



**The Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge  
Frequently Asked Questions  
General Public  
Archived April 2016**

**Have a Question About the Challenge?**

Primary contact for all questions related to The Challenge:

- Email- [hccc@apha.org](mailto:hccc@apha.org)
- Phone – JeVonna Ephraim, Project Director, at 202-777-2429

Exceptions

- Learning Network questions and webinar suggestions, and
- Materials for posting on your webpage of The Challenge’s website
- JeVonna Ephraim, [jevonna.ephraim@apha.org](mailto:jevonna.ephraim@apha.org), 202-777-2429

Media and communication issues

- Katy Frame, [kframe@brgcommunications.com](mailto:kframe@brgcommunications.com), 703-739-8358

**General Questions**

**1. What is the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge?**

The Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge (the Challenge) is a collaboration between the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the National Association of Counties (NACo) to encourage small to midsize U.S. cities, counties and tribal nations to create a positive health impact. The Challenge will identify the best practices for achieving community and individual health, wellness and health equity. Additionally, the Challenge promotes collaboration and community-wide involvement and will identify nationally replicable models of health.

Competing cities, counties and tribal nations will move the needle toward creating healthier and more equitable communities using measurable criteria over several years. The Challenge will award \$1.5 million in prizes to cities and counties that build cross-sector teams around health issues of critical importance to their communities.

**2. What is the Goal of the Challenge?**

The goal of the Challenge is to develop practical, evidence-based strategies to improve measurable social and health outcomes and promote health and wellness, equity and social interaction – community by community, block by block.

Through the Challenge, we want to recognize and catalyze communities across the U.S. with the ideas and solutions that empower communities to be healthier; helping make the right choice the easy choice for their residents. By sharing measurable approaches and impact, we will create models for use nationwide.

**3.How do you define “Healthy City/County”?**

We believe that *a Healthy City/County is economically competitive, inclusive and equitable*. At the Aetna Foundation, we believe that positive change happens when we work side-by-side with people to implement sustainable changes at the community level.

Every community is unique and may require something different to promote change by increasing opportunity and collective health, but all cities, counties and tribal nations have the power to create a positive impact. We want to meet communities where they are and look for measureable ways to improve health through the following metrics:

Domain	Metric
Healthy Behaviors	Tobacco use
	Nutrition
	Physical Activity
Community Safety	Community Violence
Built Environment	Food quality
	Walkability, bike ability and transit use
	Housing affordability
Social/Economic Factors	Educational attainment
	Living wage
	Environmental Exposures
	Air quality
	Water quality

**4.How is the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge different from other prizes or challenges that already exist?**

The Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge focuses on public health and prevention approaches that are largely driven by the size of the population of the city or county. The goal is to make change not for a single condition or disease but with a more holistic approach to improving the overall health in a selected community. Also, the \$1.5-million-dollar pool of prize monies is larger than other related projects. The Challenge is a two-phase competition in which many communities are continually engaged and in which they share best practices with each other through an ongoing learning network. As a result of its inclusive and interactive design, the Challenge can have a much greater impact than most prize competitions.

**5.What is the “theory of change” for the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge?**

The Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge is trying to change the way a community thinks about health. Through a “health in all policies”, multi-sector and multidimensional approach, cities and counties can build an inclusive and economically vibrant community. The Challenge will use “a

learning communities” approach to share best practices throughout the course of the competition and to help all cities and counties become healthier by developing and sharing scalable models. The Challenge will be transformative with respect to how cities and counties view the critical importance of designing, building, and sustaining healthy, equitable communities. As a result of the Challenge, communities throughout the country will develop practical, evidence-based strategies that will improve measurable health outcomes and promote health and wellness, physical activity and social interaction. The Challenge will spark the best city and county health and wellness ideas, accelerate collaboration and community-wide involvement, and achieve measurable impact that can be scaled nationally.

#### **6. Who is eligible to participate?**

Cities, counties and tribal nations within specific population parameters are eligible to participate.

Two tiers of participants are defined based on population size:

Tier 1 – cities, counties and tribal nations with populations between 65,000 and 250,000.

Tier 2 – cities, counties and tribal nations with populations between 250,001 and 600,000.

If your city, county or tribal nation is smaller than 65,000 or larger than 600,000 you may still be eligible. Please see answers to questions 8-10 below.

#### **7. Are tribal nations eligible and is there a tribal population size minimum and/or maximum?**

Yes, federally recognized tribal nations are eligible as long as they meet one of the tier population ranges. Federally recognized tribal nations are defined as: “A federally recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs”. [Source: U.S. Department of the Interior- Indian Affairs: <http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/>]. The population of the tribal nation must fall within the two eligibility tiers.

#### **8. Our city (or county) is under 65,000 in population. Can we join with another city (or county) to meet the minimum population range for Tier 1?**

Yes, as long as you can confirm the population of the combined communities to be within the eligible range and meet all other RFP requirements (selection of domain(s) and metric(s), collection of letters of commitment, ability to collect data from both communities, etc.).

#### **9. Our city (or county) already collaborates with another city (or county) on some health-related issues. Can we apply as one entity?**

Yes, as long as the combined population is within the eligible range and all other requirements and expectations are met.

#### **10. Our city is larger than 600,000 in population. Can we apply with a focus on one community within our city?**

Yes, as long as you can confirm that the community has at least 65,000 residents (the minimum of population range) and that all other requirements and expectations can be met.

Your proposal, however, will still be classified as Tier 2, since your city is large.

#### **11. What is meant by a “community within a city”?**

A “community within a city” is meant to be a specific geographic region within the city. It could be defined by zip codes or small metropolis status, such as a village within a city. For a county

application, a city within a county may be selected. We refer to these as “segments” of the city/county in other questions. A segment cannot be defined by any sociodemographic characteristic, such as gender, age, race/ethnicity etc.

**12. Our city/county population is between 250,000 and 600,000 (Tier 2 range), but we plan to focus our project on a specific geographic segment that has a population between 65,000 and 250,000. Will our proposal be classified as Tier 1?**

No. Your proposal will still be classified at Tier 2 since your city is a medium-sized city by population.

**13. Why would a city or county want to participate in the Challenge – what are the benefits?**

For cities and counties intent on improving the health of their communities, the Challenge offers several benefits:

- Participation in an ongoing national learning network to collaborate and learn from other participating cities and counties
- Access to the Challenge’s website where relevant information and resources are available
- Opportunity to share stories about your unique project on your own city/county’s page on the Challenge’s website
- Receipt of a community engagement planning grant to assist with project implementation
- Potential to receive a financial prize in recognition of significant improvement as a result of the project.