



Environmental Health Watch and Partners Receive BUILD Health Challenge Award to Support Food Justice in Central and Kinsman Neighborhoods of Cleveland

CLEVELAND, OH – MAY 23, 2023 – The city of Cleveland has been selected as one of 13 communities across the United States to receive awards from The BUILD Health Challenge for its 2023-2026 term. An innovative funding collaborative and award program, BUILD puts multi-sector, community-driven partnerships at the center of health to reduce health disparities caused by system-based or social inequity.

Cleveland’s BUILD project is entitled “Race, Food and Justice: Resident-led change to support a sustainable local food system” and is led by Environmental Health Watch in partnership with the Central Residents, Cleveland Department of Public Health; Sisters of Charity Health System; The FARE Project; Loiter East Cleveland and FreeThinkers.

The collaborative project will receive \$300,000 in funding over the next 3 years and additional resources to continue supporting food justice work in the Central and Kinsman neighborhoods, which saw the closure of the only full-service grocery store in Central in 2019. Solutions led and developed by residents, stakeholder organizations and representatives from local institutions will be funded by the BUILD award, which may include:

- Food co-op built, owned, operated, and managed by local residents.
- Community farmers network
- Health food café
- Food jobs pipeline that connects to food-related training and employment to create entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Advocacy and policy change

“The City of Cleveland is honored to be selected as one of the 13 communities to receive recognition, funding and support from BUILD,” said Justin M. Bibb, Mayor of Cleveland. “BUILD is a program that will help us create a more equitable city by providing resources where our residents need them the most. This type of systems-level change is necessary to advance healthy communities throughout our city. I am excited to see what’s ahead from our BUILD team here in Cleveland.”

The BUILD Health Challenge is a unique national program focusing on bold, upstream, integrated, local, and data-driven projects that can improve community health. The BUILD Health Challenge award provides funding, capacity building support, and participation in a national learning network to enhance our local collaborative partnership and address our community’s most pressing health challenges. With a specific focus on strengthening cross-sector and community-driven partnerships, BUILD awards are designed to support collaborations ready to put bold, upstream, integrated, local, data-driven plans into action.

“We are so grateful to BUILD for its support and for the longstanding commitment of our partners and resident leaders.

This award would not be possible without matching funds and in-kind support from the Sisters of Charity Health System, as well as the hard work of the steering committee,” said Kim Foreman, chief executive officer of Environmental Health Watch. “Together, we are committed to ending food apartheid through changing systems and amplifying community voice in the Central and Kinsman neighborhoods.”

About the BUILD Health Challenge

The BUILD Health Challenge is made possible with the support of: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, de Beaumont Foundation, Episcopal Health Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, Missouri Foundation for Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Trinity Health, Vitalyst Health Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

About Environmental Health Watch

Environmental Health Watch is one of Northeast Ohio’s longest standing environmental justice organizations. Since its incorporation, Environmental Health Watch has engaged and convened concerned citizens and representatives regarding important and evolving environmental justice issues.

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