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**Reinvestment Fund and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Name Eau Claire  
One of 50 *Invest Health* Cities**

*Eau Claire to join innovative, national program to improve health in low-income neighborhoods*

Eau Claire, May 17, 2016—The city of Eau Claire has been selected by Reinvestment Fund and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to take part in the new *Invest Health* initiative. *Invest Health* is aimed at transforming how leaders from mid-size American cities work together to help low-income communities thrive, with specific attention to community features that drive health such as access to safe and affordable housing, places to play and exercise, and quality jobs.

Eau Claire was selected from more than 180 teams from 170 communities that applied to the initiative. Cities with populations between 50,000 and 400,000 were asked to form five-member teams including representatives from the public sector, community development, and an anchor institution, preferably academic or health-related. The Eau Claire team comprises representatives from City Administration, Housing Authority, Public Health, Realtor’s Association, and UW-Eau Claire. The team will work to creatively look at options to improve community health through investments in housing quality and availability for low-income and student populations.

“We are excited to work with partners across the city to focus our efforts on improving health outcomes through affordable housing, healthy spaces, and sustainable growth,” said Dale Peters, City Manager. “This project will fit naturally into the great work we are already doing to improve our neighborhoods and community health.”

Mid-size American cities face some of the nation’s deepest challenges with entrenched poverty, poor health and a lack of investment. But they also offer fertile ground for creative strategies that improve health and have the potential to boost local economies. The program has the potential to fundamentally transform the way Eau Claire improves opportunities to live healthy lives.

“With a long history in community development finance, we are excited to help create a pipeline to channel capital into low-income communities through public and private investments,” said Amanda High, Chief of Strategic Initiatives at Reinvestment Fund. “Our goal is to transform how cities approach tough challenges, share lessons learned and spur creative collaboration.”

Over the next 18 months, *Invest Health* teams will take part in a vibrant learning community, have access to highly skilled faculty advisors and coaches who will guide their efforts toward improved health, and receive a \$60,000 grant. Eau Claire will also engage a broader group of local stakeholders to

encourage local knowledge sharing. Learning from the national program will be synthesized and disseminated through the [project website](#).

“Public officials, community developers, and many others have been working in low-income neighborhoods for years, but they haven’t always worked together,” said Donald Schwarz, MD, MPH, MBA, RWJF Vice President, Program. “*Invest Health* aims to align their work and help neighborhoods thrive by intentionally incorporating health into community development.”

Eau Claire will explore a broad range of ideas related homeownership and investment in improving housing quality for student and permanent residents. Project teams will travel to Philadelphia for a kick-off meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup> and will meet regularly to share lessons learned throughout the 18-month project. A full list of awardees and more information is available at [www.investhealth.org](http://www.investhealth.org).

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#### **About Reinvestment Fund**

Reinvestment Fund is a catalyst for change in low-income communities. We integrate data, policy and strategic investments to improve the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods. Using analytical and financial tools, we bring high-quality grocery stores, affordable housing, schools and health centers to the communities that need better access—creating anchors that attract investment over the long term and help families lead healthier, more productive lives. Learn more at [reinvestment.com](http://reinvestment.com).

#### **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).