

Houston Methodist awards inaugural grants from \$25M Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Grant Program



Arianne Dowdell is the vice president and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at Houston Methodist.

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By [Shafaq Patel](#) – ACBJ minority business reporter, Houston Business Journal
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Houston Methodist awarded nearly \$2.5 million to 37 Houston-area nonprofits, the first grants allocated from a new \$25 million effort.

This funding is a part of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Grant Program the health care system created in 2020. Grants from the \$25 million fund will be awarded over five years to support underserved communities and their efforts to foster healthy neighborhoods, improve educational access and opportunities, and to cultivate employment and economic opportunities. The grant program includes both DEI grants and social equity grants.

Houston Methodist announced on May 25, the anniversary of George Floyd's murder, that 19 healthy neighborhood programs, 10 economic empowerment programs and nine educational empowerment programs are receiving about \$2.47 million combined.

"The main reason we wanted to move forward with this was to make sure that we were able to further address social determinants and health equity in the greater Houston area," said [Arianne Dowdell](#), vice president and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at Houston Methodist. "It made sense for us to look at the root cause issues and address those in further detail, which would come from the nonprofits that are really vital to the work that we do on a daily basis at the hospital."

Dowdell worked with the Methodist Community Benefits team, which has been around since the 1990s, to select the 37 recipients for the grant out of the 177 nonprofits that applied in fall 2020.

"We thought it was important to be really holistic in the approach for how we looked at different organizations," Dowdell said. "When you look at education, economic empowerment and healthy neighborhoods, those all contribute to the health care disparities that we see in the communities, and there's organizations (selected for grants) in each of those areas that target those."

Recipients of the grant include Yes Prep Public Schools, where the money will support its Thrive Program, an alternative education program for troubled youth; Capital Idea, where funding will go

toward education and training for African American and Latina women to help them earn degrees; and Arms Wide Adoption Services, where the nonprofit will use the funding to launch a campaign to recruit more families for African American children who are in foster care.

[Dejuana Jernigan](#), president and CEO of Arms Wide Adoption Services, said its \$100,000 grant will allow the 44-year-old nonprofit to launch the "It Takes a Village" campaign. The effort will focus on outreach to recruit more families for African American children, and it will raise awareness for the disproportionality that exists in the foster care system.

"Black children are vastly overrepresented at every stage of the Texas child welfare system," Jernigan said. "They are more often removed from their families. I think that this effort will help address that issue and disrupt the issue of disproportionality in particularly the greater Houston region."

Below is the full list of the organizations that received the inaugural funds of the Houston Methodist Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Grant:

- AccessHealth (healthy neighborhoods)
- Arms Wide Adoption Services (healthy neighborhoods)
- Boat People SOS - Houston (healthy neighborhoods)
- Capital Idea Houston (economic empowerment)
- Central South District (educational empowerment)
- Community Assistance Center (healthy neighborhoods)
- Culture of Health - Advancing Together (educational empowerment)
- Cy-Hope (healthy neighborhoods)
- Easter Seals (economic empowerment)
- El Centro de Corazon (healthy neighborhoods)
- Family Houston (economic empowerment)
- Family to Family Network (educational empowerment)
- Hype Freedom School Inc. (educational empowerment)
- Interfaith Community Clinic (healthy neighborhoods)
- Justice Forward (healthy neighborhoods)
- Legacy Community Health (healthy neighborhoods)
- Memorial Assistance Ministries (economic empowerment)
- Montrose Grace Place (economic empowerment)
- Northwest Assistance Ministries (healthy neighborhoods)
- Open Door Mission (educational empowerment)
- Rebuilding Together Houston (healthy neighborhoods)
- San Jose Clinic (healthy neighborhoods)
- Santa Maria Hostel (economic empowerment)
- SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast Inc. (economic empowerment)
- Sickle Cell Association of Houston Inc.(healthy neighborhoods)
- South Texas College of Law Houston (economic empowerment)
- Spring Branch Community Health Center (healthy neighborhoods)
- Spring Branch Community Health Center in Carverdale (healthy neighborhoods)
- The Links Inc. - Missouri City Chapter (educational empowerment)
- The Links Inc. - Port City Chapter (healthy neighborhoods)
- The T.R.U.T.H. Project (healthy neighborhoods)
- The Women's Resource of Greater Houston (economic empowerment)
- Urban Harvest (healthy neighborhoods)
- Vecino Health Centers (healthy neighborhoods)
- Volunteers of America (economic empowerment)
- Wesley Community Center (educational empowerment)
- Yes Prep Public Schools (educational empowerment)
- YMCA of Greater Houston (educational empowerment)