Foundation	Baton Rouge	\$1 million	\$1.2 million	\$2.2 million
West End Health and Wellness Project	Hopkins Street Revitalization Association Inc.	Delcambre	\$1 million	\$3.7 million	\$4.7 million
Healthy Living Club	Kiwanis Club of Lafayette	Lafayette	\$1 million	\$1.5 million	\$2.5 million
Dare to be Healthy	Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center	Lake Charles	\$760,000	\$1.2 million	\$2 million
Live Lively LaSalle!	Centennial Cultural Center Inc.	LaSalle	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$2 million
Ouachita Well	YMCA of Northeast Louisiana	Monroe	\$1 million	\$1.4 million	\$2.4 million
Fit NOLA Project	Louisiana Public Health Institute	New Orleans	\$1 million	\$1.2 million	\$2.2 million
Whole Kids Nation	Greater New Orleans Foundation	New Orleans	\$900,000	\$1.4 million	\$2.3 million
Growing LA	New Orleans Food & Farm Network Inc. and Recirculating Farms Coalition Inc.	New Orleans	\$440,000	\$1.4 million	\$1.8 million
Healthy Green and Into the Outdoors Obesity Prevention Project	The Community Foundation of North Louisiana	Shreveport	\$600,000	\$850,000	\$1.4 million
			<b>\$10.2 million</b>	<b>\$16.8 million</b>	<b>\$27 million</b>

Dollar figures are approximate.

## Thinking differently

The Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana is not just about reducing obesity. It's about combining resources to make broad environmental changes at the community level — from creating safe places for children to play to improving families' access to fresh produce.

It ultimately takes strong, collaborative projects — involving public and private agencies — to change social norms.

## Multi-sector collaboration

As a result of the Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana application process — which involved 15 technical assistance workshops across the state — many nonprofit organizations are thinking differently about how to address social challenges in Louisiana.

Looking beyond their own programs, many nonprofits say they're now exploring ways to collaborate with other organizations to make a bigger impact.

In fact, 49 nonprofits applied for grants, but their proposals involved nearly 500 other organizations throughout the state. These partners included municipalities, school districts, universities, hospitals, research centers and chambers of commerce — all working together toward holistic community change.