

# Civic Action

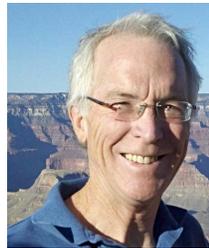
*A monthly update from the National Civic League*

March 2016

## Improving Health Equity Is Essential: Tell Us Your Story and Win \$3,000

*By Doug Linkhart, President of NCL*

Health equity is a key factor in health outcomes in the U.S.—and [we're looking for examples of local efforts that make a difference.](#)



There is a growing recognition that health outcomes are affected dramatically by behavior and environment and not just genetic makeup or other inherent traits. According to the Centers for Disease Control, income and education levels, along with personal behavior, cause wide disparities in health outcomes among different communities in the U.S. A recent CDC study showed that mortality rates were 40% higher for low-income populations compared to people with higher incomes.

Other factors, like differences in access to health care, levels of environmental pollution, and crime rates also account for differences in health outcomes. [Healthy People 2020](#) cites five areas that are critical to our health: economic stability, education, social & community context, health care, and neighborhood/built environment.

Increasingly, governments at all levels are seeking to address underlying factors like access to care and environment as a means of improving health equity to help millions of people live better, longer lives. Many cities and counties are conducting community health improvement plans and health impact assessments to identify key factors and solutions to address the social determinants of health.

### In This Issue

[Apply to Win \\$3,000](#)

[NCL Partners with Kellogg Foundation!](#)

[Get Free NCR Article - Dubuque's Culture of Engagement](#)

### Apply for the RWJF-NCL Health Equity Award

Tell us how you're improving health equity to win the RWJF-NCL Health Equity Award and \$3,000. Deadline for 2016 applications is April 1. [APPLY TODAY](#)

### Quick Links

[National Civic League](#)

[All-America City Award](#)

[Apply for RWJF-NCL Health Equity Award](#)

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The National Civic League would like to recognize some of these local efforts to address health disparities. With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,

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we have established an award to recognize individuals who have successfully implemented a systems-change approach to reduce health disparities within the past two years related to one or more of the following areas: access to quality care, education, employment, income, community environment, housing, and public safety. [Winners will receive \\$3,000 to spend as they wish.](#)

For more information or to nominate someone for this award, please visit <http://www.nationalcivicleague.org/rwjf-ncl-health-equity-award/> . **Hurry!** The deadline for nominations is April 1, 2016!

### **NCL Partners with Kellogg Foundation Around Racial Healing**

In January, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation announced their newest effort focused on racial equity: Truth,



Racial Healing and Transformation. National Civic League is proud to partner with Kellogg in supporting this incredibly critical work. This work aims to build upon the momentum in cities across the United States to openly discuss and take action to address racial disparities in our country. NCL will be working with WKKF on this initiative in several capacities including highlighting this important work at the 2016 All-America City Awards.

Part of this effort will be challenging the false idea of a "hierarchy of human value" so we can ensure all people can heal and thrive in their communities. Take a moment and share your story, in your words and your own voice about "how you see yourself" vs. "how some people see you" to help confront stereotypes, labels, and misperceptions. Visit [#RemixTheNarrative](#) to share your story and learn more.

### **Creating a Culture of Engagement in Dubuque, IA** *(A National Civic Review Case Study)*

In the early 1980s, Dubuque, IA, struggled with one of the country's highest unemployment rates and faced the potential of a mass population exodus. In the winter issue of the National Civic Review, NCL's Sarah Lipscomb tells Dubuque's inspiring story of community change. "Spurred by a depressed economy, Dubuque leveraged partnerships and citizens' strengths to

put the city back on the map," she writes. "The evolution of their visioning process to address challenges and emphasize partnerships has led to broader engagement and more sustainable



Dubuque\_ Iowa. Photo by yark64\_ Flickr.

solutions for the community at large." Today Dubuque is considered a success story and a leader when it comes to sustainable economic development and collaborative problem-solving. Read more about Dubuque's ongoing efforts to be a community where "where people feel respected, valued, and engaged." [Read the article](#)

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