



a racial equity initiative of the w.k. kellogg foundation

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is the America Healing initiative?

A: America Healing: A Racial Equity Initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a five-year, \$75 million commitment to address racial inequities in our country and to ensure that all children have equal access to opportunity. Our grants will support organizations that are working to promote racial healing and eliminate structural racism. America Healing builds on the work that our Foundation has already done in this area.

Q2: What is structural racism?

A: Also referred to as institutional racism, structural racism is a system in which the policies and practices of both government and private institutions continue to privilege some and disadvantage others based on physical characteristics. While these practices may not be blatantly discriminatory, they are the enduring effects of Jim Crow laws, school segregation, redlining, and other overt actions in which white people were preferred over those of other races. In often subtle but hardly inconsequential ways, structural racism continues to keep non-whites from achieving the same level of personal and professional success as whites.

WHY NOW? WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

Q3: Why is this initiative needed? Many people believe that because we have an African-American president we're now in a "post-racial" society.

A: Unfortunately, the evidence does not support the reality of a post-racial America. Our nation has come a long way since the beginning of the Civil Rights Era. Most Americans would strongly resist any effort to reinstate policies or laws that exclude or discriminate against people based on their race.

Yet, there is ample evidence that racial gaps and disparities still exist in the areas of education, health status, family income, housing and employment. Our neighborhoods are still largely segregated. While it has narrowed somewhat, the achievement gap between white and African-American students persists, and we know that 3 million children of color drop out of school every year. Studies show racial and ethnic minorities face higher rates of diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and tooth decay, etc. than non-Hispanic whites. Infant mortality rates are twice as high for children of color as for whites, and African-Americans have higher death rates than whites for 12 of the 15 leading causes of death.

These are just a few of the inequities that America Healing intends to address. By 2015 minority children will be the majority of America's youth, and our country's future will be resting on their shoulders – shoulders that bear the burden of these racial inequities. (Source: 2008 U.S. Census Bureau Population Projects)





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Q4: What is different about this initiative?

A: This initiative represents the foundation’s next bold step toward healing the mistakes of the past and addressing structural racism that persists today in America. It is fundamental to its vision of “a nation that marshals its resources to ensure that ALL children have an equitable and promising future.”

The depth and breadth of the kinds of grantees being funded is extensive. We’ve funded activities at the community level that address racism from a number of angles: cultural programs, education initiatives, those designed to address health, wellness and nutrition, and others.

While the America Healing initiative is, itself, unprecedented, it is an expansion of work already done on equity, and a reflection of a commitment to racial equity so deeply ingrained that all of the \$300 million-plus work which the foundation funds each year includes a component which addresses racial equity.

Finally, though we were only able to fund 119 of the nearly 1,000 grant requests we received, we have set up a comprehensive database that includes information on the hundreds of unfunded projects. We are making this database publicly available and in hopes that others will connect and support this important work.

Q5: How is this initiative different from other efforts to fight racism in America?

A: America Healing is a broad, comprehensive effort that will address racial inequities across all areas of people’s lives. It is largely a grassroots initiative inspired by the local organizations that are already running innovative programs to eliminate these disparities. The Kellogg Foundation grants will allow these organizations to continue and expand their work.

Q6: What are the key areas of focus for the initiative?

A: There are four key focus areas:

- Supporting the creation and maintenance of a sustainable public system of accountability for progress
- Supporting and expanding the capacity of community-based efforts
- Intensifying action-oriented research and analysis
- Strengthening advocacy for both policy and systems change

ABOUT THE GRANTEES

Q7: How many grant applications did the foundation receive?

A: The Kellogg Foundation received nearly 1,000 applications for funding through the America Healing initiative, totaling \$280 million—an overwhelming response signifying a hunger in this country for racial healing work.





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Q8: Who are the grantees?

A: The Kellogg Foundation is awarding grants to 119 organizations from 29 states and the District of Columbia. The work will be done in all 50 states. Grantee organizations represent all populations and geographical regions of the country and include organizations focusing on food, health, education, the media, the justice system, the environment, and child welfare, among other areas. In addition, anchor institutions such as the National Urban League, the NAACP, the National Congress of American Indians and the National Council of La Raza are partners in this work.

Q9: What about the applications that were not funded?

A: The tremendous response to this project demonstrates the need that exists in our communities. The Kellogg Foundation is publishing an online catalog of the remaining proposals in hopes that other organizations will support some of these efforts to heal divides and eliminate racial barriers. The catalog can be found at www.wkkf.org.

GOALS OF AMERICA HEALING

Q10: What are the goals of this program?

A: The Kellogg Foundation's four primary goals for the America Healing initiative are to:

- Establish an ongoing system for communicating, tracking, measuring and documenting progress, and report those results to local, national and global audiences.
- Support and expand the capacity of community-based efforts to bridge racial and ethnic divisions, address structural racism and promote racial healing.
- Widen the circle of allies who support or are engaged in racial healing and equity in order to strengthen advocacy for change.
- Make community organizing and advocacy more effective by improving the research and analysis of racial equity.

Q11: How will you measure whether this initiative is having a meaningful impact?

A: Grantees are collecting data on the work that is being funded by America Healing and will track the impact of those projects over time in such areas as health, education, and the justice system.





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ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Q12: What role can government play in this initiative? Isn't government part of the problem?

A: Government, like every other major institution in society, is still affected by structural racism, even though there have been concerted efforts to diversify both legislative bodies and the ranks of government employees. We believe this should be a multi-sector effort that involves public, private and nonprofit entities as well as individuals.

Q13: Won't this project just re-open old wounds that have been forgotten?

A: The intent of the America Healing initiative is not to drag up past injustices or to ignore the progress we have made. Instead, it is to honor the mistakes of the past and address the inequities that remain in our society and to support the organizations that are working to ensure that people of color have equal access to quality schools, health care, jobs and other opportunities that contribute to success.

The goal is to foster true healing in our country. Beginning at the community level, the initiative is based on the belief that as a country we must first put racism in front of us in order to ultimately put its effects behind us. We now know a lot about emotional intelligence and the harmful impact of trauma and exposure to negative experiences. The America Healing work applies these concepts to promote the resolution and the reconciliation needed.

