



the incubator hub by Healthy Teen Network

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Sprout: A Design Challenge

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## What is Sprout?

*Sprout: A Design Challenge* is a four-day deep-dive training where teams of three get hands-on with human-centered design to tackle a real-world challenge. Imagine it as a human-centered design boot camp—lots of learning, lots of doing, and a coach to guide you every step of the way! Over four days, with a helpful coach, the teams journey from start to finish, from idea to prototype.

## When is it?

The event runs from Monday, March 9, 2026, to Thursday, March 12, 2026. The tentative schedule is as follows:

- Monday: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM ET
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM ET

## Where is it?

Pack your bags for Providence, Rhode Island! We're hosting the event at a matriarch-inspired, creative collective that is the perfect backdrop for your human-centered design learning adventure.

## Who should apply?

This opportunity is for human-centered design newbies—i.e., teams with little to no experience in human-centered design. We're looking for teams that work well together, have a go-with-the-flow attitude, and are ready to adapt to new challenges. We warmly welcome applications from individuals with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences, including those from underrepresented and underserved communities. We aim to bring together teams that reflect the richness and variety of communities across the country.

- Read [all of the application questions](#).
- The application portal is now open: [apply now!](#)



## When/How can I apply for the design challenge?

If you're interested in applying for *Sprout*, we encourage you to visit [our website](#) for more information and to submit your application as soon as possible. **Please note that we will accept only the first 42 applications to ensure each team receives an equitable, dedicated, and timely review by our selection committee.**

## How big are the teams?

Teams participating in *Sprout* consist of **three individuals** who bring diverse perspectives, skills, and experiences to the table. We encourage people to come together as teams whose skills complement one another and who have prior experience working together, but **you don't have to come from the same organization**. This collaborative approach ensures that teams can leverage their collective strengths and effectively navigate the challenges presented during *Sprout*.

Each team member plays a crucial role in the ideation, prototyping, and presentation phases of the challenge. By working closely together, teams can harness their combined creativity and expertise to develop innovative solutions to real-world problems.

## Can some team members participate in person and others virtually?

*Sprout: A Design Challenge* is an in-person opportunity where selected teams will join us for a hands-on, four-day workshop to learn to use human-centered design methods. **There is no virtual component to this opportunity.** If you or other members of your team have any questions or concerns regarding accessibility, we encourage you to reach out to our team by emailing us at [innovation@HealthyTeenNetwork.org](mailto:innovation@HealthyTeenNetwork.org).

## Can I still apply if only two team members can attend the design challenge?

To be eligible for this opportunity, a team that applies must meet all our required criteria, including having three team members who can attend the event. Please refer to our "Requirements to Apply" section of [our website](#) for more information.



## What if I can't be there for all four days? Can I just attend some of the days?

Each team member plays a crucial role in the ideation, prototyping, and presentation phases of the challenge. As such, all team members of selected teams must attend all four days of *Sprout: A Design Challenge*. Full participation is essential to maximizing the event's impact and contributing to the collaborative design process.

## How much does it cost?

Each person on a selected team gets a \$2,500 stipend to support transportation, accommodation, and other costs associated with attending the event. Each member of a selected team will have the option to receive their stipend via direct deposit or a check provided on the first day of the event. Lunch and snacks will be provided on each of the four days of *Sprout*. **All expenses beyond this stipend are the responsibility of the selected teams.**

## If the funds don't cover all my costs, who pays for the rest?

All expenses beyond the stipend of \$2,500 are the responsibility of the selected teams.

## Is *Sprout* federally funded?

*Sprout: A Design Challenge* is part of our In/Tend Incubator initiative and, as such, is federally funded. However, *Sprout* is a distinct opportunity from applying directly to In/Tend.

*Sprout* is a capacity-building opportunity designed for teams new to human-centered design. It's a chance to explore the approach, spark curiosity, and add a new tool to your team's toolbox.



## Does my experience count as "human-centered design" or "innovation"?

Sprout is tailored for individuals new to the concepts of human-centered design and innovation. If you have little to no experience in human-centered design, *Sprout* is the perfect opportunity for you to dive in and explore this exciting field.

If you already know and enjoy human-centered design and feel it's your thing, *Sprout* likely isn't the best match for you. *Sprout* is specifically designed to welcome newcomers to human-centered design. We want individuals who are curious, eager to learn, and ready to embrace the principles of human-centered design.

If you're uncertain whether your experience aligns with *Sprout*, we encourage you to apply and let our selection committee assess your suitability for the program.

## I work in [x] field. Am I eligible?

As long as you meet the eligibility criteria outlined for *Sprout: A Design Challenge*, including being at least 18 years old and having little to no prior experience in human-centered design or having participated in similar design challenge events, you are eligible to apply. We welcome applicants from all fields and backgrounds!

## Is my application complete? What is the status of my application?

If you want to confirm that we received your submission, first check whether you received a survey completion thank-you email. If you did, then you are all set! You can expect to hear from us in early February. If you have any specific questions about completing your application, feel free to reach out to our team at [innovation@HealthyTeenNetwork.org](mailto:innovation@HealthyTeenNetwork.org). We may have delays in responding to individual requests to check application statuses. We ask for your patience and understanding.

The application portal will close and stop accepting further applications once we receive **42 submissions**, or on **January 9, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET**, whichever comes first. We highly encourage and recommend interested teams to apply as soon as possible.



## I'm having a technical issue with the application and can't submit.

If you are encountering critical technical difficulties with the application, feel free to reach out to our team for assistance only after doing your best to troubleshoot the issue, such as using a new browser, opening a new incognito window, or clearing your browser's cookies. You can email our team at [innovation@HealthyTeenNetwork.org](mailto:innovation@HealthyTeenNetwork.org). Please note we may have delays in responding to individual requests. We ask for your patience and understanding.

## I'd like to make a change to my application.

Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate revisions to an application once it has been submitted. Depending on each team's circumstances, we *may* permit minor edits to data that were incorrectly entered, such as revisions to team contact information or organization names. However, substantial edits, such as essay answers, are not permitted.

## How are participants selected?

### Selection Process

An independent selection committee carefully reviews applications. This committee is made up of experts in innovation and adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

To ensure all teams receive a dedicated, fair, and timely review from our selection committee, we must limit the total number of submissions to 42. We understand that this is an uncommon application process, and in the spirit of innovation and transparency, we welcome any [feedback on this process](#).

### Selection Criteria

The Selection Committee will be evaluating applications based on:

- **Team Composition & Collaboration:** Do they have strategies to promote effective communication and collaboration within the team? Are their skills complementary?
- **Excitement & Motivation:** Is the team enthusiastic about the opportunity? We're looking for teams with a genuine passion for learning something new and making a difference.



- **Experience & Adaptability:** What prior experiences have prepared the team for this adventure? How adaptable are they in navigating new situations and learning opportunities?
- **Alignment with Innovation Dynamics:** Does the team demonstrate a creative, innovative approach in their application? Do they show promise for translating ideas into action?

The Selection Committee will be looking for applications that creatively illustrate who the team is and how they work effectively together. We are also looking for teams that embody the potential for innovation and show the promise of putting it into action if given the opportunity, such as through the *Sprout* experience, but they have not had a chance to do so yet.

The application portal will close and stop accepting further applications once we receive **42 submissions**, or on **January 9, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET**, whichever comes first. We highly encourage and recommend interested teams to apply as soon as possible.

Applicants will be notified of their application status by February 2, 2026. Teams must confirm their participation by February 9, 2026.

Teams that accept the invitation to join *Sprout: A Design Challenge* must then arrive on time and participate in the event from March 9 to March 12, 2026.

## I missed the application. Can I apply next year?

Once the application portal closes on January 9, 2026, at 11:59 PM, we will no longer accept applications for *Sprout: A Design Challenge*. To be notified of any upcoming *Sprout* or In/Tend application opportunities, please sign up for our mailing list.

We hope to continue to offer this event in the future and will keep you apprised of developments. In the meantime, we invite you to follow In/Tend and Healthy Teen Network through our [blog](#), [Bluesky](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Threads](#), and to check the [In/Tend website](#) periodically for news and program updates.

Additionally, if you're interested in other incubator or accelerator programs, In/Tend is part of a broader ecosystem sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Population Affairs (OPA). You can learn more about other Hubs at the [Reproductive Health National Training Center's \(RHNTC\) website](#).



## Why was I not selected? Can I have feedback on my application?

Thanks for your interest in *Sprout: A Design Challenge*! We are not able to provide individual feedback as to why a team was not chosen as a *Sprout* finalist. All decisions were made by a selection committee comprised of experts in adolescent health and innovation. The selection committee made its decisions based on a team's composition, excitement, motivation, experience, adaptability, and aptitude for innovation. Preference was given to applicants who:

- Individuals representing historically underserved populations
- Young people, ages 18 to 24

For the complete list of eligibility criteria, please visit our website.

To get the latest news from In/Tend, sign up for updates at [www.healthyteenetwork.org/join](http://www.healthyteenetwork.org/join).

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