

# Dean Thomas LaVeist helps award three local organizations in Johnson & Johnson Health Equity Innovation Challenge

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David Gladow [dgladow@tulane.edu](mailto:dgladow@tulane.edu)

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Dr. Thomas LaVeist, dean of the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, recently served as judge for the 2021 Johnson & Johnson Health Equity Innovation Challenge. The competition today announced three award winners from the New Orleans area.

Chosen from more than 180 applicants, the winners embodied the spirit of providing transformational innovation and socioeconomic impact, as well as a dedication to help close racial health and mortality gaps. All awardees are doing their part to dismantle systemic barriers that impact the collective health of communities of color.

The New Orleans area awardees included:

- The [Ashé Cultural Art Center's I Deserve It! Program](#) – This program trains artists and culture bearers to serve as community health workers who can deliver health messaging, resources, and education to health-deficient New Orleans neighborhoods.
- The [Formerly Incarcerated Transitions \(FIT\) Clinic](#) – The FIT Clinic provides crucial medical care and access to local resources for residents of New Orleans and surrounding parishes who are integrating back into the community after serving time in a correctional facility.
- [Resilience Force](#) – This job development and crisis response organization retrain under-or unemployed New Orleanians from the hospitality industry as community health workers.

The winners are all receiving seed funding from a pool of more than \$1 million, mentorship opportunities from experts, and access to the Johnson & Johnson Innovation – JLABS ecosystem, which includes networking opportunities and more based on unique needs, to further advance their innovations.

You can learn more about all 14 awardees and the challenge [here](#).