

The California Endowment Strategic Vision Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Place

What do you mean by "place" in The Endowment's new strategic vision?

Places, the neighborhoods where we live, work and learn, have a direct impact on the health of community residents. We're not just talking about improving health insurance coverage or increasing the number of doctor visits—we're talking about the availability of healthy foods in those places, safety, access to parks and recreation for kids and their families, air quality, transportation, etc. All of these factors are interconnected and affect our health.

California is teeming with racial, ethnic and even geographic diversity. So our definition of place must allow for the fact that urban, rural and even suburban poverty exists. We mean areas – even neighborhoods – with the poorest of health outcomes. It is in these places that we intend to engage grantees, partner organizations and the residents themselves to address existing barriers to health.

What will your places look like?

In partnership with local leaders, we hope to help build communities throughout California where kids are healthy, safe and ready to learn. Great examples of selected place-based work include Geoffrey Canada's Harlem Children's Zone, which works to enhance the quality of life for children in some of New York City's most distressed neighborhoods. A little closer to home is Market Creek Plaza in San Diego, where the Jacobs Family Foundation helped to redevelop a neglected community with the assistance of eight neighborhood teams. Although these two examples did not focus primarily on health, they are great examples of what can be done within underserved communities. We are looking for community leaders who are interested in transforming an unhealthy neighborhood into a healthy one.

How many places will you select for targeted funding from 2010-2020?

Approximately 10-15 places.

What factors are you basing your selections?

A core group of our Program, Evaluation and Policy staff developed selection criteria, which included the collection of "need data" – those social determinants of health such as income, educational attainment, physical environment – that will help us in our selection process. This data are being used to identify areas that are impacted by deep poverty and low health outcomes, but yet have the potential to develop into communities that can be modeled, replicated and inspire policy changes to create a healthy environment for all Californians.

We are now working with a nonprofit health equity organization to map the data and demographics throughout California. We will use data, our grant-making history, as well as interviews and information from community residents to inform the final selection of places. These places will reflect the spectrum of California's diversity and will include communities – both large and small, rural and urban.

Will you continue to fund organizations that fall outside of your selected “places”?

Yes. While the majority of The Endowment’s resources during the next decade will be dedicated to helping targeted low-income communities, a significant portion of our resources will continue to be invested across the state to support new ideas and build momentum for a statewide Building Healthy Communities vision.

When will you announce the selected “places”?

We will announce the selected places in January.

Will you be releasing a new grant application?

Yes. We are retooling our funding application to reflect our new strategic vision. The guide will be made available in mid-2009. There will, however, be some overlap between the new and existing funding programs, and we will continue to make new grants throughout the process.

How will your work in only a few places affect the health and well-being of all Californians?

Our plan relies upon connecting the work we do in our selected places to each other, so we can support a movement for health systems and policy change statewide. Other communities can draw from and model programs after what works in these places. The best way to advance a statewide reform strategy is by having innovative ideas and practices demonstrated at the local level.

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For additional information on The California Endowment’s strategic vision, please visit www.calendow.org/healthycommunities.