

Racial Health Equity Legal and Policy Cohort Application Guidelines

Overview

The Network for Public Health Law is pleased to invite applications for the [2026–2027 Racial Health Equity Legal and Policy Cohort \(RHE Cohort\)](#). Established in 2021, this biennial, national program supports governments, public health departments, community-based organizations, and advocates in using law and policy to advance racial health equity.

Through the application process, organizations identify their racial health equity projects and specific legal and policy needs. Selected participants are paired with a dedicated team of experts and receive up to 40 hours of tailored legal technical assistance from September 2026 to April 2027. In addition, cohort members gain access to training and peer learning opportunities that strengthen their understanding of public health law and foster collaboration with peers across the country.

This document outlines the application process, eligibility criteria, and key program details for organizations interested in participating in the 2026–2027 RHE Cohort (Cohort 3). Please email srogers@networkforphl.org with any questions or to receive more information.

Key Details & High-Level Timeline

- Informational webinar: Thursday, May 7, 2026, 12pm CT | [Learn more](#)
- Applications open: Friday, May 1, 2026, 8am CT
- Submission deadline: Friday, June 26, 2026, 5pm CT
- How to submit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RHECOHORT3>
- Applicants will be notified of their application status in early August
- Legal and policy technical assistance: September 2026 – April 2027
- Welcome webinar: Late August/Early September 2026
- Virtual training on public health law and racial equity: Fall 2026
- Virtual facilitated discussion(s): Winter/Spring 2027
- Program evaluation: May 2027, or on a rolling basis as projects end

Application Components

The application is divided into three sections:

- [Organization Details](#) – Basic information about your organization, the communities you serve, and your equity commitments.

- Project Details – Information about the project or issue for which you are requesting legal and policy technical assistance, including community impact, challenges, opportunities, and expected outcomes.
- Project Leads / Contact Information – Details for the staff who will coordinate with the Network team.

A full list of application questions and required information can be found at [the end of this document](#). All applications should be submitted using the electronic form.

Eligible Organizations

Eligible applicants for the RHE Cohort include representatives from local, state, or tribal health departments, community-based organizations or groups, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, healthcare, and others working to eliminate deep, systemic, and racially driven inequities in health with desire to work on law and policy issues to advance community health and racial equity are welcome to apply. Prior cohort participants are eligible to apply, but priority will be given to new applicants.

Note: Limited stipends (up to \$1,000) are available for participating, under-resourced organizations to honor community and staff time. Stipend requests will be a part of the application process.

Eligible Projects

We are seeking applications who are developing or working on a specific racial health equity project that would benefit from legal and policy technical assistance. We can assist with work that is at any stage of development.

We are interested in supporting projects that have most, if not all, of the following characteristics:

- Have a commitment and clear goals to furthering racial health equity
- Are committed to an intersectional approach to racial health equity
- Are grounded in principles of health equity and the priorities of communities that have experienced inequitable health disparities
- Are community-led or community informed
- Are led by entities that are engaged and working with communities either currently or that are seeking assistance with how to connect with communities
- Could be implemented in other jurisdictions or communities
- Have a well-defined legal/policy scope or would benefit from planning assistance to define the legal/policy scope
- Have a clear connection to improving population health.

Requirements

Participation in the RHE Cohort 3 will run from September 2026 to April 2027. Applicants will be notified of their status in early August.

To ensure a successful collaboration, applicants must:

- Meet with Network staff at the start of the program to get oriented
- Work with your dedicated Network team to define the legal and policy focus of your project
- Join regular check-in meetings to discuss your project's progress
- Attend webinars and peer discussions with other cohort participants
- Review and give feedback on drafts of materials we create together
- Complete a survey about your experience at the end of the program

The Network will provide resources and dedicated staff to work on each project, provide timely communication, engage in monthly (and as needed) project discussions, and respond to any questions that may arise.

Support

The Network's structured legal technical assistance is the core of the RHE Cohort program. Up to 40 hours of technical assistance is available per project and may include:

- Policy identification and issue scoping
- Legal and policy research and analysis
- Jurisdictional scans
- Education on legal concepts, tools, and frameworks
- Explanation of legal authorities and decisions
- Guidance on the use of legal and policy tools
- Development of resources and written materials
- Presentations or briefings, as appropriate

The Network does not provide legal advice or legal representation. Successful applicants are encouraged to share the products of their collaboration with the Network with their legal counsel for review if appropriate/necessary.

Benefits

Participants will benefit from peer learning through the RHE Cohort, which will gather at least twice for webinars and facilitated discussions. The goal of these events is to deepen understanding of how public health law can support racial equity and provide opportunities to share lessons learned and build relationships with each other.

By the end of the Cohort, participants are better equipped to:

- Use law and policy strategically to advance racial health equity goals
- Navigate legal challenges and policy barriers with greater confidence
- Build relationships with peers and partners working toward anti-racist systems change
- Access ongoing legal and policy technical assistance through the Network

Expected Outcomes

At the field level, the Cohort strengthens connections between public health, community organizations, and legal solutions, while deepening understanding of the real-world challenges and opportunities facing those on the front lines of equity work.

By participating in this opportunity, cohort members and their organizations:

- Better understand how laws, regulations, policies, and other actions affect health and racial equity.
- Can identify legal and policy levers that support/hinder their racial health equity goals.
- Feel more confident applying the knowledge they learned through working with the Network to real situations.
- Are better positioned to serve their communities because they can use law and policy strategically rather than seeing them as barriers or something only lawyers' handle.

Cohort members learn about and build connections with people and organizations nationwide working to advance anti-racism and racial health equity.

Questions You'll Be Asked

Please note: Information entered in the online form cannot be saved until the form is completed and submitted; we recommend that you enter your responses and submit the form in one continuous session. Required questions are marked with an asterisk (). You may wish to prepare your responses in advance and copy and paste them into the form.*

Section 1: Organization Details

1. Organization Name
2. Organization Type (e.g. nonprofit, community-based organization, government agency, collation, etc.)
3. Tribal Nation (if applicable)
4. City/Town
5. State/Territory
6. County
7. Organization Overview
Briefly describe your mission, main programs, and the populations your organization serves.

8. Communities Served
Describe the communities your organization generally serves, including demographics, geography, or populations experiencing systemic inequities.
9. Racial health Equity Commitments/Goals
Describe any goals or initiatives to advance racial health equity within your organization.

Section 2: Project Details

10. Project/Issue Description
Briefly explain the project or issue you are seeking legal technical assistance for, including background, current stage, and relevance to your community.
11. Primary Community of Focus
Please identify and describe the primary community or communities of focus for this project.
12. Racial Health Equity Challenges / Opportunities
What racial health equity challenges or opportunities are you seeking legal technical assistance to address through this project?
13. Community Involvement
Describe how the community has been engaged in shaping this project. (e.g., advisory boards, focus groups, surveys)
14. Legal/Policy Challenges & Technical Assistance Requested
What law or policy challenges or opportunities are you seeking technical assistance on?
Please describe the specific legal or policy-related support you are requesting, including any barriers you have encountered and/or key questions you hope to explore.
Note: Our team will work with selected Cohort project teams to further clarify the law and policy (and other) scopes of work.
15. Expected Outcomes/Goals
What do you hope will change or improve as a result of this technical assistance?
16. Stipend Interest
The Network has limited funds to honor community and staff time and support the participation of under-resourced organizations. Stipend recipients will be required to complete an I-9 form. If you are interested in a \$1,000 stipend, please explain how you would use it to support participation in this project.
17. How did you hear about this opportunity?
 - a. Network email and/or Network Report e-newsletter
 - b. Network website
 - c. Email or newsletter from another organization
 - d. Friend/Colleague
 - e. Social Media
 - f. Other (please specify)

Section 3: Project Leads/Contact Information

18. Primary Project Lead #1

- a. Name
- b. Organization
- c. Title
- d. City/Town
- e. State
- f. Tribal Nation (or N/A)
- g. Email Address
- h. Phone Number

19. Primary Project Lead #2

- i. Name
- j. Organization
- k. Title
- l. City/Town
- m. State
- n. Tribal Nation (or N/A)
- o. Email Address
- p. Phone Number

20. Additional Team Members (optional)

Thank you for completing this form. We sincerely appreciate your important work in promoting racial health equity in your community and hope to have the opportunity to work with you.