



Call for Nominations: Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity
May 2026

Background

Though maternal mortality has declined globally over the past decade, there are many communities around the world that continue to be disproportionately affected. In many countries, unacceptable maternal health outcomes persist. A long history of unequal access to health care, as well as the underlying social determinants of health, are key factors that contribute to these differences.

Around the world, visionary leaders and community-based organizations are creating a path to a world where maternal health outcomes are equitable, and **pregnancy and childbirth are safe for all**. They are helping to create a world where every prenatal visit, every labor and delivery and every postpartum encounter for the first year after childbirth will result in the healthiest possible outcomes. From providing practical support to women during childbirth to connecting families to health and social services, we believe the solutions to improve maternal health outcomes exist within the communities most negatively impacted.

Prize Overview

In 2021, Merck for Mothers*, Merck's \$650 million global initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die while giving life, launched the Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity. This annual prize provides a grant to an organization in recognition of its commitment to and progress towards more equitable, more respectful, higher quality maternal health for all. This award is named after Kenneth C. Frazier as a testament to his unwavering commitment to social justice and leveraging the private sector for public good.

The Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity will provide one eligible not-for-profit organization per year with a one-time grant of up to \$250,000 to support its work to advance maternal health equity. Nominated organizations may be located anywhere in the world and must have made a demonstrated and distinctive impact in advancing maternal health outcomes with a strong preference for organizations led by individuals representative of the focus population served.

Merck for Mothers is now inviting nominations for the annual Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity. An individual may nominate more than one organization for consideration; self-nominations are encouraged. To nominate an organization for the award, complete this form to respond to the following questions:

Section 1: Nominator & Organization Information

1. Your name
2. Your email address
3. Name of organization being nominated
4. Website of organization

5. Where is the organization headquartered?
6. Where will the proposed programs and activities be implemented? (Please specify country/countries and where applicable, the sub-national level (e.g. state, region, country). This may differ from where the organization is registered.)

Section 2: Organizational Status & Contact

7. Does the organization hold 501(c)(3) nonprofit status?
8. Does the organization hold international nonprofit status?
9. Name and title of the organization's point of contact
10. Email address of the organization's point of contact

Section 3: Leadership, Impact & Maternal Health Equity

11. How is this organization reflective of the community it serves? (e.g., leadership representation, lived experience, community engagement, governance)
12. Why do you believe this organization is advancing maternal health equity?
13. What evidence can you share to demonstrate impact? (e.g., outcomes or results, data/metrics, scale or reach, policy influence, or specific examples of impact)

Section 4: Award Impact & Use of Funds

14. How would receiving the Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity enhance the organization's capacity to improve maternal health equity?
15. How would the organization propose to use the grant funds (up to \$250,000 USD) to extend its impact on maternal health equity, if selected? Please specify how you would use the award funds on programmatic activities, personnel, indirect costs/overhead, etc.
16. Proposed project length (in months)

The deadline to submit a nomination is 30 June 2026. Upon receipt of nominations, a committee will conduct an eligibility screening based on the guidance below. Nominations will then be assessed based on the strength of the responses to the questions posed in the nomination form. During the selection process, additional information may be required from a small group of finalists to select the final awardee.

Eligible Organizations

An organization is eligible to receive the Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity only once. Organizations led by individuals representative of the focus population served are strongly preferred.

Merck for Mothers is only able to fund not-for-profit organizations through this grant award. Merck for Mothers cannot provide funding to city or state health departments, other government entities, hospitals or health systems. Merck for Mothers also cannot provide funding to political organizations, campaigns and activities or to organizations



that discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, national origin, veteran's status or disability.

Awardees will be eligible for a one-time grant of up to \$250,000 USD. Grant funding may not constitute more than fifty percent (50%) of the recipient's annual operating budget.

The following activities are also not eligible for the use of grant funds:

- Activities or organizations that directly influence or advance Merck's business (commercial) or marketing interests, including purchase/influence of purchase of Merck's products
- Engagement/payments of government officials and city agencies (which in many cases could include hospital employees in government-run facilities)
- Payments/incentives/benefits going to health care providers
- Purchase of computers or other durable goods. This also includes any equipment with a lifespan beyond the end date of the project.
- Capital expenses, including construction and renovation of facilities or endowments
- Purchase of supplies or equipment unrelated to this project or program
- Payment of staff salaries or other costs not involved in this project or program

Any grant made pursuant to the Kenneth C. Frazier Award for Maternal Health Equity is conditioned upon the execution of a grant agreement by the awardee and Merck for Mothers in the form provided by Merck for Mothers.

Questions

Applicants should submit any questions regarding this call for nominations to: CSTMFORMOTHERS@merckformothers.com by **15 May 2026**. Responses will be shared by **29 May 2026**.

Proposal Submission

Nomination forms must be submitted by **11:59PM (ET) 30 June 2026**. It is the nominator's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed by this time. The nominator bears full responsibility for data errors or omissions.

Review & Notification Process

A selection committee will review all proposals and notify nominees no later than **31 August 2026**.

Timeline

Call for nominations issued	4 May 2026
Questions submitted regarding the call for nominations	15 May 2026
Responses to questions shared with applicants	29 May 2026
Nominations due	30 June 2026
Nominees notified of status	31 August 2026
Prize awarded	By end of 2026, pending grant agreement