

Carolyn Boone Lewis Award for Improving Health Outcomes

Application Opens to Members: 9/4/2026

Application Deadline: 12/4/2026

Notification of Awards: 5/3/2027

Background and Directions

The American Hospital Association is pleased to announce a new award: the Carolyn Boone Lewis Award for Improving Health Outcomes. This prestigious award will recognize excellence in applying data-informed strategies to effectively improve health outcomes for all. Hospitals and health systems have an opportunity to demonstrate how they are implementing promising practices that reduce disparities in health outcomes.

Eligible hospitals and health systems must be AHA members in good standing. One winner and two finalists will be selected for the Carolyn Boone Lewis Award for Improving Health Outcomes.

Award overview:

Applicants should describe how their organization used data to identify disparities in health outcomes, designed and implemented targeted strategies to address those disparities, and measured progress over time. Applicants should clearly articulate the problem they seek to address. Responses should emphasize measurable impact for populations experiencing poor or disparate outcomes. Strategies or solutions implemented should describe the actions taken, who was involved, and how the strategies were designed, adapted or scaled.

Applicants should provide an overview of how their organization has designed and implemented strategies to improve health outcomes for all, including the relevant elements below:

- **Collection and use of data:** Explain how your organization collects, stratifies and applies quantitative and qualitative data to identify disparities and inform the design of interventions.
- **Clearly defined disparities:** Disparities are measurable differences in health outcomes across populations, such as a higher burden of illness, injury, disability or mortality experienced by one group relative to another. Describe the identified disparities, the populations affected, and the data or information that demonstrated the need for action.
- **Community collaboration for solutions:** Explain how your organization effectively partners with community-based organizations and integrates their insights. Describe how these partnerships support the co-design and implementation of solutions that improve health outcomes and build trust with the community.
- **Person-centered care:**
 - Describe how your organization partners with impacted communities and the workforce to co-design improvements, using patient voice as a data source (e.g., focus groups, storytelling, patient experience data, consumer preference data).
 - Describe how your organization improves patient engagement and health outcomes, including efforts related to accessibility and disability inclusion, health literacy, building strong trust and communication, and other patient-centered approaches.

- **Data demonstrating measurable impact:** Provide evidence of results, such as outcome improvements, trends over time, or progress toward stated goals. Include both quantitative and qualitative data where appropriate.

Factors for Consideration

Applications should clearly highlight:

- **Quantifiable impact:** Demonstrate how the work has made a measurable difference within and across your hospital, health system and communities served. The review committee values evidence drawn from both long-sustained strategies and new, innovative initiatives, including:
 - Health outcome metrics
 - Quality and safety measures
 - Documented results achieved
 - Impact on patients and communities
 - Patient focus group data
- **Clear connection to improved health outcomes:** Describe how the strategies led to improved health outcomes, using data, examples or brief case stories to demonstrate progress.
- **Trust and communication:** Describe how organizational strategies contributed to building trust and strong communication, including intentional workforce engagement and training and leadership accountability and co-ownership of goals related to reducing disparities in health outcomes. Trust and communication can apply to:
 - a. Patient-provider
 - b. Workforce empowerment
 - c. Institutional trust and connection with community members/organizations
 - d. Instances of rebuilding and repairing trust crucial to improving health outcomes of a specific group experiencing disparities

Requirements

- **Responses to each question are limited to 500 words.**
- Applicants may include one image per question, if it aids in storytelling.
- We encourage applicants to submit supplemental materials, such as dashboards and scorecards. Brief reports up to **10** pages long may also be submitted. Supplemental documents must be limited to **20** pages total.
- All supplemental materials should be uploaded with this online application by 12/4/2026.

Submission Deadline: Please submit your online application and supplements by 12/4/2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Questions can be directed to CBLHealthOutcomes@aha.org.

*1. Please provide your organization's contact information.

o Organization Name _____

o City and State _____

- o Contact Name _____
- o Title _____
- o Email _____
- o Telephone _____

*2. What is the total number of licensed beds in your hospital/health system?

*3. How many hospitals are part of your health system?

*4. What is the geographical footprint of your organization?

*5. What was your total operating revenue in the last fiscal year?

Application Question 1: Identifying Differences in Health Outcomes through Data

Describe how your organization collects, validates and analyzes data to identify one or more disparities in health outcomes. Your response may include:

- **Data Collection and Validation**
 - What data are collected?
 - How are data validated, stratified and analyzed to identify gaps or differences in care and outcomes?
 - How do you identify populations experiencing disparities in health outcomes?
 - How do front-line staff contribute to identifying disparities through lived experience and operational insight?
- **Use of Data to Drive Action**
 - Describe how data are used to:
 - Identify and prioritize disparities and areas for improvement
 - Inform dashboards, scorecards or reporting structures
 - Support strategic and operational decision making
 - Design, implement and evaluate interventions

Application Question 2: Designing Data-informed Strategies to Improve Health Outcomes

Describe the strategies your organization designed and implemented to improve the identified disparate health outcomes. Your response may include:

- How strategies were selected and designed based on data and identified needs
- How strategies were tied to organizational policies and assigned leadership to ensure accountability
- How staff were prepared, supported and held accountable
- How person-centered care was incorporated (e.g., patient engagement, accessibility, health literacy)
- Barriers or challenges and how they were addressed

Application Question 3: Partnering Beyond the Hospital to Strengthen Impact

Describe how your organization partnered with community-based organizations or other external partners to address the identified disparities, including how these partnerships directly targeted non-clinical factors that influence health and overall well-being. Your response may include:

- Examples of co-designed initiatives or engagement strategies and actionable outcomes that resulted from partnerships with community organizations and voices (e.g., specific populations, formal 501c3 non-profits, informal community partners, patient and family advisory councils, advocates)
- Workforce roles in co-designing with community partners
- The role of community partners in implementation or decision making
- How these partnerships strengthened or expanded the overall impact of your strategy

Application Question 4: Measuring Impact and Progress Over Time

Describe how your organization measured the impact of the strategies and the outcomes achieved, including baseline measurements. Your response may include:

- Metrics and methods used to measure progress and outcomes
- Quantitative and qualitative results, including trends over time and patient testimonials, where available
- Evidence linking workforce actions to outcome improvements
- Evidence of meaningful improvement in health outcomes, quality, safety or patient experience
- Organizational policies or data that suggest improvement in trust between the hospital or health system and the patients and communities served

Application Question 5: Innovation

This section allows applicants to highlight innovation and new approaches that reduce health disparities. Your response may include:

- One new or novel process, strategy, workforce model or initiative your organization implemented with the sole purpose of improving health outcomes for an identified population
- How this effort differed from previous work
- Realized or anticipated long-term impact on care delivery and health outcomes
- How this work will be sustained and embedded into organizational strategy or culture
- Demonstrated improved financial performance (e.g., cost avoidance, increased revenue through improved care delivery, etc.)

Supplemental Materials (Optional)

Applicants are encouraged to submit supplemental materials that further demonstrate progress in reducing disparities in health outcomes (e.g., dashboards, scorecards or evaluation reports). Please limit supplemental materials to **five** submissions (no more than 20 pages) in total.