

Grant Initiatives

The foundation is currently engaged in a strategic planning process that will guide its grants and activities for the next three to five years. This RFP represents the final grant cycle under the [current strategic plan](#) adopted in 2018. It aligns with the pillars and strategies identified in that plan but also incorporates learnings and challenges of the past few years.

The foundation is pleased to solicit proposals from eligible nonprofit and government organizations for the following grantmaking initiatives:

- Improving Health Equity
- Health and Housing Stability
- Addressing Food Insecurity

Application Information

Proposals must be submitted online and be received by the foundation by **4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 17**. Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered for review.

Instructions for the online application are available on the foundation's website at www.mwhealth.org. **PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM HAS CHANGED.** The new grant portal will make the application process easier. Grantees will now have a single user account to manage all funders using Blackbaud Grantmaking in one consolidated portal. All applicants are encouraged to attend a webinar on Thursday, September 18, from 2:00–3:00 p.m. to learn more about the portal. Please register by emailing Rebecca Donham at rdonham@mwhealth.org.

Concept Papers

The foundation uses concept papers as a way of initiating a conversation with applicants about whether the request is a good fit with current funding initiatives. Concept papers include a one-page summary, a cover sheet and a logic model. Required documents must be submitted no later than Friday, September 26. The foundation strongly encourages applicants to submit their concept papers in advance of this deadline to allow for timely

feedback. Concept papers should be directed to Rebecca Donham at rdonham@mwhealth.org. If you would like to discuss your idea prior to submitting a concept paper, please contact Rebecca Donham or Angela Castrillo at (508) 879-7625.

Foundation Support

Once a grant is made, foundation staff work with grantees to ensure that project outcomes are achievable and measurable, that grant activities are connected to larger community efforts to address area health needs, and that grantees have access to technical assistance and training to help them achieve success. The foundation also seeks to learn from each grant, using site visits and grantee reports to record lessons learned that can inform our work and that of future grantees.

General Restrictions

The foundation supports programs that directly benefit the health of those who live and work in one of the 25 communities served by the foundation. Such support is limited to organizations that qualify as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code, or organizations that are recognized as instrumentalities of state or local government.

The foundation does not provide grants to individuals, nor does it provide funds for endowments, fundraising drives and events, retirement of debt, operating deficits, projects that directly influence legislation, political activities or candidates for public office, or programs customarily operated by hospitals in Massachusetts.

The foundation does not award grants to organizations that discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, disability, citizenship, sexual orientation or veteran status.

About the Foundation

The MetroWest Health Foundation's mission is to improve the health status of the community, its individuals and families through informed and innovative leadership. The foundation serves the following communities: Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medfield, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, Wellesley and Westborough.

Improving Health Equity

Introduction

Reducing health inequities is essential to improving overall health outcomes in the region. While we recognize there are many health disparities, the foundation is focusing on three issue areas significantly impacting health outcomes. Proposals must identify and document which specific disparities within one of the focus areas the project seeks to address and include a targeted plan to reach communities most impacted by those health disparities.

Activities and Outcomes

The foundation is seeking grant proposals from organizations that address health inequities in one of the following areas:

1. Immigrant and Refugee Health: Requests can include, but are not limited to, information and education about legal rights, regional coalitions working to coordinate services and address systemic issues, school-based health services, domestic violence programs and services, and/or chronic disease prevention and management.
2. Mental Health: Requests can include, but are not limited to, projects that promote positive mental health, reduce transportation and linguistic barriers to treatment, expand safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, and/or support women/birthing people while pregnant and in the first year after giving birth. Efforts to support the mental health of local health and human service providers will also be considered.
3. Vaccine Equity: Requests can include activities such as outreach, education, or vaccine clinics that increase access to all recommended vaccines for children and adults.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$40,000 per year and requests can be for up to two years.

Health and Housing Stability

Introduction

Housing costs are a major financial burden for MetroWest residents of all ages and demographic backgrounds. Affordable and safe housing is essential to a healthy life. Impacts on health can be direct, such as lead paint exposures leading to neurological conditions, the presence of mold increasing cases of childhood asthma or deteriorating building conditions leading to preventable falls.

The region's high cost of housing and living also makes it challenging for families and newly arrived immigrants to afford basic needs. There has been an increase in families from all backgrounds seeking temporary shelter because they are unable to afford rising rents. This means an increase in the need for support services and basic healthcare. For older adults on a fixed income, maintaining their home or paying market rate rental prices is unsustainable.

Activities and Outcomes

The foundation is seeking grant proposals to address one of the following objectives:

1. Prevent evictions, assist unhoused individuals in meeting basic needs and navigating systems, and support immigrants and families in obtaining housing subsidies and locating affordable housing options.
2. Decrease housing insecurity among older adults by providing support services to help them stay in their homes.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$40,000 per year and requests can be for up to two years. The foundation will not pay for rental assistance or resident home repairs.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Introduction

Food insecurity in the region was identified as a growing and pressing issue in the MetroWest and Greater Milford Community Health Assessments. According to Project Bread, one in three Massachusetts households were food insecure in 2024. The impact is not felt equally. In 2024, Black and Hispanic households faced the highest rates at 46% and 62% respectively.

Lack of healthy food can result in diets high in low-cost ultra processed foods and lower in fresh produce, meats and dairy. This can lead to type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity.

There are multiple challenges in accessing food, including rising cost of food, transportation, and fear and stigma of going to a food pantry. Changes to the SNAP program, including expanded work requirements, limited exemptions for dependents, and increased state cost sharing, are anticipated to jeopardize the 1.1 million Massachusetts residents who receive SNAP.

Activities and Outcomes

The foundation is seeking grant proposals to address one or more of the following objectives:

1. Provide healthy, nutritious food in a safe and culturally responsive manner. Requests are limited to organizations that offer client choice shopping experiences and are limited to one or more of the following projects:
 - a. Mobile markets, neighborhood-based food programs or home delivery for homebound people that provide safe and convenient options for residents
 - b. Provision of food that is locally grown and/or culturally relevant
 - c. Provision of fresh foods, including meat, cheese, eggs and dairy
2. Assist residents in applying for food assistance programs, including SNAP, WIC or HIP. Assistance should be available in the major languages spoken by individuals seeking help.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$40,000 per year and requests can be for up to two years. Food purchases cannot exceed 50% of the request to the foundation.