

Equitable Access to Care Funding Opportunity

Increasing Health Insurance Enrollment

As Medicaid Expansion is implemented in North Carolina, the Trust will support efforts to ensure that groups who have been marginalized can access available health-supporting public benefit programs. Accurate information from trusted messengers will be critical to ensure that all eligible individuals are able to enroll. The Trust will support communications, outreach and enrollment efforts that target American Indian, Black, and Latinx individuals who are less likely to have health coverage due to historic and systemic inequities.

Goal

Maximize access to and enrollment in programs that support the health of individuals and families with low incomes including the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, Medicaid, NC Health Choice (CHIP), Food and Nutrition Services (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and others. Increase focus on the enrollment of historically excluded populations.

Strategy

Conduct broad-based communications, community education, and advocacy efforts that advance goals.

Build community, network, organizational, and individual capacity so that historically marginalized populations, particularly Black, Immigrant, Indigenous, and other leaders of color can drive community and health improvement effort.

Timeframe

Call-by date: July 20, 2023

Application deadline: August 10, 2023

Geographic Focus

See opportunity details for priority regions.

About Health Improvement in North Carolina

Through our Health Improvement in North Carolina program area, we invest in solutions that improve the quality of health for residents of North Carolina by supporting equitable access to health care and equitable health systems.

Opportunity Details

Several studies by the National Institute of Medicine conclude that a lack of insurance is hazardous to individual and community health. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, signed into law in 2010, led to historic gains in health insurance coverage. A robust enrollment effort in North Carolina helped reduce the uninsured rate from about 21 percent in 2010 to a little more than 10 percent in 2017. However, from 2017-2019, federal policies eroded some of these coverage gains. In 2019, North Carolina's [uninsured rate of 11.3 percent](#) was still well above the national rate of 9.2 percent due to the failure to expand Medicaid in the state. Medicaid Expansion has been a priority for the Trust for over a decade. Since 2013 we have invested more than \$2 million to engage stakeholders and conduct public education sessions on the importance of closing the coverage gap.

After over a decade of advocacy, Medicaid Expansion is now moving forward, and North Carolina has an unprecedented opportunity to connect an estimated 600,000 residents to health coverage. In rural areas, residents are [40% more likely to be uninsured](#) and eligible for Medicaid expansion. Ensuring equity in expansion implementation efforts will be critical to ensure enrollment of Indigenous, Black, and Latinx individuals who are less likely to have health coverage due to historic and systemic inequities. Accurate information from trusted community messengers will be essential to ensure that all eligible individuals are able to enroll in coverage.

In addition to ensuring that individuals newly eligible for Medicaid enroll in the program, there is more work to be done to connect individuals who are eligible for but unenrolled in existing public benefit programs. Though numerous public benefit programs are available, people often have difficulty successfully navigating systems to access and retain the benefits. Because the programs are regulated and administered by multiple different federal and state agencies, the programs differ widely in their eligibility criteria, definitions, requirements, and application and renewal processes. All of this complicates the experiences of people seeking to access benefits and services. Additionally, structural racism compounded over decades continues to pose obstacles that keep Black people and immigrants from equitably accessing the safety net. The result of this complex system is that enrollment of eligible individuals in health supporting public programs continues to lag. As Matthew Desmond [recently noted](#), our country is “really bad at making sure that aid is marketed to people and distributed to people.”

For example, the share of eligible people who receive WIC benefit nationwide [generally declined](#) from 2016 to 2020. In North Carolina, of an estimated 434,200 eligible individuals, there are only 243,300 participants in the program. In the SNAP program, only [69 percent](#) of eligible individuals in NC are enrolled in the program, compared to 82 percent nationwide. While overall program participation rates in SNAP have remained steady, SNAP participation rates for eligible noncitizens and for U.S. citizen children living with noncitizen adults both [declined substantially](#) from 2016 to 2020. A recent study from [Carolina Demography](#) reveals that low enrollment rates of immigrant and mixed status families is evident across all health supporting public benefit programs in North Carolina – including SNAP, Medicaid, Marketplace coverage and cash assistance.

Having a strong statewide network of trusted, community-based leaders engaged in health insurance and public benefit outreach is essential to ensure that communities are aware of opportunities to enroll in programs that can help stabilize their families and strengthen their economic security. Preference will be given to organizations that have deep connections to the community they serve. The Trust is interested in proposals that include education about the Medicaid Transformation process in North Carolina and provide referrals for assistance accessing other public programs.

Contact

To schedule a conversation about this opportunity, please contact Grants Assistant Mary Weaver for an initial consultation at mary@kbr.org or 336-972-5654.