American Kidney Fund®
FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS

The following report provides an overview of AKF's ongoing work to serve underserved communities and the partnerships and collaborations that help support these efforts.

Community Health Care Report

Identify the high risk/underserved and/or disadvantaged populations in the community(ies) that you serve and describe specifically the actions you have taken, based on relevant assessment data, to increase their accessibility to health services.

The American Kidney Fund (AKF) serves people living with and at risk for kidney disease nationwide, including underserved Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Native American, and rural communities. Through education, engagement, partnerships and grants, AKF addresses disparities in prevention, awareness, treatment education and care access, helping individuals understand risks, communicate with professionals and make informed decisions. AKF's Kidney Health for All® (KHFA) initiative focuses on prevention, community engagement, partnerships and access to care across the kidney care continuum. The KHFA Coalition brings together national and community organizations, professionals, patients and advocates to guide solutions through community perspectives and professional expertise.

AKF uses qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to understand educational needs, patient experiences and care barriers. For example, past interviews have included people with APOL1-mediated kidney disease, Hispanic/Latino individuals with or at risk for chronic kidney disease, and professionals serving Hispanic/Latino patients. Interviews with Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals and their health professionals are planned. Additionally, AKF has conducted surveys assessing English- and Spanish-language transplant and post-transplant guides, housing and food insecurity among patients who receive financial assistance from AKF, and community perspectives on clinical trials.

The Kidney Health for All website offers population-focused resources across the care continuum. "Genes to Generations: Know your family's health history" supports prevention through family health awareness. Other materials help patients consider home dialysis, discuss clinical trial participation with healthcare professionals, understand kidney transplantation, address organ and tissue donation myths, and navigate life after transplantation. Together, these efforts connect community education with resources supporting prevention, treatment choices and health.

AKF's Kidney Health Coach® program trains community educators to help prevent chronic kidney disease and slow progression to kidney failure. Coaches receive tools to tailor education to local needs and deliver it through established community relationships and settings. The Kidney Health Coach Advisory Council reviews content and materials for appropriateness and responsiveness. Members include community leaders, people with kidney disease, transplant recipients, kidney donors, caregivers and professionals serving kidney patients.

Kidney Health Coach Health Equity grants reduce financial barriers for individual coaches and organizations educating underserved racial and ethnic populations about kidney disease prevention and management. The goal of the Health Equity Grant program is to expand the reach and impact of Kidney Health Coach by empowering organizations and coaches across the country to reach at-risk communities and educate them about chronic kidney disease (CKD) prevention and management. The grants expand the number of trained coaches, strengthen partnerships, broaden local education and support understanding of longer-term effects on coaches and communities. Through a partnership with the American Heart Association, AKF also offers one-year cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic (CKM) syndrome grants to organizations. These grants reach underserved racial and ethnic populations and rural communities with education on the interconnectedness of cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, diabetes and obesity the stages of CKM syndrome, and ways to prevent and manage it.

Additional one-year grants integrate lupus nephritis education into community health initiatives through Kidney Health Coach. By strengthening local networks of patients, care partners, faith-based leaders, and other community leaders, these grants advance the program's goal of increasing kidney disease education and awareness, among underserved racial and ethnic populations and rural communities. These grants provide information on lupus nephritis signs and symptoms, appropriate testing and diagnosis, and treatment options to manage kidney damage, while empowering patients and caregivers to actively participate in care and decision making. They also promote communication among patients, caregivers, and healthcare teams to support informed participation in care.

Describe specifically the strategies you have used to gather input from high risk, underserved and/or disadvantaged population and their leaders as a basis for program or service development.

AKF gathers input from high-risk, underserved and disadvantaged populations through in-depth interviews, online surveys, community assessments, education evaluations and patient stories. Along with input from healthcare professionals serving these communities, these methods reveal patient experiences, educational needs and barriers to care, informing educational resources, outreach and program improvements.

Qualitative interviews explore how patients obtain information, their unanswered questions, and the support needed for informed decisions. Interview activities include people living with APOL1-mediated kidney disease, Hispanic/Latino individuals at risk for or living with kidney disease, and professionals caring for Hispanic/Latino patients. Future surveys will include Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals at risk for or living with kidney disease and their health care professionals. These perspectives help AKF address community concerns and strengthen communication within care settings.

Online surveys gather feedback on transplant education, post-transplant care, clinical trials, and social drivers of health, including food insecurity and housing needs. They identify information

gaps and circumstances affecting health management while assessing whether transplant and post-transplant materials are understandable, accessible, and useful.

In the final quarter of 2025, AKF announced *Your Guide to Life After Kidney Transplant* through its Grants Management System. A QR code provided digital access, while patients could also request printed copies. A subsequent online survey assessed satisfaction, clarity, accessibility, influence on behaviors and decision-making, and remaining information gaps. Findings inform resource updates and related education.

Community outreach events engage people who may not participate in formal research. Assessments, including those concerning clinical trials, explore participants' knowledge, questions, and concerns. Patient stories collected at outreach events and conferences complement research findings by illustrating how kidney disease, treatment and care barriers affect daily life.

Kidney Health Coach participants are invited to complete online evaluations following education presentations and activities. These assessments examine knowledge and intentions to change health behaviors, helping AKF evaluate value and improve program content and delivery.

Community leaders and patient representatives support program development through AKF's KHFA Coalition and Kidney Health Coach Advisory Council. Community organizations, health care professionals, patient advocates, and leaders with lived experience of kidney disease provide guidance and review. Their perspectives complement feedback and help ensure program content and educational approaches reflect community needs. Combining these sources allows AKF to consider patient experiences and professional challenges when developing resources, strengthening outreach, and refining programs for populations facing disparities in kidney health and access to care.

Describe specific partnerships with other providers and community-based organizations to promote continuity of health care for high risk/underserved and/or disadvantaged populations.

AKF develops strategic partnerships with health organizations, educational institutions and community-based organizations to extend kidney health education and support to high-risk and underserved populations. Through these relationships, AKF and its partners share resources, expertise, and community networks to connect kidney health information with established health and outreach initiatives. This collaborative approach supports continuity of health education across community settings and reinforces the importance of prevention, early identification, and ongoing management of kidney disease.

During 2025–2026, AKF secured nine partnerships and collaborations: the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, The Balm in Gilead, Chamberlain

University, and the Metropolitan DC Chapter of The Links. Collectively, these partnerships and collaborations expand opportunities to reach Black/African American communities, faith-based communities, nursing students, elementary school students and other youth, and people at increased risk for chronic kidney disease because of diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure.

Collaborations with the American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association connect AKF's kidney health efforts with organizations focused on conditions closely associated with kidney disease. These relationships create opportunities to reinforce consistent prevention and disease management messages for people with overlapping health risks. Collaboration with Chi Eta Phi Sorority and Chamberlain University extends AKF's reach among nursing students and nursing networks, supporting greater awareness of kidney health among current and future health professionals.

AKF's partnerships with Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, The Balm in Gilead, and the Metropolitan DC Chapter of The Links strengthen connections with community leaders and established service networks. These relationships provide additional avenues for sharing kidney health resources with Black/African American communities, faith-based audiences, and young people. By working through organizations with existing community relationships, AKF broadens access to information that can help individuals recognize their risks, ask informed questions, and engage with health care professionals.

Together, these efforts strengthen the connection between community education and ongoing healthcare. They support continuity by reinforcing kidney health messages through multiple trusted sources and settings and helping people better understand the relationship between kidney disease and other chronic conditions. This work complements clinical care by preparing individuals and families to participate more actively in prevention and disease management.

Provide two examples of how you have used the community-oriented approach to program development specified in the attached principles to develop a program of service for high risk/underserved and/or disadvantaged populations specified in the guidelines.

Example 1: Kidney Health Coach Health Equity Grants

AKF's Kidney Health Coach Health Equity grants provide one year of support to individual coaches and community-based organizations, addressing financial barriers to locally delivered kidney disease prevention and management education for underserved Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander and rural populations at risk for chronic kidney disease. The program aims to expand the number of active coaches, strengthen community partnerships, increase access to education, and better understand its longer-term effects. Community participation guides program development and delivery: the KHC Advisory Council—including community leaders, patients, caregivers, transplant recipients, kidney donors, and professionals serving people with kidney disease—provides guidance and reviews educational content, while trained coaches tailor activities to

local needs and settings. Participant evaluations assess knowledge and intentions to change health behaviors, helping AKF refine the program and understand community needs.

From December 2023 through October 2025, 75 coaches received grants of $500 each, and 24 organizations received grants of $10,000 each. Grantees reported an estimated cumulative reach of 34,644 people through more than 851 kidney health education sessions and events; these figures do not represent a verified count of unduplicated clients served in a single year. The program budget is $150,000, representing .000456% of AKF's agency budget for fiscal year 2026. During this period, none of the program budget was directly reimbursed by third-party payers or covered by public/private grants.

Example 2: APOL1-Mediated Kidney Disease Education and Community Engagement

Launched in 2021, AKF's APOL1-mediated kidney disease (AMKD) educational campaign combines awareness efforts, patient engagement and grassroots partnerships to help at-risk individuals and families understand AMKD and their potential risk. Components include multimedia outreach, an online resource hub, patient and professional educational materials, and community events and conferences. Qualitative interviews with people living with AMKD inform the campaign's understanding of patient experiences and educational needs, while strategic partners extend its reach through their networks and community relationships, supporting education responsive to affected communities' questions and concerns.

In 2024, AKF launched the first National AMKD Awareness Day, to be observed annually on the last Tuesday of April. This awareness campaign has been supported by corporate, community and strategic partners nationwide. Through AMKD Awareness Day, AKF has worked to increase public awareness of AMKD and help ensure that individuals, families and communities have the knowledge needed for earlier identification, diagnosis and informed care. This national effort brings together patients, communities, healthcare professionals, policymakers and partners around a shared commitment to kidney health. Over the last two years, efforts have included in-person and virtual education for both patients and healthcare professionals, activation of patient advocates, and marketing, communications and digital outreach. These activities aim to strengthen community connections and expand opportunities for patients and families to access information and discuss AMKD. The program budget is $742,850, representing .23% of AKF's agency budget for fiscal year 2026. During this period, none of the program budget was directly reimbursed by third-party payers, while 100% was covered by public/private grants (sponsors).

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MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION: The American Kidney Fund's (AKF) mission is to fight kidney disease and help people live healthier lives.