



Health Forward
FOUNDATION

**Organizational Equity and
Inclusion Metrics for 2024**

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Why This Work Matters

At Health Forward Foundation, we strive to partner with diverse nonprofit organizations across our community in an equitable way.

When our partner organizations, including their leadership and board members, resemble our communities of focus, everyone benefits. By ensuring that they are inclusive of the communities they serve and support, organizations are more likely to include the perspectives of those with real understanding of the issues they are trying to address in their work. Gaining deeper insights into the demographics of our funded partners helps us assess how inclusive we are of our communities of focus.

2024 was a pivotal year, as we advanced into the second year of implementing our strategic purpose areas, building on the lessons learned from our first year. As such, our efforts to ensure that our funded partners resemble and are inclusive of our communities of focus have become more apparent. This report further serves to continue holding ourselves accountable to our purpose, mission, and values.

This report highlights funding trends by demography, geography, and race and ethnicity across all funded partners for the purpose of learning and sharing how we are centering our communities of focus in our funding.

Purpose

Every day we work to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems

Mission

To achieve health equity and secure a fair and just region through leadership, advocacy, and resources.

Communities of Focus

Our commitment to change will focus on working to improve the lives of people who experience the greatest injustices in health outcomes, including:

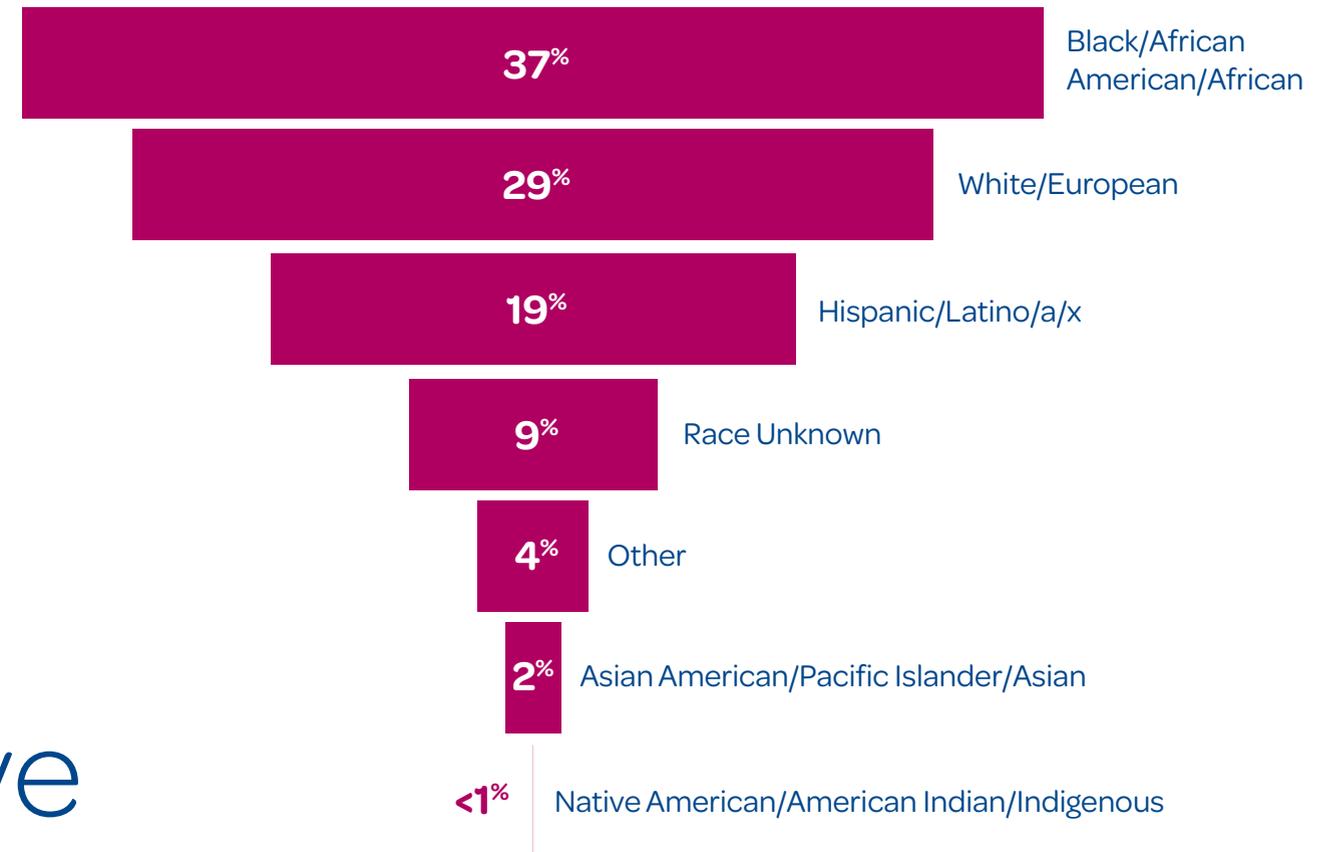
People of color whose health outcomes are shaped by structural racism and other socioeconomic conditions

People in rural areas where systemic barriers hinder optimal health

These communities often overlap with people of varied identities who experience economic insecurity, live in marginalized conditions, and find barriers to accessing high-quality care that is affordable, equitable, and trauma-informed.



Health Forward 2024 Funded Partner Population Served (168 awards went to 139 organizations)



Diversity of the People our Funded Partners Serve

At Health Forward, we are working toward a future where everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy life. But health gaps in our region are not evenly spread – they are deepest in communities of color and rural areas, where systemic barriers have persisted for decades. To build a healthier, more inclusive region, we focus our efforts where the obstacles are greatest. To better understand and address these disparities, we invite our funded partners to share data on the race and ethnicity of the people they serve. Looking at individuals served by our dollars, we found that nearly 62 percent are people of color.

This aligns with one of our communities of focus – those affected by systemic racism. The demographics of those served by, and the people within, our partner organizations have more diverse representation than our region as a whole. The data show that Black, white, and Hispanic/Latinx people are significantly represented among our communities served. We’ve also seen an increase of Black/African American CEOs and board members among our funded partners. When people of color are leading efforts to solve the issues that acutely affect their communities, it can lead to more lasting and meaningful change.

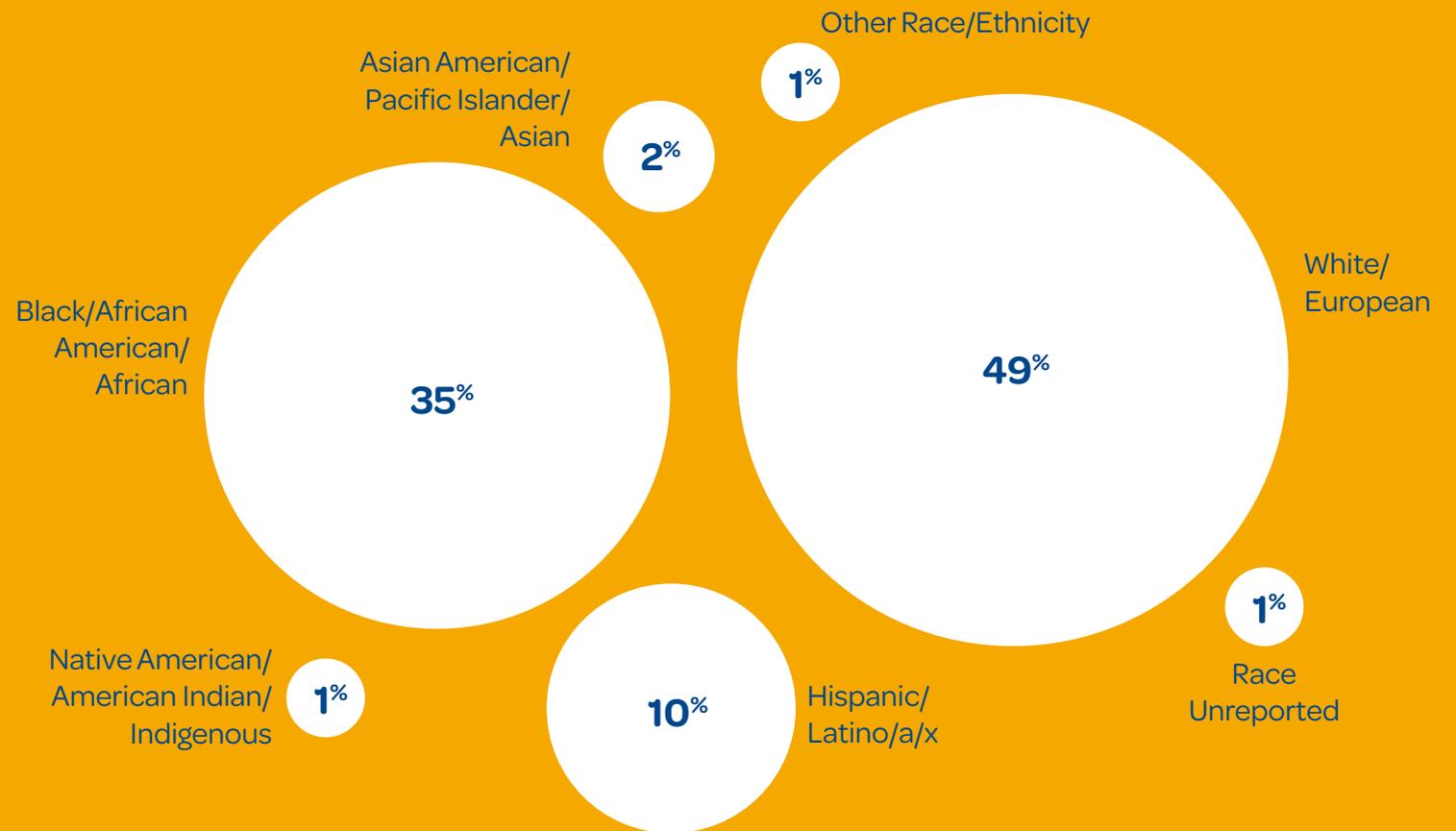
Board Diversity

As part of our funding application, organizations are invited to provide the demographics of their board members. When looking at the people who serve on these boards, we found that nearly half (49 percent) are people of color. This has been a steady increase (from 34 percent) in representation since 2020.

Assistance with board diversification is often a topic of conversation with our funded partners. Health Forward continues to play an important role in building the capacity of Kansas City's regional nonprofit ecosystem. One example of how we are thinking about this work includes a continuation in funding in our Platform purpose area to support predominantly white-led organizations that are looking to instill equity and inclusion into their work, as well as their organizational policies and practices.

2024 Funded Partner Organizations Board Race/Ethnicity

n=1678 Board members of 139 organizations



Health Forward continues to play an important role in building the capacity of Kansas City's regional nonprofit ecosystem.

Board Diversity

From 2020 to 2024, we saw a 27-point increase in the number of organizations funded where the majority of board members identified as people of color.

One example of this work can be seen in the KC Health Equity Learning and Action Network (LAN), a collection of 50 partners committed to instilling anti-racism, equity, community, and humanity in our health ecosystems, and a concerted effort to ensure equitable access to our funding processes. Through the LAN, 46 percent of participating organizations reported that they discussed the topic of representation on their boards and in senior leadership. These conversations supported building and strengthening inclusive practices within the organization in key decision-making roles.

2024 Funded Partner Organizations Board Race/Ethnicity

51%

with 50% or more of board members identifying as people of color

49%

with less than 50% of board members identifying as people of color



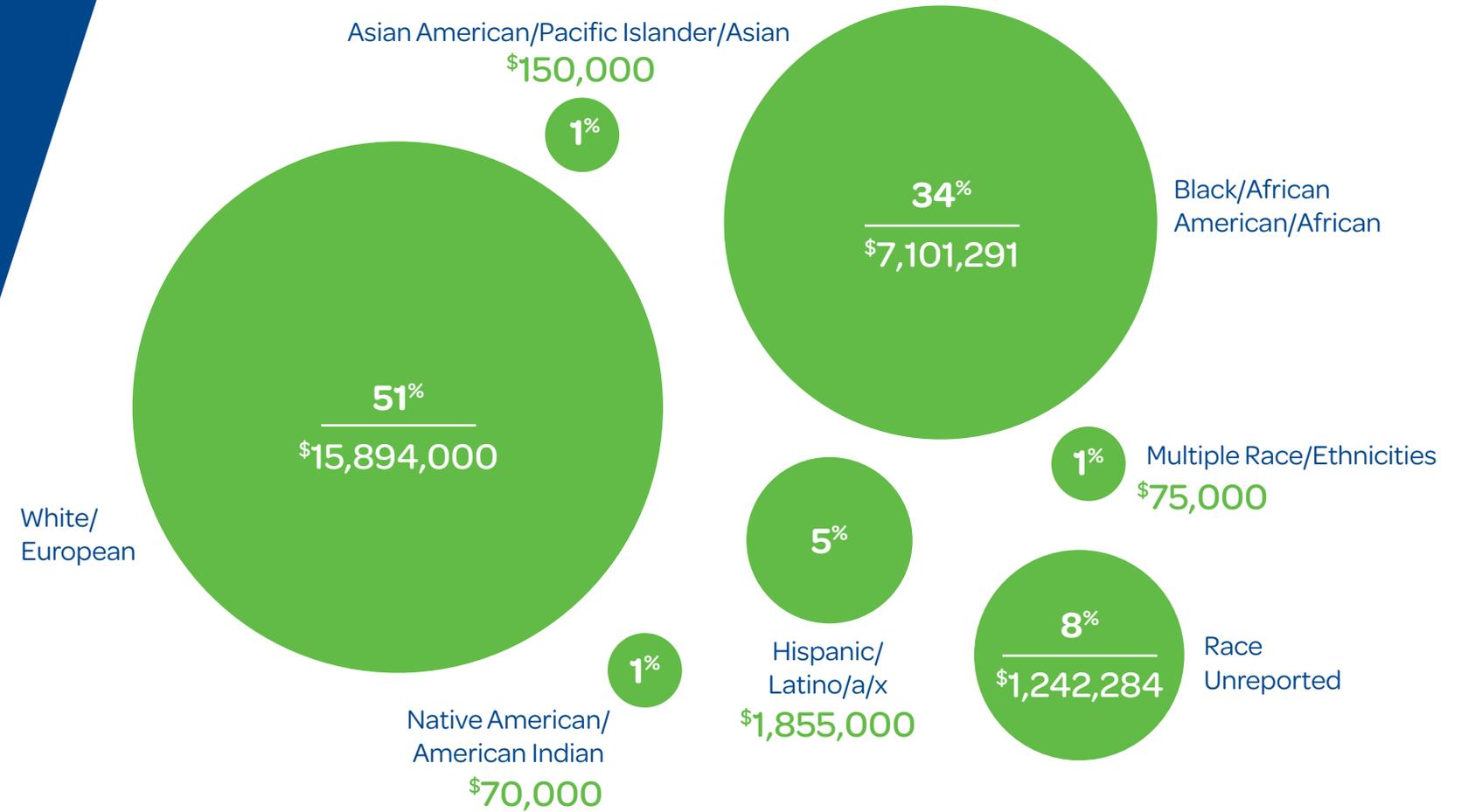
CEO Diversity

41 percent of our 2024 funded partner organizations were led by a person of color, representing an investment of \$9,521,291, up 17 percent from 2020 and an increase of \$4,065,120.

***Person of Color includes all CEO's minus those who identify as White/European and those who didn't report race/ethnicity data.*

2024 Funded Partner CEO Race/Ethnicity & Amount Awarded**

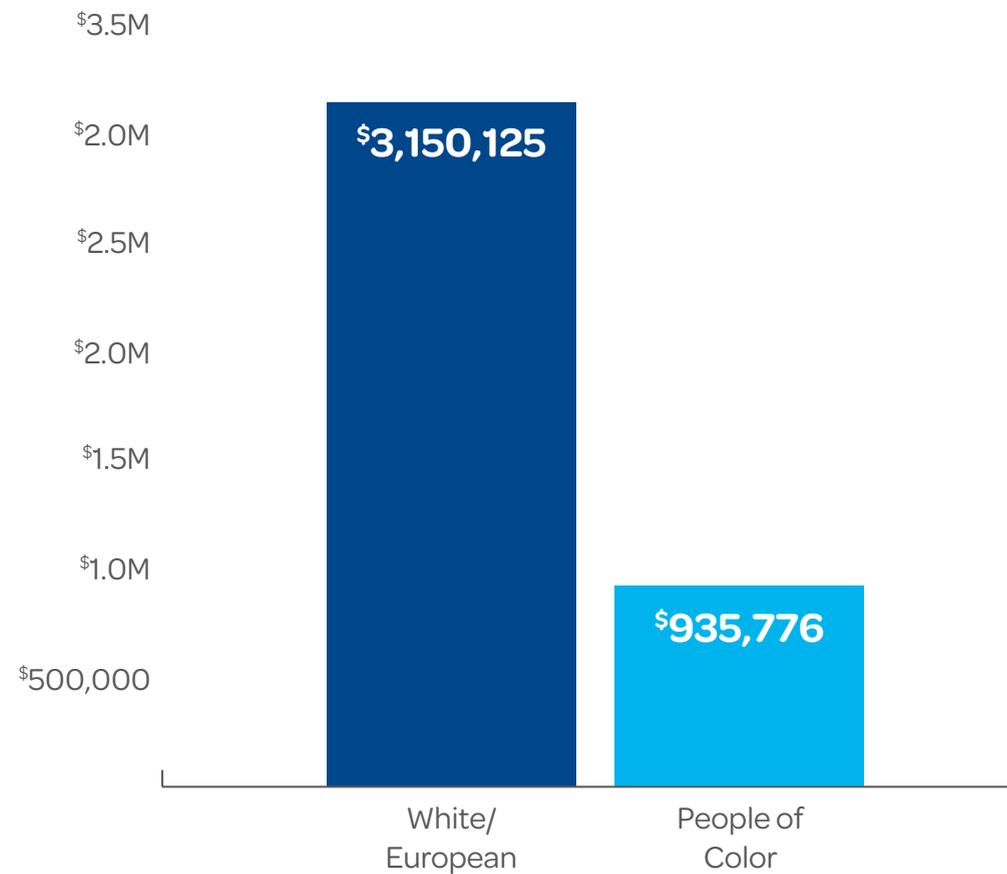
139 Organizations received \$26,387,576



CEO Diversity

A critical disparity seen in both the Kansas City region and nationally is limited access to capital for nonprofit leaders of color.¹ As shown here, white-led organizations funded by Health Forward in 2024 had median operating budgets more than \$2 million higher than our organizations led by CEOs of color. Since we began measuring three years ago, this sizable gap has persisted especially for our Black-led nonprofit partners. Health Forward is focused on supporting smaller, community-based organizations, which could have some influence on this gap. But tracking this number has exemplified the challenging economic barriers facing CEOs of color. It's why we are continuing our emphasis on investing in communities of color and strengthening the smaller nonprofits across our region.

2024 Median Annual Operating Budget of Health Forward Funded Partners by Race/Ethnicity

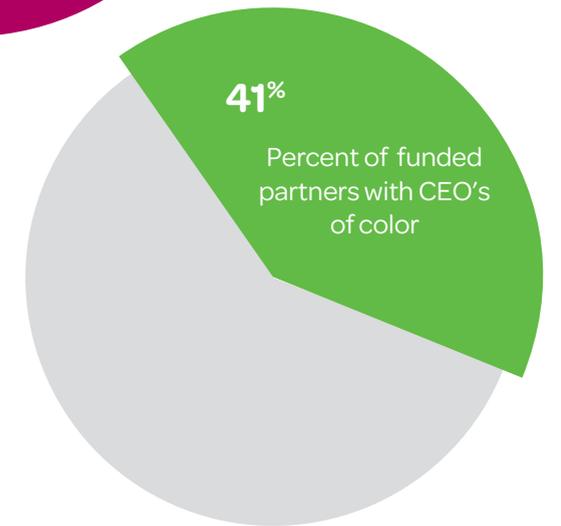
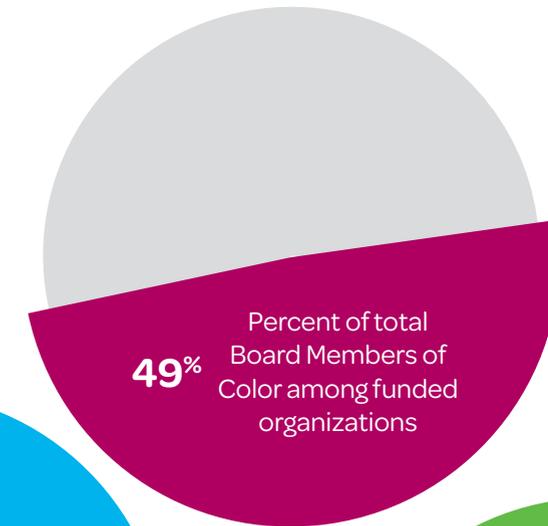
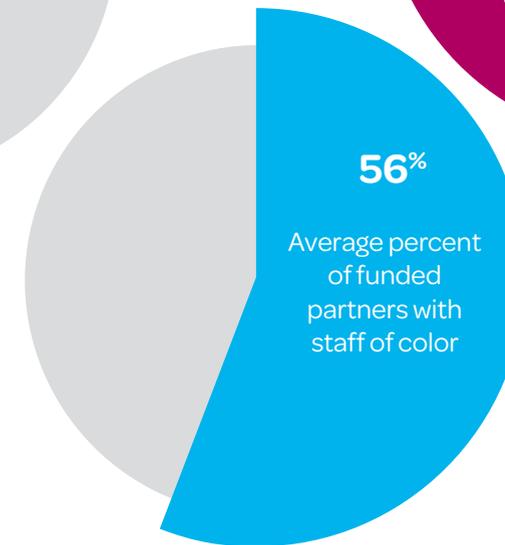
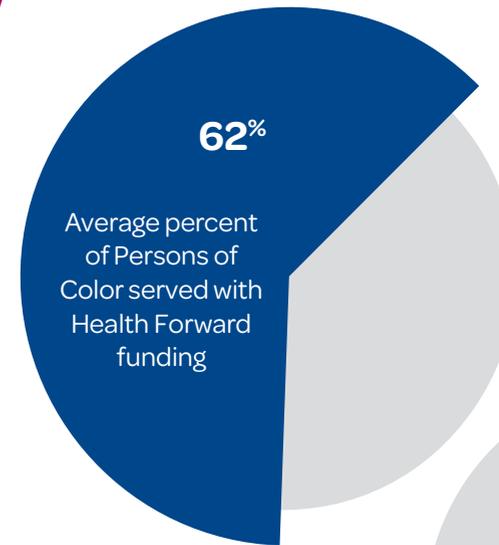


¹ Dorsey, C., Kim, P., Daniels, C., Sakaue, L., & Savage, B. (2020). Overcoming the Racial Bias in Philanthropic Funding. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/overcoming_the_racial_bias_in_philanthropic_funding

Race/Ethnicity Data Summary

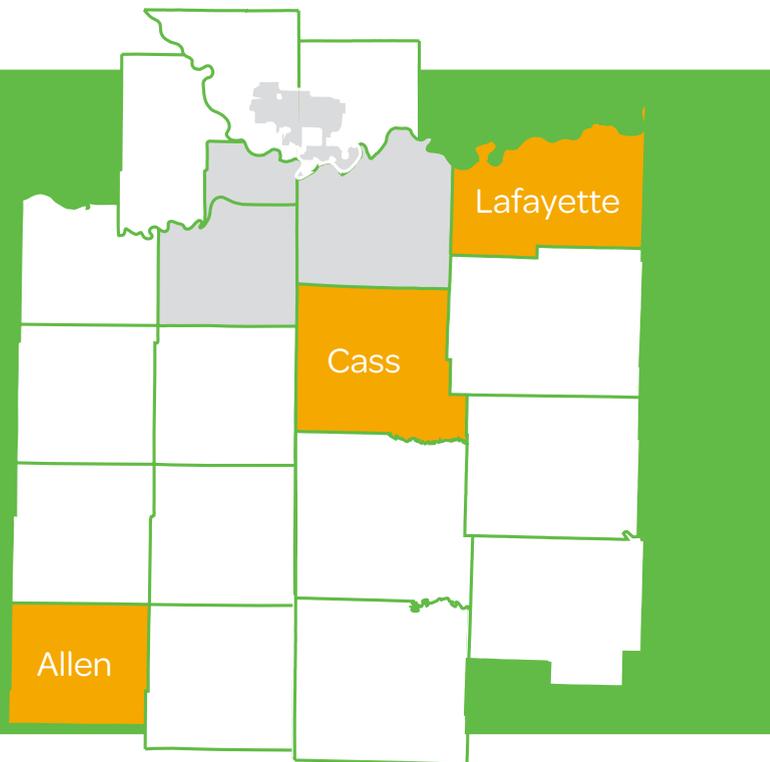
Including members of our communities of focus is one way to ensure that those closest to the problem also take part in the development of the solutions. Greater diversity in leadership, staff, and board can further support increased diversity of people served by our partner organizations. In 2024, we saw increases in leadership, board, and staff diversity as well as an increase in the percent of persons of color served, from 59 percent in 2020 to 62 percent in 2024.

Persons of Color Representation in 2024 Health Forward Funding



Spotlight on Rural Communities

Our commitment to change is focused on working to improve the lives of people who experience the greatest injustices in health outcomes. This includes people of color whose health outcomes are shaped by structural racism and other socioeconomic conditions. It also includes people in rural areas where systemic barriers hinder optimal health. This section spotlights how Health Forward is showing up in the rural parts of our service area.



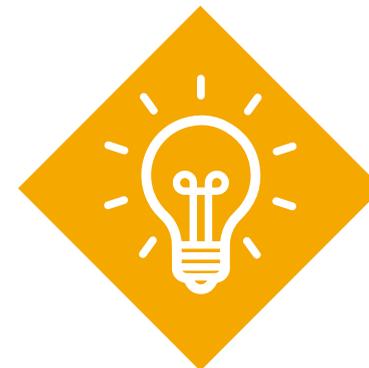
TOTAL REQUESTS

14



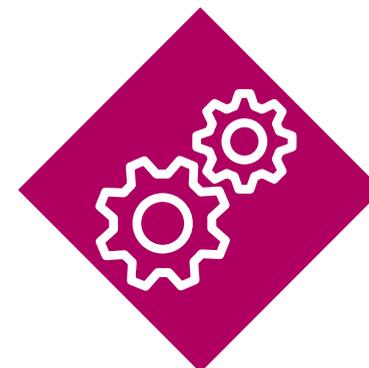
TOTAL AWARDS

14



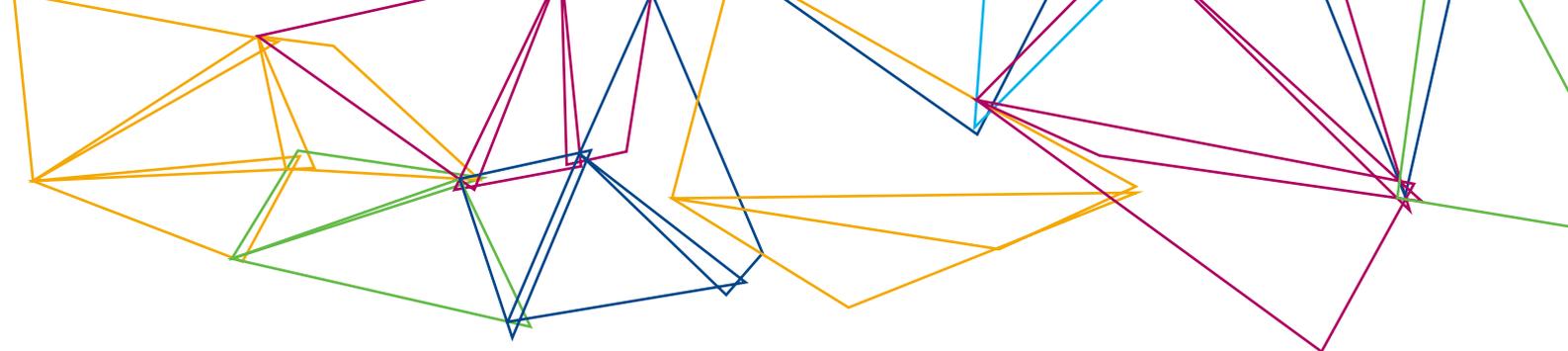
APPROVAL RATE

100%



COUNTIES INCLUDED

3



Spotlight on Rural Communities

Since 2020, Health Forward investments into our rural counties have nearly doubled, representing an increase by over \$1 million dollars in 2024.

Considering funding awarded proportionate to population, Allen County has been particularly successful. We believe this is in part due to the existence of a health advocacy organization unique to the rural area, which serves as a catalyst for community engagement and health programming. Based on our experience with the rural counties we serve, having a coordinating body to navigate application processes and facilitate collaborations across organizations greatly improves their funding success. The rural counties within our service area have unique communities, strengths, and challenges. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy in addressing their health needs.

County	Number of Requests/Approvals	Total Funding	Dollars/Person
Allen	5/5	\$1,125,000	\$90.06
Cass	3/3	\$560,000	\$5.12
Lafayette	6/6	\$1,045,000	\$31.69

Our rural counties are highly successful when it comes to securing funding.



Spotlight on Small, Community-Based Organizations

Health Forward Foundation is committed to strengthening small, community-based organizations that are deeply embedded in the communities they serve. These organizations, often led by and serving people of color or rural populations, play a vital role in advancing health equity by delivering innovative, community-driven solutions.

In 2024, Health Forward continued its commitment by investing in these small organizations to provide critical capacity-building support that allows them to expand programs, take strategic risks, and build lasting community connections.

**Small organizations for the purpose of this analysis is representative of those organizations with an annual operating budget of \$2 million or less.*

2024 Total Funding	Funding Represented
33% awarded to small organizations	\$8,688,576
Organization Leadership	Median Annual Operating Budget
52% led by people of color	\$935,776

