



Health Forward
FOUNDATION

Welcome!

We'll get started around 9:05am.

You can download the funding
opportunity announcement on our
website.

CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT &
ADVOCACY

2027 FUNDING
OPPORTUNITY





Health Forward
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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY COALITIONS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

2027 Pre-application Conference



AGENDA

September 29, 2026

9:05 am – Welcome & Introductions

9:10 am – Funding opportunity presentation

About Health Forward – Jason Williams

Civic engagement and advocacy coalitions – Cori Stites and Ashley Beard-Fosnow

Learning and evaluation – Tara Gonzales Hacker

Application process – Keonna Baldwin

Review process and timeline – Cori Stites

10:15 am – Q&A

INTRODUCTIONS—HEALTH FORWARD TEAM



McCLAIN BRYANT MACKLIN

Chief Policy and Impact Officer
mbryantmacklin@healthforward.org



JASON WILLIAMS

Principal Impact Strategist - Power
jwilliams@healthforward.org



CORI STITES

Impact Strategist - Power
cstites@healthforward.org



ASHLEY BEARD-FOSNOW

Impact Strategist - Policy
abeardfosnow@healthforward.org



KEONNA BALDWIN

Manager of Impact Administration
and Operations
kbaldwin@healthforward.org



TARA GONZALES HACKER

Director of Impact Learning and
Evaluation
tgonzaleshacker@healthforward.org



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ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

Purpose, mission, and strategies



ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

PURPOSE AND MISSION

Purpose

Every day we work to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems.

Mission

Achieve health equity and secure a fair and just region through leadership, advocacy, and resources.

Purpose Plan

Our Purpose

Every day we work to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems.



People

Strategies

- Strengthen capacity and effectiveness of partners to provide whole-person, equity-centered care
- Advance equity-centered innovation and infrastructure across the community health ecosystem
- Champion an inclusive and culturally responsive health sciences workforce
- Advocate for policies that improve health

Outcomes

- Advance equity-centered, whole-person care
- Increased competency and capability of organizations and workforce
- Increased coordination, alignment, and commitment among systems and actors in the health sciences ecosystem
- Equitable access to high-quality, whole-person care

Power

Strategies

- Advance capacity building, leadership development, and connectedness
- Advance participation in democracy
- Support community-driven efforts to redistribute and share power

Outcomes

- Stronger, more effective community-based organizations and leaders
- Increased effectiveness of community organizing and civic participation
- Increased community voice and shared power in philanthropy decisions

Place

Strategies

- Advance safe, healthy, and affordable housing and homeownership
- Advance digital access, literacy, and equity

Outcomes

- Increased affordable housing and homeownership opportunities as a pathway to health and wealth creation
- Reduced disparities in digital access and literacy

Platform

Strategies

- Support cross-sector efforts to advance racial equity and economic justice throughout public, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors
- Shape community understanding around racial equity and economic inclusion as a pathway to health equity
- Leverage Health Forward's capital resources to further advance racial equity and economically just systems

Outcomes

- Increased action on issues of racial equity and economic justice across key sectors in our community
- Increased community knowledge of the connection between race equity, economic inclusion, and health equity
- Increased financial and social capital targeted at racial equity and economic advancement

Intended Impact

- High-quality, equitable community health ecosystem
- Strong community organizations and voices
- Equitable and just places that foster health and economic advancement

ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

POWER PURPOSE AREA

STRATEGIES

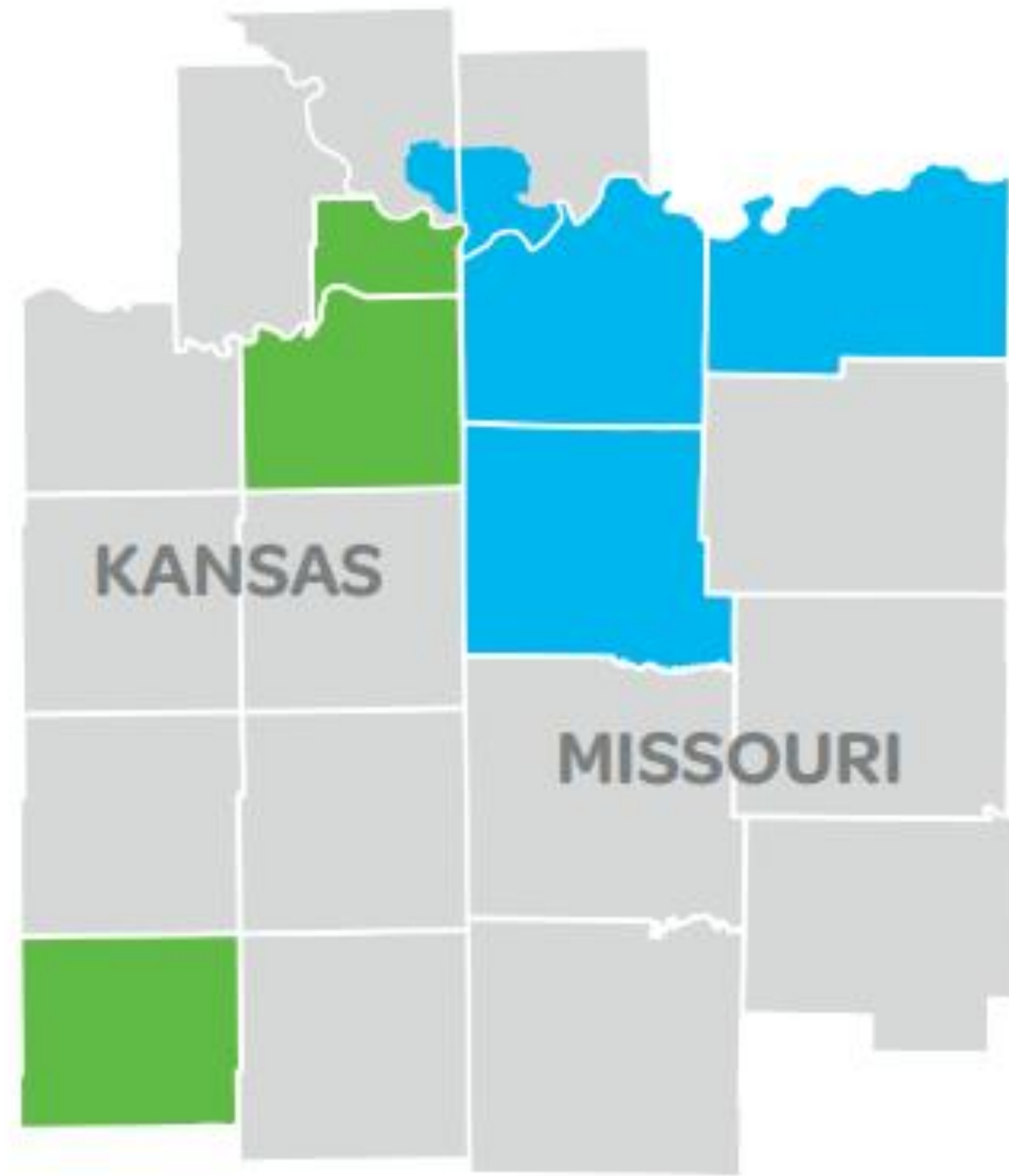
- Advance capacity building, leadership development, and connectedness
- **Advance participation in democracy**
- Support community-driven efforts to redistribute and share power

OUTCOMES

- Stronger, more effective community-based organizations and leaders
- **Increased effectiveness of community organizing and civic participation**
- Increased community voice and shared power in philanthropy decisions

ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

SERVICE AREA



KANSAS

Allen County
Johnson County
Wyandotte County

MISSOURI

Cass County
Jackson County
Lafayette County
Kansas City, Missouri
(including portions of
Clay and Platte counties)

Established by the Missouri State
Attorney General in 2002.

ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

COMMUNITIES OF FOCUS

Our commitment to change prioritizes working to improve the lives of people who experience the greatest injustice in health outcomes, including:

- People of color whose outcomes are shaped by structural racism and other socioeconomic conditions
- People in rural areas where systemic barriers hinder optimal health

ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

TRUST-BASED PHILANTHROPY

What are the key practices of trust-based philanthropy?

- Multi-year, unrestricted funding
- Do the homework
- Simplify and streamline paperwork
- Be transparent and responsive
- Solicit and act on feedback
- Offer support beyond the check



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FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Civic Engagement and
Advocacy Coalitions



FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY COALITIONS



- Health Forward will award up to \$6.5 million
- Dollars to be distributed in 2027 and 2028

NEW IN 2027

Consultations:

- Health Forward is **requiring** a consultation for all applicants
- You will not be able to access the application until you complete this consultation



NEW IN 2027

Youth:

- We are getting more refined about what we are looking to fund in relation to youth-focused work

Census work:

- We added preparing for the 2030 census under the list of potential activities



DEFINITIONS

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement encompasses a broad range of activities related to **democracy**, from supporting a community-based organization to voting. It's a strategy and an outcome that fosters social cohesion and **amplifies the power** of citizens by aggregating individual voices. Community members are most effective in solving problems and holding institutions accountable when they **act collectively**.

ADVOCACY COALITION

People and organizations with a **shared overall policy goal** who organize themselves to suggest specific policies and work to affect the policymaking process to those with the ability to **change policy** in favor of the coalition's shared policy goal.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

WHY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

- Research has demonstrated strong connections between voting and civic engagement and the **health of people and communities**
- Civic engagement is a form of **social connection** that can have a positive impact on longevity, self-esteem, empathy, disease immunity, emotional regulation, depression, and anxiety
 - Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical wellbeing



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

WHY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

- Voting and other forms of civic engagement present an opportunity to exert voice, establishing a path to health through **empowerment**
- Strong civic engagement as a whole contributes to:
 - Communities who **advocate** for themselves
 - Leaders who are **representative** of the communities they serve
 - Better public policy**
 - Better health outcomes** for communities as well as individuals

ADVOCACY COALITIONS

WHY COALITION SUPPORT?

- Specific, powerful tool to increase civic engagement and pursue collective advocacy
- Organizations with shared interests pool and leverage resources
- Method to amplify, mobilize, and empower people with lived experience in order to achieve policy change

FUNDING PRIORITIES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY COALITIONS

Health Forward will fund specific civic engagement and advocacy activities including (but not limited to):

- Community organizing and power-building aligned with our policy agenda
- Voter registration
- Non-partisan voter engagement, education and GOTV
- Advocacy aligned with Health Forward's policy agenda
- Youth and young adult civic engagement and civic education, including youth prior to voting age, with a strong focus on participation in our democracy
- Narrative change, messaging, and strategic communications related to policy, advocacy and democracy
- Research and evaluation on specific policy issues impacting our communities and aligned with our policy agenda
- Coalition building that aligns strongly with Health Forward's policy agenda
- Census-related work to prepare for the 2030 census

FUNDING PRIORITIES

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT....

More on youth and young adult priorities:

- Civic engagement needs to be central to the programming
- Structured, intentional, consistent
- Not one-off or seasonal
- Needs to go beyond leadership development or psycho-social learning
- Youth and young adults also need to be participating in democracy, learning about the civic life, organizing their peers, or otherwise engaging in related activities that are central to this funding opportunity.

POLICY AGENDA OVERVIEW

Policy Goals align with our Purpose Plan

- **People:** People can easily access safe, quality, and affordable whole-person care.
- **Power:** Participation in our democracy and policy making process improves health outcomes.
- **Place:** Our communities are healthy places where people fully participate in the digital economy and build wealth through safe, quality, and affordable housing and homeownership.
- **Platform:** Community health is influenced by systems, policies, and stories that promote racial equity and economic inclusion.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY COALITIONS

- This funding opportunity could be a fit for many different types of organizations
- But we will be looking for strong alignment with
 - Civic engagement activities
 - Health Forward's policy agenda
 - Communities of focus

THE WORK IN ACTION

AMENDMENT 5 AND THE VOICE OF VOTERS

- Amendment 5 was a legislatively referred constitutional amendment that was on the August ballot, that would have eliminated state income taxes
- This would have created a huge hole in the MO budget, which already struggles to sufficiently fund social services, healthcare, infrastructure, and education
- A network of partners who have already had to connect and collaborate around other fights (reproductive health access, workers rights, etc.) was ready to spring into action
- Missouri Budget Project, MO Workers Center, Missouri Jobs with Justice, Abortion Action MO, Progress MO
- Running a campaign, organizing people on the ground, crafting compelling messaging, educating voters, getting people to the polls



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LEARNING AND EVALUATION

Civic Engagement and Advocacy



Assessing desired impact

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY COALITIONS

- Partnered with **Grassroots Solutions (GRS)** to co-develop and implement an evaluation and learning plan that short and long-term outcomes.
 - Feedback provided by cohort members in 2024 and 2026 through voting and discussions; shaped initial evaluation and learning plan and a refresh in 2026.
- Space for participant-defined outcomes & “signals of progress” through check-ins and qualitative data collection.
- Data collection with funded partners
 - Surveys – 2023, 2025, 2026
 - Interviews & focus groups – 2023, 2026
 - 2027 – TBD (survey or interviews/focus groups – not both)

Five-year outcomes

(Medium-term and Ecosystem level)
By 2031...

Community Organizing

Funded partners and the communities they serve have built a larger, more resilient ecosystem of community organizers. This means that organizing groups are operating at greater scale and sophistication through shared and innovative strategies and tactics, that sustains people and power-building practices, prevented burnout, and expanded organizing initiatives across Health Forward's service area.

Prioritized two-year outcomes

(Near-term and Funded Partner Org Level)

- Organizing initiatives reached more places and people within Health Forward's service area.
- Sustained the capacity of funded partners engaging in community organizing.
- Grew the number of opportunities to support organizers and grassroots organizing programs.

Five-year outcomes

(Medium-term and Ecosystem level)
By 2031...

Civic Engagement and Advocacy Ecosystem

The civic engagement and advocacy field became stronger, more equitable, and more interconnected, with effective power sharing between white-led (or historically well-resourced) organizations and community-based organizations.

Contributed to a robust civic infrastructure in which residents, organizers and advocates had the knowledge, tools, resources and partnerships needed to influence policy outcomes and strengthen democratic systems.

Prioritized two-year outcomes

(Near-term and Funded Partner Org Level)

- Grew the capacity of funded partners to engage in year-round advocacy.
- Grew the capacity of funded partners to engage in year-round voter engagement.
- Funded partners leveraged their unique role within the ecosystem in service to a shared priority.
- Grew the number and scale of voter registration and voter education programs.
- Grew the influence of organizations representing historically excluded communities with policymakers.
- Funded partners coalesced around a shared priority.
- Grew the number of community-based leaders serving on public decision-making bodies (e.g., boards, coalitions, advisory groups, campaign leadership teams).



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APPLICATION PROCESS

2027 Funding Opportunity



APPLICATION PROCESS

DEADLINES

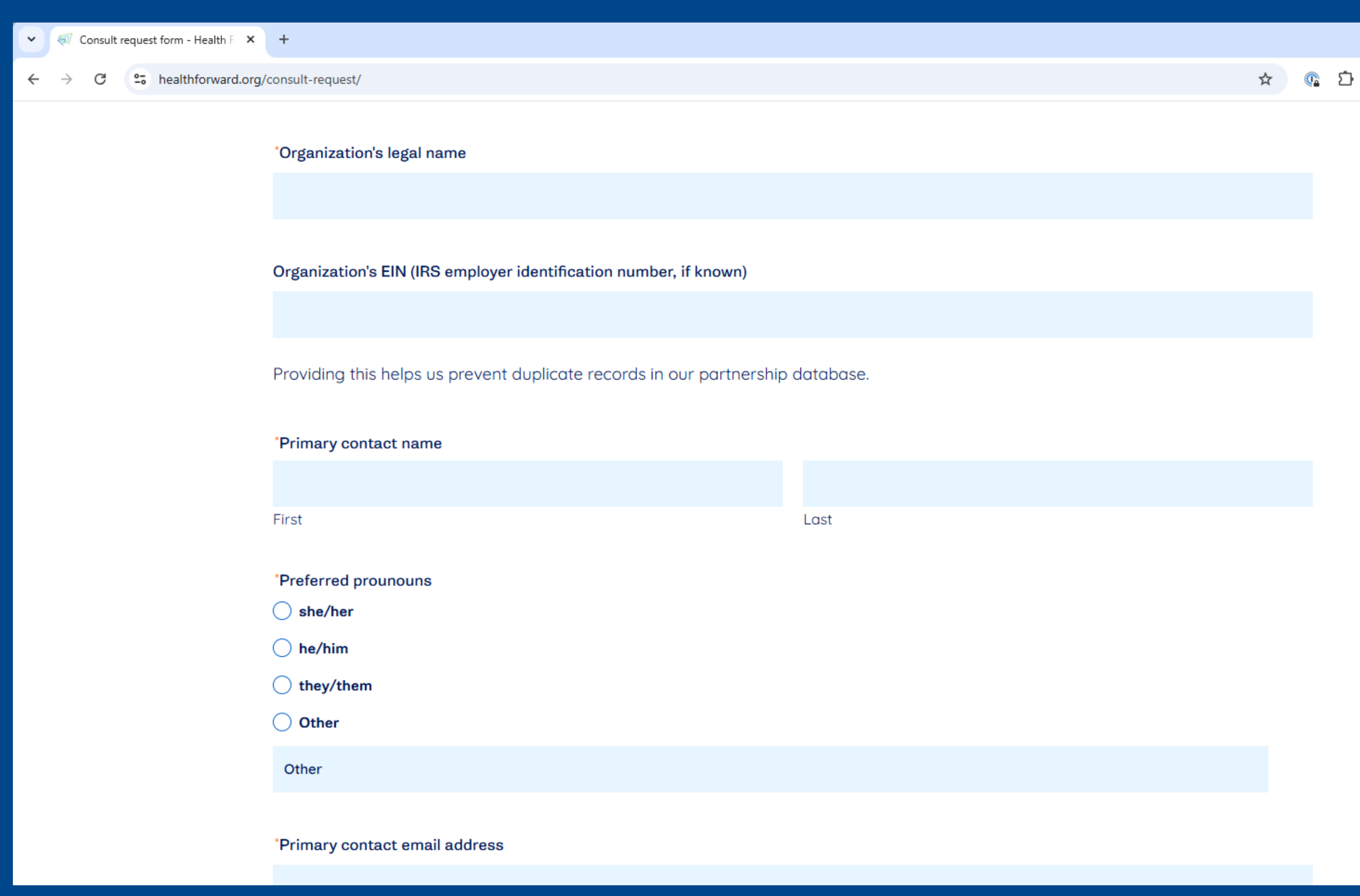
- October - November 2026 – Consultations available with Health Forward –REQUIRED FOR ALL APPLICANTS!!!
- Friday November 20, 2026 – Last day to request a consultation
- Tuesday November 24, 2026 – Last day to complete a consultation
- Wednesday December 2, 2026 – Application due by noon
- March 2027 – Funding decisions will be announced by late March
- April 2027 – Dollars will be distributed by the end of April

APPLICATION PROCESS

CONSULTATIONS

Visit our website to request a consultation:

<https://healthforward.org/consult-request/>



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL healthforward.org/consult-request/. The form is titled "Consult request form - Health F" and contains the following fields:

- *Organization's legal name**: A single-line text input field.
- Organization's EIN (IRS employer identification number, if known)**: A single-line text input field.
- Providing this helps us prevent duplicate records in our partnership database.**: A note below the EIN field.
- *Primary contact name**: Two text input fields labeled "First" and "Last".
- *Preferred pronouns**: A list of radio button options:
 - ☐ she/her
 - ☐ he/him
 - ☐ they/them
 - ☐ OtherBelow the options is a text input field labeled "Other".
- *Primary contact email address**: A single-line text input field.

APPLICATION PROCESS

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- Review the guidelines available on our [website](#)
- Non-discrimination—race, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status
- We can fund 501(c) tax-exempt organizations
- Organizations who have not yet received tax-exempt status will need to use a fiscal sponsor
- We cannot fund political campaigns to support or oppose candidates for public office
- Priority given to organizations in our service area
 - However, we will consider organizations located outside of our area that do work to benefit our region and communities of focus

APPLICATION PROCESS

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

- Communities of focus
 - People or groups who have been historically marginalized and excluded from power and political processes
 - Organizations that are led by and/or serve people of color
 - Organizations that are located in and/or serve rural communities
- Work in Health Forward's service area
- Work aligns with Health Forward's policy agenda

APPLICATION PROCESS

PORTAL ACCESS

- Once you complete your consultation...
- An invitation to complete the application will be sent to the email provided in the consultation. Click the link in the email and log in.
 - If your organization does not have a Health Forward portal account, you will first receive an email with registration instructions.
 - Following the account set up, we will send the invite to the application.
- Save your progress, if you plan to finish later.
- Once a year, you will be prompted to complete demographic information for your organization and submit your organizations financials.
- Contact our impact administration team for assistance: impactadmin@healthforward.org

APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION CONTENT

Request amount: No maximum

Request term: Up to 24 months

Activities:

- Community organizing and power-building
- Voter registration
- Non-partisan voter engagement, education, and get-out-the-vote
- Advocacy aligned with our policy agenda
- Youth and young adult civic engagement/education,
- Narrative change, messaging, and communications
- Research and evaluation
- Coalition building that aligns strongly with Health Forward's policy agenda
- Census-related work to prepare for the 2030 census
- Other: (please describe)

APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION CONTENT

Geography: Consider the scope of the civic engagement work you plan to do. How would you describe the scope of your geographic impact? Please provide your best estimates of the concentration of your work within the Health Forward service area. Indicate a percentage.

- a. Allen County, Kansas: _____%
- b. Johnson County, Kansas: _____%
- c. Wyandotte County, Kansas: _____%
- d. Cass County, Missouri: _____%
- e. Jackson County, Missouri (Eastern Jackson counties): _____%
- f. Kansas City, MO (incl. Clay and Platte Counties): _____%
- g. Lafayette County, Missouri: _____%
- h. Other Area Served: _____%

APPLICATION PROCESS

NARRATIVE – ALL APPLICATIONS (UPDATED)

1. How does your organization align with the priorities of this funding opportunity? Tell us about the civic engagement, advocacy, and/or coalition work that a Health Forward gift would support. (Please refer to the list of funding priorities on page five of the [funding opportunity announcement](#).)
2. Tell us about your history, expertise, and connectedness to the communities you serve. How are you positioned to do this work? What practices and/or approaches do you take to learn from and center community voice and participation? Highlight the ways your work connects with Health Forward's [communities of focus](#).
3. Please describe the impact you hope to achieve. Tell us about your short- and long-term outcomes as well as your previous achievements. If this is new work for you, please describe your capacity and why this is a fit for your organization at this time.

APPLICATION PROCESS

NARRATIVE – OPTIONAL QUESTIONS



4. If applicable, how does your work align with Health Forward's policy agenda and purpose plan ? This is especially important for organizations doing advocacy and coalition work, but it may also be relevant to those participating in community organizing, research, narrative change, or other activities. What policy issues are you working to advance?
5. For applicants building coalitions: Describe the members of your coalition specifically. What organizations or individuals are actively involved?



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REVIEW PROCESS

2027 Funding Opportunity



TIMELINE

2027 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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OUR APPROACH

Accessible

- Health Forward uses a simple, low-barrier application for our funding opportunities
- Our team conducts consultations to get to know your organization and to answer your questions as you prepare your application
- We remain available to answer questions

Transparent

- Our priorities are clear in our funding opportunity announcement and our policy agendas
- Our application asks for the information we consider most valuable
- We communicate if you are not a fit
- After review, we provide feedback on applications upon request

Equitable

- We look beyond the page
- It's about the work you do, not the application you write
- Multiple people review each application using an asset-framed approach
- Applications are discussed by a diverse panel of reviewers
- We will reach out to you if we have questions



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ANY QUESTIONS?