

**Letter of Intent I.D:** 41852

**City:** Saint Paul, MN

**Legal Name of Applicant Organization:** City of Saint Paul

In May 2015, the Saint Paul community gathered for its annual week-long Placemaking Residency to focus on public health. Keynoting the event was Dr. Richard Jackson, Professor and Chair of Environmental Health Sciences at the School of Public Health at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Jackson posed the question of what it would look like if we had the opportunity to invest some portion of the resources we spend on acute care in building healthy communities.

Building on discussions sparked by Gil Penalosa at the 2014 Residency that Saint Paul should be a city that works for 8 year olds, 80 year olds and everyone in between, community workshops in 2015 focused on how health outcomes are impacted by the built environment.

- How do investments in sidewalks and bike paths—or the lack thereof—relate to patterns of hypertension and Type I diabetes?
- What is the relationship between resources spent on acute care to those invested in clean, safe and affordable housing?
- How would investments in the production and distribution of healthy locally grown food both build on the assets of immigrant communities and impact persistently high unemployment levels in some Saint Paul neighborhoods?

That work is continuing, particularly on the East Side of Saint Paul. The East Side, a multi-ethnic, mix-income community was heavily impacted by the loss of industrial employers in the 1980s. Over the past two decades, however, community leaders have been addressing the social determinants of health by:

- Reclaiming brownfields and repurposing them as modern employment centers;
- Planning and constructing complete streets and completing the city's Grand Round bike route;
- Creating a new nature sanctuary with walking and biking paths that link the neighborhood to the downtown;
- Developing youth driven community gardens and food production kitchens; and
- Financing new businesses, including ethnic groceries, a new co-op grocery and a spate of new restaurants.

Among the biggest challenges Saint Paul faces, however, are those associated with ensuring authentic community engagement around important issues such as these. New and growing ethnic and cultural communities bring different perspectives on public health, different traditions with respect to health care and different insights with respect to community development. Conversations on the East Side are more likely to raise questions about the health impacts of both our country's history of slavery and the current immigration debate. They are more likely to raise the possibility of building on the assets of Hmong farmers to shape a new economy. And they are more likely to lift up strong cultural traditions that support maternal and infant health, healthy eating and strong connections to the outdoors.

The Invest Health opportunity would allow Saint Paul to formalize the process of assessing key health indicators on the East Side and engaging the community in addressing those issues as far “upstream” as possible.

### Proposed Team

Members of Saint Paul’s team would include:

- *Catherine Penkert*, Innovation Specialist, City of Saint Paul. Catherine brings 13 years of experience leading projects and programs, facilitating cross-sector collaborative initiatives, securing resources, and evaluating outcomes for public and nonprofit organizations.
- *Deanna Abbott-Foster*, Executive Director, Dayton’s Bluff Community Council. Prior to her position with DBCC, Deanna was the Executive Director of Hope Community, Inc. in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis for over 15 years. There she led community engagement and revitalization efforts in of one of the city’s most diverse neighborhoods.
- *Diane Tran*, System Director of Neighborhood Integration, HealthEast. Diane has a strong background in consulting with leading organizations focused on building a healthier Minnesota.
- *Mario Hernandez*, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Latino Economic Development Center. He previously served in policy development and project coordination roles for the State of Minnesota and was executive director of La Escuelita.
- *Pakou Hang*, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Hmong American Farmers Association. Pakou grew up growing fruits and vegetables and now creates supply chains that link Hmong farmers with local chefs and institutionalized distribution networks. She is a highly regarded community organizer and recipient of the Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Award and a Bush Leadership Fellowship.

### Vision of Success

Our vision of success is that we will build on the good work being done across the Twin Cities and the country and ground it in a vibrant multi-ethnic community in ways that also inform the larger efforts. Among the key regional efforts that will inform our work are:

- *From Silos to Circles*: Over thirty organizations across the health care and human service continuum, led by Jan Malcolm at StratisHealth, are working to define and invest in policy and delivery innovations to meet the Triple Aim challenge of better quality, better population outcomes and lower cost. HealthEast is a key participant in From Silos to Circles.
- *LISC’s Healthy Futures Fund*: A question related to the relationship between affordable housing and health care was the impetus for the Healthy Futures Fund, a new investment vehicle developed by LISC in partnership with Morgan Stanley and the Kresge Foundation. HFF is bringing together grant, loan and equity capital to build affordable housing and community health centers as well as fund services that link them in places where one of the two already exist. Twin Cities LISC would actively support the Invest Health initiative.