

# INVEST HEALTH

## Strategies for Healthier Cities

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

### What is the program?

*Invest Health* is a new initiative that brings together diverse leaders from mid-sized U.S. cities across the nation to develop new strategies for increasing and leveraging private and public investments to accelerate improvements in neighborhoods facing the biggest barriers to better health. The program is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Reinvestment Fund.

The program was developed to:



- **BRING TOGETHER DISPARATE SECTORS** in mid-sized cities to align around a vision for better health, create innovative ideas, and unlock new sources of investment.
- **HELP MID-SIZED CITIES ATTRACT CAPITAL** to improve health outcomes in low-income communities.
- **BUILD LASTING RELATIONSHIPS** in these cities that extend beyond the length of the program and help inform work in other communities nationwide.
- **TEST POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS** to inform the national conversation about how to best invest to achieve health equity in more communities throughout the U.S.
- **ADVANCE SYSTEMS-FOCUSED STRATEGIES** that reach across sectors to support health improvement in low-income communities.
- **HELP CITIES USE DATA AS A DRIVER** for change, beginning with an evidence-based understanding of the problem and continuing to a data framework for assessing impact.

### Why was the program developed?

The Commission to Build a Healthier America recommends that we fundamentally change how we revitalize neighborhoods, fully incorporating health into community development. To realize this vision, many communities need to build their capacity to align capital in ways that address the social, economic, physical, and environmental factors that drive well-being. With significant changes in populations and demographics, mid-sized cities are, in many ways, leading the charge to define 21st century prosperity. This is where the majority of Americans live and where many experience some of nation's deepest challenges with entrenched poverty, poor health, and lack of investment. Collectively, mid-sized cities have more individuals living in poverty than large cities. These cities offer fertile ground for new approaches to improving health—approaches that may also help boost local economies—and drive momentum nationally.

This initiative was developed to provide an opportunity for mid-sized cities to transform the way local leaders work together to create solution-driven and diverse partnerships. These partnerships will emphasize making changes to the built environment in low-income neighborhoods to improve resident health and well-being. These changes can focus on increasing access to quality jobs, affordable housing, and nutritious food, and reducing crime rates and environmental hazards.

In many of these cities, local leaders are already invested and engaged in low-income communities and possess many of the skills and networks necessary to create systems change. However, they may lack a team approach and a common vision, a data-informed understanding of their problem and how to resolve it, or connection to the capital channels required to advance projects and programs that address the multiple determinants of health. This initiative is designed to provide a learning community experience in which to better define community challenges, devise solutions, and align capital and other funding to build healthier, more equitable communities.



## What will the program do?

This program has the potential to fundamentally change the way cities improve opportunities to live healthy lives. In the 50 Invest Health cities, this shift starts with the creation of a team of leaders from government, corporate, health, philanthropic, academic, and community development sectors. Drawing upon a broad definition of health and the power of local data, at the end of 18-months team will have:

1. Established a strong, sustainable collaboration between community development, built environment, and health sector stakeholders;
2. Meaningfully engaged community residents in the planning process;
3. Identified and initiated key systems-change strategies to create more equitable communities, including efforts to leverage existing or new funding streams to address priority determinants of health;
4. Surfaced 2-3 actionable investment opportunities that use capital to advance the city's health priorities; and
5. Catalyzed an enduring, health-supporting, community investment pipeline.

Each participating city will also engage a broader group of local stakeholders as it goes about its work and that spirit of knowledge sharing will continue through regional and national gatherings where larger learning communities can flourish.

Through the initiative, cities will create new paths to problem-solving in low-income communities. Through cross-sector teamwork and a shared vision and strategy, cities will improve their capacity to develop solutions and permanent change.

Learning from the program will be synthesized and disseminated to influence the field more broadly.

**To find out more about Invest Health, visit [www.investhealth.org](http://www.investhealth.org).**



**REINVESTMENT  
FUND**

### **About Reinvestment Fund**

Reinvestment Fund is a catalyst for change in low-income communities. We integrate data, policy and strategic investments to improve the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods. Using analytical and financial tools, we bring high-quality grocery stores, affordable housing, schools and health centers to the communities that need better access—creating anchors that attract investment over the long term and help families lead healthier, more productive lives. Learn more at [reinvestment.com](http://reinvestment.com).



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

### **About The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).