

Phase II Essay Instructions (Do not delete)

The RWJF Culture of Health Prize recognizes communities that have come together around a commitment to health, opportunity, and equity through collaboration and inclusion, especially with historically marginalized populations and those facing the greatest barriers to good health. The Phase II application provides an opportunity for you to add to your Phase I Essay in order to broaden and deepen judges' understanding of how your community's work addresses all six Prize criteria.

Since judges will carefully and systematically review each community's Phase I and Phase II submissions as a complete package, applicant communities are strongly urged to use the Phase II Essay to *enhance rather than repeat* content submitted in Phase I.

The Phase II Essay should have five distinct sections, composed of responses to each of the five items below. To maximize space for responses, signal the start of each new section by using the bolded phrases as shown (rather than repeating each question or prompt in its entirety).

1. **Building a Culture of Health.**

- a. Showcase additional accomplishments that reflect your response to identified community needs and progress toward better health for all, and that go beyond the efforts featured in your Phase I essay. Describe each additional accomplishment in a brief paragraph that illustrates:

- Specific policies, programs, or strategies undertaken
- How the accomplishment addresses key community challenges
- Different sectors, partners, and populations involved
- Impact to date and/or expected future impact

Do not simply list additional accomplishments. The description requested here will provide a deeper understanding of how your community's work addresses all six Prize criteria.

- b. Describe how your accomplishments, taken together, reflect an intentional and comprehensive approach toward improving health and reducing disparities in your community.

2. **Working Together.** Describe the role of partnerships in your community.

- a. How is your community working across the many factors that influence health, across sectors, and across organizations to weave together efforts to maximize impact?
- b. Describe an example of how you have built effective collaborations and partnerships, for example through inclusion of new sectors or marginalized populations?

3. **Defining Success.** Describe how your community defines success in your collaborative efforts to build a Culture of Health.

- a. How are shared priorities, definitions of success, and specific goals established among partners?
- b. Describe a specific example of how the community is consistently using data and evidence to continuously improve processes and inform action.
- c. How do you know your community is making measurable progress toward improving health outcomes and decreasing disparities in outcomes and/or opportunities that influence outcomes?

4. **Creating Conditions to Improve Equity.** Describe your community's approach to fostering a sense of security, belonging, and trust among all residents, specifically considering groups in your community that have experienced marginalization resulting in economic or social disadvantages.

- a. What barriers have you noticed contribute to inequities in your community, and what policies, practices, or procedures have been changed as a result?
- b. How are community residents who experience marginalization regularly engaged in making decisions and driving solutions to address barriers to good health?

5. **Sustaining Community Impact.** Describe your community's approach to ensuring that its efforts will create lasting change.

- a. How is your community maximizing and integrating financial and non-financial assets so that your accomplishments take root and flourish over time?
- b. In what ways is your community prioritizing upstream investments and making equitable decisions about how to invest resources, with an eye toward sustainability?

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[Building a Culture of Health

Healthcare: Hospitals: Sitka has two fully independent hospitals –City-owned Sitka Community Hospital (SCH) and Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital, owned by SEARHC, a regional Tribal healthcare provider. The two entities serve all consumers and compete, resulting in duplication of services. Both institutions have faced serious financial challenges. To create a financially sustainable healthcare system and use resources more efficiently, the City is negotiating with SEARHC to acquire SCH. The deal is expected to close in 2019. The merger will free resources for SEARHC to build a new hospital that will offer advanced and specialty services that Sitkans now travel to receive. Land and funding for construction is in place. In addition to improving the financial security of the community's healthcare system and increasing medical services, creation of a unified system is expected to help the community heal longstanding racial tensions maintained by the existence of a "Native" hospital and a "community" hospital.

Obstetrics: In 2018, SCH and SEARHC agreed that it would be beneficial to the community to have one Labor and Delivery program for the island. SCH discontinued its program, which will give obstetrics providers at SEARHC more deliveries, increasing patient safety. Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital since earned a Baby-Friendly Hospital designation after taking steps to change and implement policies and practices that give more information, skills, and support for moms to successfully breastfeed their children.

Mental Health: In 2018 Sitka held its first Trauma-Informed Community Conference with over 100 attendees. The school district implemented trauma-informed care and mental health first aid trainings for all staff. Additionally, 208 community members have been trained in Mental Health First Aid.

Affordability: The high cost of food, housing, and utilities in Sitka is an increasing burden for residents with low incomes, including but not limited to seniors, people with disabilities, and single-parent families with children. Local government, tribal and community organizations have a range of affordability initiatives in three areas: food security, shelter, and utilities.

Food security: Food costs are 31% higher in Sitka than in nearby Juneau. The [Sitka Food Co-op](#) is working to make healthy food more affordable. The "pop-up" Co-op relies on volunteer labor to keep costs low. Its prices average 20-30% less than in local grocery stores. It offers discounts for families with young children, payment plans for membership, and now, deferred payment plans for families impacted by the government shutdown. The Co-op now regularly serves 240 families. Orders grew 27% in 2018.

Shelter: Nearly 1,000 households in Sitka pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing costs, the standard benchmark for affordability. There is a shortage of homes affordable for young families to purchase, a lack of small housing units affordable and accessible to seniors, and the city has a growing population of residents without permanent homes. [Sitka Community Land Trust](#) is in the process of building 7 new affordable homes on land donated by the City. [Baranof Island Housing Authority](#), a Native housing authority, offers rental housing, homeownership assistance, and funding to help low-income homeowners with repairs. [Youth Advocates of Sitka](#) recently received a grant to support a [transitional living program for teens aging out of foster care](#). The Sitka Homeless Coalition is working to create a seasonal winter shelter for men.

Utilities: The City of Sitka generates electricity for the community with clean, renewable hydropower. A major infrastructure improvement in 2014 increased both the supply and cost of power. In 2017, the City created a needs-based electric subsidy program for low-income households. It is working to lower electric rates by encouraging fuel-switching, installing electric boilers at both elementary schools, and cooperating with Baranof Island Housing Authority to replace oil-fired furnaces with heat pumps; 22 conversions were made in 2018. The city also leased space on its power poles to a local telecommunications provider; revenues will be used to reduce the cost of electricity to local consumers.

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Education: In 2012, Sitka School District (SSD) embraced the Sitka Native Education program and co-leads it with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Its new Arts, Culture and Technology initiative is based on community values and strong partnerships, with groups like the Sitka Sound Science Center, the Sitka Fine Arts camp, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the University of Alaska Southeast. New lessons give context and weave what the students are learning into their everyday life. Wooncheen Preschool began in 2015 with a goal of reducing achievement gaps by serving students and families most in need of support. Alaska Natives, American Indians, students from low-income households and children in foster care have top priority for enrollment. In its first year, the program served 37 students and 35 families – 23 families were Alaska Native and 30 were low-income under the federal free-and-reduced lunch income eligibility guidelines. Programming engages children and their families, emphasizes caring relationships, high expectations and support, opportunities for meaningful participation, and a central role for parents in decision-making. SSD is Alaska's lone representative in the League of Innovative Schools, a coalition of 86 forward-thinking school districts across 33 states. Innovations in the district include Pacific High School, a separate school providing an alternative program for teens at risk of dropping out.

Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Alaska has the highest rates of domestic violence against women in the nation. Alaska Native women are disproportionately impacted. [Sitkans Against Family Violence](#) works in partnership with the City, Sitka School District, and the Sitka Tribe to address and prevent domestic violence. Since 2004, SAFV has been a recipient of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention DELTA funding to establish a community prevention coalition and plan, implement, and evaluate prevention programming. The comprehensive program uses social media, offers classes in schools and does skill-building with families. Three successful programs that have come out of this initiative are the Sitka Youth Leadership Committee for teens plus the Girls on the Run and Boys Run I toowú klatseen programs for elementary school-aged students. In 2017, the [Sitka Tribe secured \\$2 million in federal grants](#) to fund shelter improvements and violence prevention programs provided by SAFV. SAFV raised \$150,000 locally to reconstruct and improve its family shelter, which helped leverage additional private funds. The project will be completed in 2019. Additionally, Sitka received the "upstream" Strategic Prevention Framework Grant and Drug Free Community Grant.

Addressing Historic Trauma: In 2018, [Sitka Tribe of Alaska](#) entered into an unprecedented partnership with the National Park Service to provide interpretation at [Sitka National Historical Park](#). The agreement between the federal government and the Tribe is the first of its kind. Tribal citizens dressed in traditionally-inspired uniforms now provide information about the Native and colonial history of Sitka for visitors to the park. Lead ranger Louise Brady explained the significance of the program to [US News and World Report](#): "When I come in here, I'm Kiks.adi," she said. "It's our clan that fought the Russians in 1804, and the park has always been a really special place...Most of my life I've come out here, if I'm having a rough time or not having a rough time. I'll be walking through the park, and I'll think of my ancestors that fought for this land. I've heard stories about women fighting alongside the men, so I personally get a lot of strength from this place, from that history."

Outdoor Recreation: [Sitka Trail Works](#) was created in 1997 to provide employment for displaced pulp mill workers. Over the past two decades, it has constructed and improved miles of trail, providing safe and accessible opportunities for walking, hiking and biking. In 2018, STW received a major grant to complete the final Phase of the Cross Trail, which also serves as an emergency alternative to the city's main shoreline road in the event of a tsunami. Sitka has a stellar trail system for a variety of walkers, hikers and cyclists.

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This partial list of additional accomplishments in building a culture of health in Sitka are the outcome of many years of community discussions, planning and deliberate decisions by local and tribal governments in the community. Several themes run through these initiatives: (1) a community journey to heal the trauma emerging from colonization hundreds of years ago, and to recognize and respect the knowledge and autonomy of Sitka's Native people. (2) A conscious priority to provide a high quality of life for all residents of the community, so that residents with low incomes are not priced out of Sitka.

Working Together

The projects summarized above document some of the ways that groups work well together to improve community health. The Sitka Health Summit coalition, which hosts monthly gatherings and an annual goal setting day for citizens, provide venues for diverse community representatives to express concerns and develop solutions.

Reuse and revitalization of the Sheldon Jackson College campus is a good example of how the community works together to find opportunity in times of crisis. In 2007, after 129 years, Sheldon Jackson College (SJC) closed for financial reasons. Sitka lost a major employer, and the future of the 13-acre campus in the center of town, with its many dilapidated historic buildings, was in doubt. Since then, the campus has come roaring back to life. Sitka Fine Arts Camp, an existing organization, assumed ownership of most of the property. Between 2011 and 2015, SFAC organized and supervised 1,000 volunteers, who logged 40,000 hours rebuilding the campus. The organization grew into its new space and expanded its offerings from three short summer sessions to a summer-long program offering 16 different camps and workshops that draws students from around Alaska and the U.S., as well as year-round arts programs for Sitka residents.

The Hames Center on the SJ campus has evolved into a community fitness center that serves 600 regular members and more than 6,000 users each year. It incorporated as an independent nonprofit in 2010. The Center has a small professional staff but much of its programming is made possible by 25 regular volunteers who give about 100 hours a week. It offers free family fun days, a senior walking program and dozens of classes and programs to keep our residents healthy. For those struggling financially, the Hames Center provides full access to the facility in return for four hours of volunteering per week.

Sitka Sound Science Center incorporated as a new organization after SJ closed to improve understanding of Alaska's ecosystems through scientific education and research. With funding from the City, a private grant and loans from commercial fishermen, it purchased two buildings on campus. It operates a salmon hatchery and aquarium, sponsors visiting scientists and important research, and offers a range of environmental education programs in partnership with Sitka schools. SSSC has created many jobs.

Other nonprofits and programs operating on the SJ campus include Sitka Summer Music Festival, Youth Advocates of Sitka, Sheldon Jackson Museum (acquired by the State of Alaska after the college closed), the Sitka Children's Museum, Betty Eliason Childcare Center and Sitka Counseling. The newest addition is Outer Coast College, an emerging two-year alternative higher ed institution that offered its first program targeted to high school students in 2018. Outer Coast places special emphasis on reaching students throughout Alaska, particularly Alaska Natives and rural Alaskans, as well as other high-potential students from underserved backgrounds. The college plans to officially open in 2020.

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Together, the organizations that emerged or have grown on the SJ campus since the college closed are employing residents, offering programs that contribute to health and quality of life, drawing visitors, preserving historic resources, and making important contributions to the local economy.

Defining Success

We define success broadly as achieving a better quality of life for all Sitkans. At the annual Sitka Health Summit Planning Day, residents select two goals as priorities for the year. These goals are shared with the community in a variety of ways, including local newspaper, radio, and social media. Many are project-focused, with success measured by completion and/or ongoing operation of a program or facility, such as the award-winning Fish to Schools program, the Choose Respect social justice mural, Local Food Assessment, Community Kitchen, and construction of the Community Playground.

Different groups in town use data to select goals related to health, such as the Sitka School District, City Health Commission, City Assembly, and non-profit groups. One example of how our community uses data to improve processes involves the Sitka School District (SSD). The District has data which shows Alaska Native boys have a disproportionate referral rate for special education services. In response, the District hired an expert to design a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) which is a proven learning accelerant. The MTSS focuses on social/emotional learning and has a holistic system with graduated interventions to support students. The Sitka School District continues to gather data on referral rates as well as graduation rates, with the aim to improve outcomes for their students.

Another example is the Indian Child Welfare (ICWA) partnership that recently received top honors from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, Honoring Nations Board of Governors. Every two years, Harvard canvasses all Native American tribal nations for innovative examples of excellence in tribal governance. After multiple rounds of competitive evaluation, Sitka Tribe of Alaska's ICWA program—a partnership with the local Office of Children's Services (OCS)—was selected as one of six finalists to present to the General Assembly of the 75th Annual National Congress of American Indians Conference on October 25, 2018. The partnership was cited for the lowest child removal rate in Alaska, the highest intervention rate at 100%, and an ICWA compliant placement rate of 95%.

Sitka also uses County Health Rankings to track progress year to year. Many groups in town use data from the Southeast Alaska-focused Behavioral Risk Factor Survey and the Youth Risk Factor Behavioral Survey to track outcomes as well. We have also conducted our own local surveys like creating the MAPP Assessment and the Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment that was completed in 2013. GPRA data from the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium also gives regional and local data related to obesity rates, diabetes rates, and other health outcomes. Data from all of these sources helps our community know if we are making progress toward improving health outcomes.

Creating Conditions to Improve Equity

Racial and economic equity are active topics of discussion in Sitka in both official and in community contexts. Other examples of community efforts to improve equity and address disparities include:

Subsistence foods: Traditional foods are integral to Alaska Native culture. In Sitka, salmon, halibut, rockfish, lingcod, herring eggs, seaweed, deer, seal, seal oil, gumbuts, and berries are the main subsistence foods. The Sitka Tribe of Alaska Resource Protection Department harvests, processes, and distributes these foods to Tribal Citizens who would not otherwise have access. Priority is given to elders, Tribal Citizens who are eligible for USDA Commodities, and Tribal Citizens with disabilities. In

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2018, 2,590 servings of traditional foods were donated to Tribal Citizens in Sitka. At the political level, the [Sitka Tribe recently sued the State of Alaska over its herring management plan for Sitka Sound](#), arguing that the state's permitted harvest of herring eggs ignores the needs of subsistence users and jeopardizes the long-term health of Sitka's fisheries. The lawsuit is an example of how Sitka's Tlingit people are using their traditional knowledge to protect resources for the whole community.

Access to arts education: Through a strong philanthropic program a commitment to making programs available regardless of means, Sitka Fine Arts Camp offers financial aid for students who would otherwise be unable to attend its programs. In 2018, SFAC provided more than \$94,000 of need-based financial aid for its summer program students. The organization provides full scholarships to summer camp for any Sitka student who qualifies for free and reduced lunch through the Sitka School District.

Accessible Recreation: Outdoor recreation and exercise are critical to maintaining physical and mental health. Southeast Alaska Independent Living offers the ORCA (Outdoor Recreation and Community Access) program to ensure that people with disabilities have access to recreational opportunities. Activities include a senior hiking club and adaptive options for kayaking, fishing, and winter sports.

Planning: Sitka works hard to engage the whole community through inclusive decision-making. The City's new Comprehensive Plan was developed through a citizen-centered process, including interactive public forums, workshops, open houses, portable "meetings in a box" and outreach including phone calls, online surveys, e-blasts and social media, to ensure all voices were heard.

Sustaining Community Impact

Sitka has a strong record of investing resources for long-term impact. The City's 2014 expansion of the Blue Lake Dam 2014 will provide clean, renewable hydropower for decades to come. This will generate results in the form of reduced emissions, keeping expenditures local, and savings as the cost of fossil fuels rise in the future. The City's investment in clean power is supported by citizen efforts to promote electric heat and electric vehicles. Sitka is one of only a handful of communities in the U.S. with an electric grid powered by 100% clean, renewable, local energy. Educational investments, public health polices, changes in the built environment (like the new walking trail on Japonski Island) and the pending hospital merger are examples of efforts to make lasting sustainable change.

Sitka has a vibrant non-profit sector that has been successful in raising funds locally and leveraging federal, state and private grants for community projects. Greater Sitka Legacy Fund, created in 2013, is a new avenue to raise private funds for community needs. GSLF is a local Affiliate of The Alaska Community Foundation (ACF), a statewide philanthropic organization. It is committed to maintaining Sitka as a vital, progressive, and healthy place where people can live, work, raise families and retire, and is building a perpetual endowment to support those goals. To date, it has raised \$205,000 from individuals and businesses, which has leveraged more than \$180,000 in matching contributions from ACF and Anchorage-based Rasmuson Foundation. GSLF has made \$37,000 in grants in the past five years. More than 50% of these funds have been for projects that benefit Sitka's children. A recent example is a \$1,500 to Baranof Elementary School to help fund a lending "library" of outdoor raingear so that all children have appropriate clothing to enjoy outdoor recess. As the endowment grows through investment income, bequests, and continued donations, it will offer an increasingly large resource to meet local needs over time. GSLF has a diverse board of local residents that raises funds and makes recommendations on grants.