

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.

Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana

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 |
| | | | \$10.2 million | \$16.8 million | \$27 million |

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.