



From: Cleveland Department of Public Health

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Healthy Cleveland Initiative Recognized as a “HealthyCommunity50” Member in the “Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge”

One of hundreds of entries selected to compete for up to \$500,000 in prizes through Aetna Foundation, American Public Health Association, and National Association of Counties partnership

CLEVELAND – The Cleveland Department of Public Health’s Healthy Cleveland Initiative has been selected to receive \$10,000 in community seed award funding as one of 50 members of the “HealthyCommunity50” in the “Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge”. The “Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge,” or simply “The Challenge,” is a partnership between the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association, and the National Association of Counties. By participating in The Challenge, the Cleveland Department of Public Health is eligible to receive additional prizes to support the Healthy Cleveland Initiative.

Launched in April 2016 during National Public Health Week, The Challenge seeks to award \$1.5 million in prizes to small and mid-sized cities, counties, and federally-recognized tribes that are cable of producing measurable results over the course of several years while working with cross-sector partnerships to implement health innovations and data-driven solutions. Hundreds of city governments, local municipalities, health departments, educational institutions, and other public/private entities have applied to be a part of The Challenge.

The HealthyCommunity50 were chosen based on plans to improve the health of their communities in at least one of five domains: Healthy behaviors, community safety, built environment, social/economic factors, and environmental exposures.

Through The Challenge, the City of Cleveland’s Healthy Cleveland Initiative will be working with key partners to reduce youth tobacco initiation and reduce current use among citizens. The “Breathe Free in CLE” project comes at a critical time for the city of Cleveland as the city is witnessing a smoking rate more than double the national average, which is about 16% according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

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“The Cleveland Department of Public Health is honored to participate in the Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge,” said CDPH Director Merle R. Gordon. “We feel that now more than ever we need to recommit to reducing the use and effects of tobacco in our community.”

“At the Aetna Foundation, we’re seeking to reward innovation for communities implementing new ways to improve health outcomes,” said Dr. Garth Graham, president of the Aetna Foundation. “We want the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge to serve as a catalyst for collaboration in local communities around the country working to move the needle in combating health disparities.”

All HealthyCommunity50 members will be visited by an expert judge panel to answer questions, understand the community’s approach to the project first-hand, and speak with the members of the cross-sector team and key stakeholders. At the conclusion of The Challenge, the programs most able to show measurable change will be eligible for prize awards from \$25,000 - \$500,000. Participants will be judged on their own progress and will not be competing against each other.

For more information, visit www.healthiestcities.org.