



## 2025 Sapphire Awards Eligibility Guidelines

**Deadline to submit is October 21, 2024**

[Link to application portal](#)

### **2025 Theme**

The theme for the 2025 Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards is “Transforming the Future of Health.”

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Groundbreaking initiatives, innovative solutions, and technology-enabled interventions are transforming how we address health disparities and improve health outcomes. The annual Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards provides attendees the opportunity to convene, discuss critical health issues, and learn innovative solutions that can improve the health of all Floridians. Symposium speakers include national, regional, and Florida-based experts on a variety of issues affecting community health.

The Sapphire Awards were designed in 2005 by Florida Blue Foundation to recognize excellence and innovation in community health leadership and programs in Florida. Since then, 148 Sapphire Awards, totaling \$7.5 million, have been awarded across Florida. The Sapphire Awards program and dinner will be held on May 1, 2025.

The 2025 Sapphire Awards will highlight and honor, through a competitive external review process, outstanding programs, organizations, and individuals that excel at one or more of the following:

- Creating groundbreaking, innovative, or technology-enabled interventions that address health disparities and improve community health.
- Demonstrating clear and impactful change in health care access and health outcomes.
- Leveraging resources, strategies, and relationships to advance cutting-edge solutions and collaborations that transform the lives of individuals and communities.
- Incorporating one or more of the three priority areas of the Foundation – Health Equity, Mental Wellbeing, or Food Security.

Examples of innovative, transformational projects could include virtual reality, artificial intelligence, mobile health applications, virtual care options, telehealth, mobile health clinics, farmers markets, community health worker programs, age-friendly community initiatives, and more.

## AWARD DETAILS

The Sapphire Awards are designed to recognize a nominee’s accomplishments. Award funds total up to \$525,000, are distributed to the awardees based on recognition level, and are announced at the Sapphire Awards dinner and program on May 1, 2025. These are one-time awards. Those seeking financial support or grants should visit the [Foundation’s website](#) for information on current funding opportunities.

Awards will be presented to first, second, and third place winners in each category--program, organization, and individual. Awards to individuals will be distributed to the organization in which they are engaged.

First Place	\$100,000
Second Place	\$50,000
Third Place	\$25,000

## SAPPHIRE AWARD NOMINATION APPLICATION CLARIFICATION WEBINAR

The [Sapphire Awards Nomination Application Clarification Webinar](#) will be available beginning September 16. The webinar can be viewed at your convenience.

## IMPORTANT DATES

September 16, 2024	<a href="#">Nomination Applications Open</a>
September 16, 2024	<a href="#">Nomination Application Clarification Webinar</a> recording available
October 21, 2024	Deadline to submit Nomination Applications
February 19, 2025	All applicants receive notice of status
May 1, 2025	Sapphire Awards Winners announced at the Awards Dinner and Program Finalists must be present to receive the award
May 1-2, 2025	2024 Community Health Symposium and Sapphire Awards

## NOMINATION APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Nomination Application Categories

- Program
- Organization
- Individual

### ***Nominated Programs***

- An organization seeking recognition for a single health-related program should submit a PROGRAM nomination application.
- Organizations submitting a Program nomination application must be incorporated in the state of Florida and the programs for which they are seeking recognition, either individually or collectively, must be currently conducted in the state of Florida.

- The nominated program must be in operation for a minimum of three years.
- Programs named as “First Place Winners” of the Sapphire Awards in previous years for the impact of a single health-related program are not eligible for another nomination in the Program category. However, a different program at the organization may be nominated in the Program category.
- Organizations submitting a Program nomination application must possess exemption by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3), or be a unit of Florida government (e.g., county health department, K-12 school, college, university, etc.).
- Program nomination applications must include two References from non-staff people such as current/former patients/clients, community leaders, elected officials, funders, or representatives from partner agencies/organizations. Spouses and family members of staff may not be references, nor nominators.
- Type III Supporting Organizations and private foundations are not eligible to submit a nomination application in any category.

### ***Nominated Organizations***

- An organization may submit a Sapphire Award ORGANIZATION nomination application to seek recognition for the collective impact of all its health-related services and interventions.
- An organization seeking recognition for a single health-related program should submit a PROGRAM nomination application.
- Organizations named as “First Place Winners” of the Sapphire Awards in previous years for the collective impact of all their health-related programs are not eligible for another nomination in the Organization category. They may submit an INDIVIDUAL nomination application or a PROGRAM nomination application if the nominees have not been named First Place Winners in the past.
- Organizations submitting applications for a Sapphire Award must be incorporated in the state of Florida and the programs for which they are seeking recognition, either individually or collectively, must be currently conducted in the state of Florida.
- The nominated organization must be in operation for a minimum of five years.
- Organizations applying for a Sapphire Award (all categories) must possess exemption by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3), or be a unit of Florida government (e.g., county health department, K-12 school, college, university, etc.).
- Organization nomination applications must include two References from non-staff people such as current/former patients/clients, community leaders, elected officials, funders, or representatives from partner agencies/organizations. Spouses and family members of staff may not serve as references, nor nominators.
- Type III Supporting Organizations and private foundations are not eligible to submit a nomination application in any category.

### ***Nominated Individuals***

- Nominated Individuals must be licensed health care professionals, administrators, or volunteers who have worked and/or volunteered in the state of Florida with qualified health-serving organizations that are physically located in Florida. Qualified health-serving organizations must be a 501(c)(3) organization, or a unit of Florida government (e.g., county health department, K-12 school, college, university, etc.).
- Nominated Individuals must have a proven record of more than five years of work, expertise, and accomplishments in the field.

- Nominated Individuals may be active or retired.
- Nominated Individuals must be alive and a resident of Florida at the time the nomination application is submitted. Posthumous nomination applications will not be considered.
- Individuals may be nominated
  - For their work as a professional, service as a volunteer, or a combination of both, and the nomination should focus heavily on the individual's professional work and/or volunteer service performed in Florida.
  - For a career that spans more than one organization or community, with a focus on their work performed in Florida.
  - By a peer, colleague, co-worker, staff member, board member, volunteer, patient, client from the organization where the individual works and/or volunteers, or from separate organizations. Spouses and family members may not be nominators nor references for any category.
- Individuals named as "First Place Winners" of the Sapphire Awards in previous years may not be nominated for another Individual category.
- Self-nomination applications for the Individual category will not be accepted.
- Spouses and family members of individuals to be nominated may not serve as nominators nor references.
- Organizations submitting an Individual nomination application must possess exemption by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3), or be a unit of Florida government (e.g., county health department, K-12 school, college, university, etc.).
- Nomination applications for individuals must include two References from people who know the work of the individual. The references may come from two non-staff people, including, one board member, volunteer, patient, client from the organization where the individual works and/or volunteers, community leaders, funders, or representatives from partner agencies/organizations. Spouses and family members of the individual and staff are not eligible to serve as nominators nor references.
- Type III Supporting Organizations and private foundations are not eligible to submit a nomination application in any category.

### **SPECIAL NOTES**

- Organizations may submit one nomination application per category. This also applies to large organizations that have many divisions or affiliates – like a university, college, hospital, national nonprofit. If you are with a university, college, hospital, or other entity with multiple affiliates located across the state, please reach out to your development office, foundation, or headquarters to determine which nomination application to submit. Multiple submissions of affiliates from a single institution may result that none of the applications will be reviewed and considered for recognition.
- Current and former employees, retirees, and board members of Florida Blue Foundation, Florida Blue (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida), the subsidiaries and affiliates of Florida Blue and GuideWell Mutual Holding Corporation, and their spouses and family members, are not eligible for nomination, nor may they serve as a reference or nominator. Additionally, current and former members of the Awards Committee, as well as their spouses and family members, are not eligible for nomination, nor may they serve as a reference or nominator.
- Spouses and family members of individuals to be nominated may not serve as a nominator nor a reference.

- Spouses and family members of the staff of programs and organizations to be nominated are not eligible to serve as a nominator nor a reference.
- Florida Blue Foundation does not make grants or charitable contributions to organizations that discriminate in their provisions of goods and services based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, veteran status, or marital status.
- All chosen finalists must be available for interviews and recording by the Foundation and must be present at the Sapphire Awards program and dinner on May 1, 2025.

## **SUBMITTING A NOMINATION APPLICATION**

Florida Blue Foundation uses an online application process. After you have read/printed/saved the 2025 Sapphire Awards Nomination Application Guidelines, please access the [online application portal](#) to start a new Program, Organization, or Individual nomination application; access an existing nomination application that you opened, created, or saved; or submit a completed nomination application.

Individuals who wish to submit a nomination and prefer to not nominate under their organization, or who are retired or between jobs, should send an email to [floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com](mailto:floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com) with subject line: *Sapphire Award Nomination by Individual*. Include in the email the following information for the Nominator: Full Name, Email, Mailing Address, and Phone. You will receive an email from the grant administrator with information you will need to access the application portal.

## **QUESTIONS**

Please direct questions to:

Email: [floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com](mailto:floridabluefoundation@floridablue.com)

Phone: 800-477-3736, ext. 63215.