# Request for Applications

**2026 Catalyst Awards**

## Regional Action Networks: Catalyzing Collaboration Across Communities

This document was last updated on January 30, 2026.

**IMPORTANT UPDATE: In consideration of severe weather conditions impacting several regions, the deadline for the Catalyst Awards has been extended. The new deadline is Wednesday, February 11 at 11:59 pm PT. Stay safe and reach out to info@commonhealthcoalition.org with any questions.**

## Introduction

The Catalyst Awards are an initiative of the Common Health Challenge, an annual call-to-action for Common Health Coalition members and partners to rally around a critical health system-wide issue for which the solution relies on improved partnership between health care and public health. **Awards will fund organizations to start, expand, or scale regional networks built on strong health care-public health partnerships and adapted from proven models.** Applicants will propose regionally based initiatives that can demonstrate significant progress in one year and support the establishment of sustainable networks coordinating to drive better partnership and better outcomes.

The goal is to identify, amplify, and facilitate replication of innovations already happening across the country. Awardees will lead a movement of organizations committed to doing away with existing siloes that hinder progress and expanding effective work happening at the intersection of health care and public health. These commitments include action to:

- Establish and codify collaboration
- More easily get staff where and when they are needed
- Share data in real time to advance equitable outcomes
- Expand electronic disease reporting
- Standardize readiness across the healthcare system
- Advance existing federal efforts at the intersection of health care and public health

## Background

The Common Health Coalition brings together America's leading health organizations in pursuit of a reimagined health system: one in which the nation's health care and public health systems no longer work in parallel, but hand in hand. Health care and public health institutions responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by forging novel, impactful partnerships. Formal agreements for information and resource sharing were established, emergency response plans

were developed and deployed, data was shared more readily, and the lifesaving functions of infectious disease detections systems demonstrated.

The Common Health Coalition was formed to cement these types of crisis-driven strategies into existing infrastructure and strengthen the partnership between public health and healthcare systems, particularly to advance health equity.

The second annual Common Health Challenge spotlights Regional Action Networks (RAN) as critical groups of organizations and agencies working across borders to build sustainable systems which respond to changing landscapes and better the health of those in their care. While action through resource scarcity has long been the operating standard of state and local initiatives, RANs have the potential to reshape how public health and health care systems interact, acknowledging that health crises don't respect borders and allowing organizations to pool and share valuable resources.

The 2026 Common Health Challenge supports communities throughout the U.S. by advancing, encouraging, and amplifying regional collaborative initiatives that bridge the divides between health care and public health.

Find more information about the Common Health Coalition, our partners, and the annual Challenge at: www.commonhealthcoalition.org.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for a 2026 Catalyst Award, an organization must be:

1. located in and conducting its activities in the United States or a U.S. territory
    a. The United States includes the 48 contiguous states, Hawaii, Alaska, and Washington D.C.
    b. U.S. territories include Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa

2. an educational institution, nonprofit organization, for-profit organization, State or Local government entity, Tribal entity, Public Housing Authority, Community-based organization, or Faith-based organization
    a. Public or State controlled institutions of Higher Education
    b. Private Institutions of Higher Education
    c. Independent School Districts
    d. Nonprofits with 501(c)3 Status
    e. Nonprofits without 501(c)3 Status
    f. Health care / public health organizations
    g. State / County / City or Township / Special District Governments
    h. Indian / Native American Tribal Governments, Tribal organizations
    i. Public Housing Authorities / Indian Housing Authorities

   j. Community-based / Faith-based organizations

3. part of a Regional Action Network (RAN) - a network of health care and public health organizations working across borders (intrastate or interstate) with at least one of these four key pillars already in place:
   a. Cross-sector coordination anchored through a neutral backbone organization
   b. Investments shared across the group
   c. Regional data sharing infrastructure and shared equity goals
   d. A meaningful community engagement strategy with bidirectional communications

4. Regional scope and impact through its RAN which, at a minimum, includes either:
   a. three or more towns, counties, cities, tribes, or territories coordinating through the RAN
   b. three or more states coordinating through the RAN
   c. two or more regions coordinating through the RAN
      i. **Note:** accepted geographic regions may not always follow distinct local, state, or national borders. Ex. the DMV region describes the larger metropolitan area in Washington D.C., Maryland, and northern Virginia but does not follow distinct county or state borders

5. a Common Health Coalition member
   a. Membership is **free** and signifies that your organization is committed to taking action to advance health care and public health partnerships in the United States. Participating in the Challenge is one way to be eligible for membership. Find out more information about Coalition membership at www.commonhealthcoalition.org/join-us/.

**Note:** 2025 Catalyst Awardee organizations are not eligible to apply. This is because 2025 awards will still be active at the time of award for 2026 awardees.

Organizations that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the 2026 Challenge but are interested in supporting its goals are encouraged to reach out to info@commonhealthcoalition.org. We also invite all Coalition partners to keep an eye out for opportunities to “take the challenge” - a call to action to advance activities aligned with the Challenge’s focus area within their own communities.

## Self-Check Eligibility Assessment

A self-check eligibility assessment is a required submission component of your final application. A link to complete the assessment is on the Common Health Coalition website - here.

The following is only a copy of the self-check eligibility assessment form. Applicants **must** complete the form online before submitting their final application package.

1. Is the lead applicant organization located in the United States or a U.S. territory?

   a. Yes
   b. No
2. Will activities delivered by the lead applicant organization's Regional Action Network (RAN) model be conducted in the United States or a U.S. territory?
   a. Yes
   b. No
3. Is the lead applicant organization an educational institution, nonprofit organization, for-profit organization, State or Local government entity, Tribal entity, Public Housing Authority, Community-based organization, or Faith-based organization?
   a. Yes
   b. No
4. Does the RAN have in place 1 or more of the 4 key pillars identified? 1) Cross-sector coordination anchored through a neutral backbone organization, 2) shared investments across partners, 3) a regional data sharing infrastructure with shared equity goals, 4) a meaningful communications strategy with bidirectional communication.
   a. Yes
   b. No
5. Does the RAN's geographic scope include at least three or more towns, counties, cities, tribes, or territories; three or more states; or, two or more regions that are being coordinated through the RAN?
   a. Yes
   b. No
6. Is the lead applicant a Common Health Coalition member?
   a. Yes
   b. No

## Key Dates

| | |
|---|---|
| December 15, 2025 | Challenge '26 launch |
| December - January | Self-Check Eligibility Assessment available |
| January 7, 2026 | Catalyst Awards informational webinar<br>• Webinar recording and slides available online |
| January 9 - 23, 2026 | Office Hours, Wed & Fri 4-4:30 pm ET<br>• Join here |
| February 11, 2026 | Catalyst Awards applications due by 11:59 pm PT<br>**NOTE:** *This deadline was extended from the original deadline of Feb 2 due to severe weather impacting several regions* |

| | |
|---|---|
| March 16, 2026 | Catalyst Award recipients announced |
| Late March 2026 | Community of Practice orientation |
| Late March 2026 | Catalyst Awardee orientation |
| April 1, 2026 | Award implementation period start date |
| June 2026 | Bi-monthly (every other) awardee check-ins begin |
| July 2026 | Quarterly Community of Practice meeting |
| October 2026 | Quarterly Community of Practice meeting |
| December 2026 | Common Health Coalition annual meeting |
| January 2027 | Quarterly Community of Practice meeting |
| March 2027 | Final Community of Practice meeting & Catalyst Awardee Impact Presentations |
| March 31, 2027 | Award implementation period end date |
| April 30, 2027 | Final report due |

## Allowable Use of Award Funds

The Coalition expects Catalyst Awardees will use funds for activities that result in tangible progress in forming or strengthening Regional Action Networks working across borders to respond to emerging health issues and improve outcomes for patients and communities. The Coalition welcomes innovative ideas from applicants that align with the purpose of the 2026 Challenge.

Activity examples include:

- Catalyze RAN ambitions to scale either geographically or in terms of cross-sector partnerships
- Formalize the role of a neutral backbone organization to anchor cross-sector coordination across the RAN
- Build new relationships which advance a mutual commitment to establishing shared investments
- Facilitate the development and implementation of data sharing agreements between public health and health care organizations
- Develop or implement technology and digital infrastructure to support regional data sharing
- Formalize shared equity goals built on data and a collective focus to address critical gaps at the intersection of public health and health care

- Utilize local, frontline data - such as that from community health workers - as early/ real-time detection for exacerbation of health issues in the region and use this information to drive both policy and clinical guidelines interventions
- Develop a community engagement strategy which prioritizes bidirectional communications

The list above is not exhaustive, and it is possible for an awardee to implement multiple activities with the resources provided.

Catalyst Award funds cannot be used for:

- capital investments
- equipment purchases greater than $5,000
- client medical services (e.g. medications, treatment, medical equipment)
- lobbying activities

## Award Implementation Period

April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027 (12 months)

## Application

Applications are due by **Wednesday, February 11 at 11:59 pm PT**. Use the application template provided to complete your application.

The application must be submitted via e-mail to info@commonhealthcoalition.org. Use the subject line **"Catalyst Award 2026 Application – [Lead Applicant Organization Name]"**.

Your application must not exceed 6 pages total. Text size must not be less than 11-point font. You can use larger sized fonts as desired (ex. section header). Use a standard font such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman.

Save the complete, up to 6-page application, as a PDF. Name the document as: **"Catalyst Application – [Lead Applicant Organization Name] – [Date Submitted, M/DD format]"**.

Your application must include:

- First Name of application Point of Contact (POC)
- Last Name of application POC
- Application POC Title
- Email of application POC
- First name of application Financial POC
- Last name of application Financial POC

- Email of application Financial POC
- First name of Organizational Signatory
- Last name of Organizational Signatory
- E-mail of Organizational Signatory
- Name of lead [applicant] organization
- State of lead [applicant] organization
- Lead [applicant] Organizational EIN
- Lead [applicant] Organization type – select all that apply:
    - Public or State controlled Institution of Higher Education
    - Private Institution of Higher Education
    - Independent School District
    - Nonprofit organization with 501(c)3 Status
    - Nonprofit organization without 501(c)3 Status
    - Health care organization
    - Public health organization
    - State or Local government entity
    - Tribal entity
    - Public Housing Authority
    - Social Services organization
    - Community-based organization
    - Faith-based organization
    - Other: [fill in]
- Lead [applicant] Organization annual operating budget – drop-down menu / select from the following
    - <$1M
    - $1M - $10M
    - $10M - $25M

    - $25M-$50M
    - >$50M
- Regional Action Network (RAN) Name
- RAN area of service – drop-down menu / select from the following
    - Serves three or more towns, counties, cities, tribes, or territories through a coordinated RAN
    - Serves three or more states through a coordinated RAN
    - Serves two or more regions through a coordinated RAN
- A response to 5 open-ended questions
    - Describe the Regional Action Network including its area of service, focus area(s), and history.
        - Area of service refers to the geographic areas included in the RAN
        - Focus area(s) refer to the specific gaps in health care and public health delivery being addressed by the RAN
        - RAN history refers to information about the creation of the RAN and key activities it has conducted to advance its work
    - Describe the RAN's capacity to effectively implement cross-sector coordination that addresses critical gaps at the intersection of health care and public health systems.
        - Identify key personnel and describe their role and experience.
        - Highlight Community Health Worker partners (if applicable).
        - Include details on existing efforts or future plans specific to the 4 pillars of an effective RAN.
            - **Backbone**: Anchor cross-sector coordination through a neutral backbone organization and shared priorities
            - **Funding**: Build partnerships to unlock new, shared investments
            - **Data**: Establish regional data sharing infrastructure and shared equity goals
            - **Community**: Develop a strategy for meaningful engagement and bidirectional communications

    - Describe ways in which the RAN advances/plans to advance health equity. Use specific examples and/or data to highlight critical inequities within the RAN's area of service that will be addressed.
    - Describe how the RAN will actively scale in terms of geography or cross-sector partnerships.
        - If the RAN does not include existing CHW capacity, describe plans to integrate a CHW component (if applicable).
    - Describe the potential impact of the RAN on strengthening collaborations that address critical systems gaps in the area of service. What will success look like and how will it be measured?
- Budget narrative
    - Describe how the Catalyst Award funds will be used to support the RAN's activities to address critical gaps at the intersection of public health and health care and advance a more equitable, resilient health system.
- Other attachments (*see "Supporting Documents" for more information)*:
    - Self Check Eligibility Assessment (Online form, submitted prior to application)
    - Budget
    - RAN organization chart
    - Project activities timeline
    - SMART evaluation chart
    - IRS non-profit determination letter, if applicable
    - Fiscal sponsorship agreement / MOU, if applicable
    - Letter(s) of support (maximum 5), if applicable

## Budget

Use the budget template provided. Submit the budget as a separate attachment from the application form as either an Excel or PDF file.

Catalyst Awards may range from $100,000 to $150,000.

Funds allocated to support key personnel may include their hourly / salary wage and fringe benefits.

In the travel and lodging section of the budget template, please include funds for up to 2 persons from the lead applicant organization to attend the Common Health Coalition annual meeting. Assume travel by train or plane, 2-night stay in hotel lodging, and other reasonable travel expenses such as ground transportation and baggage fees.

Funds may be used for indirect costs, but indirect costs must not exceed 10% of the total budget. Indirect costs, if claimed, are included in the total amount awarded. Waiving collection of indirect costs will not provide an advantage in the application review process (*see, 'Application Review Criteria'*).

Catalyst Award funds cannot be used for:

- capital investments
- equipment purchases greater than $5,000
- client medical services (e.g. medications, treatment, medical equipment)
- lobbying activities

## Supporting Documents

The following 5 documents must be submitted with your Catalyst Award. They do not count toward your six-page application limit.

- Self-Check Eligibility Assessment (Online form, submitted prior to application)
- Budget, template provided
- RAN organization chart
- Project activities timeline
- SMART evaluation chart

---

These 2 documents should be submitted with your Catalyst Award, if applicable. They do not count toward your six-page application limit.

- IRS non-profit determination letter
- Fiscal sponsorship agreement or MOU

**Note:** We only require these documents if they are applicable to the lead applicant organization

---

These documents are optional. They do not count toward your six-page application limit. Please submit letters of support from no more than 5 supporting organizations and combine all letters of support into one document for submission.

- Letter(s) of support (maximum 5)

## Application Review Criteria

Applications will be scored by a panel of reviewers. At least 3 reviewers will score each application.

An application can receive a maximum of 20 points from each reviewer. Reviewers will have access to the complete application submitted and supporting documents. They will not consider content included in any links to other sources outside of the application package (ex. organization website, YouTube video, journal article, etc.). They will provide a score for each of the following review categories:

- Past Performance (3 points maximum)
  - Does the lead applicant have a proven track record in community health, public health collaboration, or related initiatives?

- RAN Readiness (3 points maximum)
  - Is it likely the RAN can effectively implement cross-border initiatives that strengthen collaborations between health care and public health systems?
  - Do the key personnel identified have the skills and capacity to implement the activities described?

- Commitment to Equity (3 points maximum)
  - Does the RAN demonstrate a shared commitment to health equity?
  - Is it likely RAN activities will address a critical gap in care delivery that reduces inequities in access, care, and/or health outcomes?

- Partner Resource Utilization Plan (3 points maximum)
  - Has the applicant clearly described the partnerships that will be formed or enhanced?
  - Are specific activities identified that are relevant and feasible for the applicant to implement?
  - Does the plan include CHW integration in its described partnerships and activities?

- Budget Narrative (3 points maximum)
  - Is the budget narrative clear? Has enough detail been provided to adequately understand how the Award funds will be utilized?
  - Does the budget narrative align with the activities described?

- Impact (5 points maximum)
  - Is it likely the activities described will result in tangible progress in forming or enhancing a Regional Action Network equipped to respond to emerging health issues in ways which improve outcomes for patients and communities?

The highest scoring applicants will be considered for an award. The Coalition may consider the RAN' geographic scope, lead applicant organization type, and critical system gaps addressed in addition to criteria for past performance, RAN readiness, commitment to equity, partner resource utilization plans and impact when making final award decisions to ensure a diversity of awardees and impacted communities.

**Note:** Particular priority will be given to seeding and uplifting Regional Action Networks in parts of the country where such collaborations are not yet formalized.

## Awardee Requirements

Catalyst Awardees are expected to:

- Sign a Subrecipient Contract Agreement
- Enroll a payment account to receive Award funds
- Attend a virtual awardee orientation
- Utilize Catalyst Award funds to implement the activities proposed in the application
    - Report to CHC any changes in project budget or activities
- Collaborate with Common Health Coalition to determine organizational technical assistance needs to advance public health and health care partnerships
- Participate in a quarterly Community of Practice. Participation includes:
    - Attending virtual meetings
    - Presenting at a meeting about your RAN's project work
    - Engaging in discussion, polls, and exercises during meetings
    - Submitting community forum posts and/or responding to forum posts made by other participants
    - Sharing resources for the CoP resource directory
- Submit bi-monthly (every other month) project check-ins via e-mail (*more information below in the section, 'Evaluation and Reporting')*
- Participate in a recorded video to be shared at the Common Health Coalition annual meeting
    - Recordings are conducted virtually
- Contribute to Challenge initiatives on a quarterly basis
    - Contributions might look like sharing a success story, writing an article in a newsletter, presenting at a webinar, participating in a media interview, or other options
- Share lessons learned and successes at a national presentation or other identified event (ex. CHC annual meeting, APHA annual conference)

## Evaluation and Reporting

RAN evaluation plans should be included in the SMART chart submitted with your application. It is not a requirement that full capacity evaluation be in place at the time of application, particularly if the project aims to implement or enhance evaluation activities.

Required reporting to the Coalition will include:

- Confirmation of receipt of award funds
- Bi-monthly (every other month) project check-ins submitted via e-mail
    - The check-in template includes 3 questions:
        - Is the project progressing as expected? If not, what are the barriers preventing progress?
        - Is there specific technical assistance the Coalition can provide to support the project?
        - Is there a success story or anything else about the project's progress or impact you'd like to share?
    - Awardees can opt to conduct check-ins via phone or video teleconference if preferred
- Catalyst Awardee highlight reel participation (recorded video for the CHC annual meeting)
- Final report
    - A final report template will be provided in Q1 of the Catalyst Award project period. Questions will reflect the themes below.

The Coalition does not aim to dictate the evaluation goals, methodologies, structure, or metrics of the RAN. To the extent possible, from data submitted we hope to better understand how the Catalyst Award contributes to:

- **Expanded Reach**
    - New clients, partners, geographies, etc. served
        - How did the CA increase the RANs capacity to serve more …?
    - New issues addressed
        - How did the CA increase the RANs capacity to address …?
- **Strengthened Partnerships**
    - New partnerships and/or agreements established
        - How did the CA support the strengthening of partnerships to …?
    - % of new partnerships and/or agreements established through a formal mechanism (such as an MOU)
        - How did the CA facilitate the development of formal agreements between RAN partners to …?
- **Sustainable Funding**
    - New funding streams unlocked
        - How did the CA catalyze new funding opportunities for RAN activities?

    - New funder relationships established
        - How did the CA facilitate opportunities for new funder relationships?
    - New sustainability plans established
        - How did the CA increase the RANs capacity to develop and/or enhance sustainability plans?
- **Partner Perspectives**
    - New referrals made
        - How did the CA increase the RANs capacity for collaboration and/or coordination to address critical system gaps?
    - Client/partner satisfaction data
        - How did the CA increase the RANs capacity to deliver impact?
        - As demonstrated by real success stories from clients served, partners collaborated with, communities touched, etc.

## Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be available during the project period to all Catalyst Awardees. Technical assistance needs can be communicated in awardee bi-monthly check-ins or requested at any time. Technical assistance is available for the following activities:

- Network design, governance, and structure
- Data sharing structure and interoperability
- Strategy development: regional population health assessments
- Funding and sustainability
- CHW integration
- Proven model implementation
- Policy and advocacy support
- Evaluation and impact
- Communications and partnerships
- Equity

Technical assistance not only includes discussion, guidance, and the sharing of actionable resources but also hands-on assistance; for example, creating a template, facilitating a partner conversation as a neutral convener, reviewing a RAN document or process, etc.

## Contact

Reach out to info@commonhealthcoalition.org with any questions.

See *'Key Dates'* section for information about office hours during the application period.

## Application Checklist

- Complete the self-check eligibility assessment form online

    - Confirm receipt of self-check eligibility assessment result
    - Gather IRS nonprofit determination letter, if applicable
    - Gather fiscal sponsorship agreement / MOU, if applicable
- Review Key Dates and Awardee Requirements
    - Confirm the lead applicant's capacity to meet identified deadlines and expectations
- Review the information required for the application
    - Gather required information about the organization
        - Designate a point-of-contact. This person will receive future communications about the application status and Awards
    - Draft responses to each of the 5 open-ended questions
    - Draft a budget narrative
- Create an application package for submission. Follow the instructions in the section *'Application'.*
    - Include the required lead applicant organizational and RAN information
    - Include responses to the 5 open-ended questions
    - Include the budget narrative
    - Review the complete application template document to ensure it meets all requirements (ex. Font type, size, and maximum page length) and includes all required information
    - Save the complete application as a PDF
        - Name the document as: "Catalyst Application – [Organization Name] – [Date Submitted, M/DD format]"
- Create a budget using the budget template provided
    - Awards will range from $100,000 - $150,000
    - Indirect costs must not exceed 10% of the total budget
    - Confirm no ineligible expenses are included in the budget. *See, 'Allowable Use of Award Funds' or 'Budget' sections*
    - Save the budget as an Excel or PDF
- Create a RAN organizational chart
    - Save as a PDF
- Create a Project Activities Timeline
    - Save as a PDF
- Create a SMART Evaluation Chart
    - Save as a PDF
- Gather letters of support from key partners, if desired
    - Save letters of support as one PDF (ex. if there are 3 letters of support, they should be included in 1 PDF for submission)

- Submit the following via e-mail to info@commonhealthcoalition.org by **February 11 at 11:59 pm PT**
  - Application (not exceeding 6 pages total) in PDF
  - Budget in Excel or PDF
  - RAN organization chart in PDF
  - Project activities timeline in PDF
  - SMART evaluation chart in PDF
  - Letters of support, if applicable, in 1 PDF
  - IRS nonprofit determination letter, if applicable, in PDF
  - Fiscal sponsorship agreement or MOU, if applicable, in PDF
  - Use the subject line: Catalyst Award 2026 Application – [Organization Name]

## Sample Submission

| | |
|---|---|
| **To** | info@commonhealthcoalition.org |
| **Cc** | *[Copy relevant key stakeholders to your application, as applicable]* |
| **Subject** | Catalyst Award 2026 Application - Institute for Public Health Innovation |
| **Attachments** | Application; Budget; Organizational Chart; Timeline; SMART Evaluation; IRS nonprofit letter; Letters of Support |

Dear Lauren,

The Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI) is pleased to submit an application for the 2026 Catalyst Awards.

Attached, required documents include:

1. Application (6-pages, PDF)
2. Budget (Excel)
3. RAN organization chart (PDF)
4. Project activities timeline (PDF)
5. SMART evaluation chart (PDF)

Also submitted, as applicable to IPHI, is the organization's IRS nonprofit determination letter (PDF).

And 4 regional partners have written letters of support to further strengthen our RANs application. (All letters of support have been combined into a single PDF, attached).

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to award decisions in March.

Peter Smith

Development Manager
Institute for Public Health Innovation