

Writing a New Book on Heart Health

A Grant/Assistance Opportunity for Rural Libraries to Improve Community Health



Receive up to \$1500 for your efforts to improve health in your community.

The American Heart Association's mission is to be a *relentless force for a world of longer healthier lives*. That mission is underscored by our Guiding Values which include "meeting people where they are" and "building powerful partnerships." Libraries – especially in rural communities – offer a tremendous opportunity to do both of those things and we want to collaborate with you to tackle health disparities in a comprehensive, sustainable way.

Among other health challenges, rural Americans face higher of [high blood pressure](#), [nutrition insecurity](#), [cardiac arrest death rates](#), [tobacco use](#), and more. At the same time, rural communities have strong assets – organizations and individuals who are dedicated to making a difference and thinking creatively to overcome challenges.

To that end, the American Heart Association has worked with rural libraries in various contexts to leverage our science, resources, and experience with their position of trust in and access to communities in need. And now we are hoping to do more of the same – in your community. (See Page 2 for more details on the work we've done). Opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Empowering patrons to check their own blood pressure in or through the library, including a referral to a local clinic partner for more assistance.
- Systematically identifying/referring to resources, patrons facing nutrition insecurity or helping provide/support enhanced access to accessible nutritious food.
- Fostering CPR training and cardiac emergency response planning in your community
- Identifying/referring to resources, patrons facing tobacco dependency.

While much of this work does not require expansive funding (project budgets are often well under \$1000), we do know that tangible resources are limited, and we want to help meet that need. Therefore, we are **offering up to \$10k in grants** to rural libraries to help build capacity for sustainable opportunities to address health concerns. A few notes:

- Use the [Am I Rural?](#) tool to confirm your eligibility.
- Complete this [brief survey](#) by **March 1st** to officially apply.
- **Because of the funding source, the immediate grant opportunity is limited to libraries in IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD and WI.**
 - Libraries in other states are still encouraged to register your interest. Those who do so will receive offers of technical support/resources and alert our local staff as to the possible need to find additional funding.

Questions – or examples of existing work that you want to highlight – please contact [Tim Nikolai](#), Sr. Rural Health Director, American Heart Association, Midwest Region.



Despite nearly a century of progress, cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death for Americans, a burden that is borne disproportionately by populations within a particular community. Those with lower income and/or educational attainment, Black, Brown, and other minority populations, along with rural residents often face greater health challenges and poorer health outcomes.

Many of those gaps ultimately stem from questions of access. Access to quality health care, healthy, affordable food, safe opportunities for physical activity and more. That is why among the [American Heart Association's](#) Guiding Values is a commitment to *meeting people where they are* and a focus on *forming powerful partnerships*.

Increasingly, examples of working with local libraries are helping the Association do just that. That's no surprise really, given that a 2013 [Pew Research Poll](#) revealed that 84% of Americans 16 or older had visited their local library or bookmobile and a report on [Minnesota Public Libraries](#) underscores, part of the value of libraries is a phenomenon known as the "living room" experience, meeting and conference rooms available, all-inclusive, safe and friendly environment. Combined, then with the trusted brand of the Association, and it's a powerful opportunity.

Examples of this collaboration have included:

- Helping empower library patrons to check their blood pressure in the library, learn basic information on how to change their health behaviors, and be referred to clinical care as needed. (Many including Atlantic, IA, Shawneetown, IL, and Walkerton, IN).
- Supporting efforts to help library staff efficiently and sensitively screen patrons for food insecurity and provide referral to resources to help meet that need (Risin Sun, IN among others.)
- Facilitating a connection between the Boys and Girls Club and a library allowing the library to become a summer meal site and address nutrition security concerns for students (Pottsboro, TX).
- Helping libraries develop Cardiac Emergency Response Plans and community CPR Trainings. (Henika, MI, Putnam County, MO and more).



These ideas and others help scratch the surface of how American Heart Association resources and best practices in conjunction with the trusted, valued position libraries hold in their communities, can have a powerful, sustainable impact on health.