

INTRODUCTION

The MetroWest Health Foundation is committed to the advancement of health equity with the goal to enabling all residents of the MetroWest region to live and thrive in healthy, resilient and equitable communities.

The MetroWest Health Foundation believes that all organizations have a role to play in creating healthy and equitable communities. The foundation's commitment is to use its position and resources to support equitable communities that share the following values:

- Individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives are accepted and respected in the work to build community;
- All individuals, including underrepresented groups, are included in ways that are both inviting and empowering;
- Those most affected by an issue are at the center of any discussion, process or design that seeks to address the issue; and,
- Communities are stronger when they recognize and acknowledge the roles that racism, inequality and power play in the engagement of residents.

The foundation's unique role is to: 1) support the transformative work of local organizations to meet diversity, equity and inclusion objectives; 2) support the training needs the region's health and social service workforce on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; 3) support community organizing that builds trust with and capacity in communities of color; and 3) support efforts to increase the pipeline of Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) to work in and lead community health and social service organizations in the region.

Specific actions to promote this plan will include the following:

GRANTMAKING

The foundation will develop its grantmaking and program agenda through actively engaging with and listening to grantees and community members to understand community needs and how assistance by the foundation can be most valuable in creating healthy and equitable communities.

The foundation, through its grantmaking process, will solicit grant applications from area organizations that seek to address the systemic barriers that prevent residents from living and thriving in resilient, healthy and equitable communities. These may include actions to:

- 1) Develop and implement comprehensive Health Equity Plans that include input from all stakeholders, including Board, staff, and those using agency services.
- 2) Strategies for the recruitment and retention of diverse staff.
- 3) Training for staff, volunteers and community members with the goal of advancing equity.
- 4) Capacity building that coach/mentor emerging leaders of color or build the capacity of agencies led by people of color.
- 5) Capacity building and support of community organizing work designed to create capacity to build healthier communities.

In addition, the foundation will apply a health equity lens to its review of all grant proposals submitted to the foundation to better understand how area organizations are addressing issues of health equity and how grant funding may further impact this work.

CONVENING

The foundation will continue its backbone support of the MetroWest Racial & Ethnic Disparities Workgroup, which has become a community of practice where representatives of area health and human service organizations can openly discuss the opportunities and challenges in making the region more open to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The foundation will use the Workgroup as an advisory group to shape its health equity programming and co-sponsorship of workshops and trainings focused on health equity.

The foundation will seek out and partner with other organizations and coalitions that share our interest in the advancement of health equity in the MetroWest region. The foundation will also seek to engage other area funders in helping to support and address equity in their efforts to support local health and human services.

TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The foundation is committed to providing training and technical assistance to its staff, volunteers and area health and human services staff and board members on issues of health equity. The foundation will underwrite and sponsor workshops on the following:

- 1) Understanding health inequities in MetroWest and how they directly impact the health of all in the region.
- 2) Tools for implementing diversity, inclusion, and equity strategies within community organizations.
- 3) Understanding the changing demographics of the region.

The foundation will continue its commitment to ensuring local capacity for training and technical assistance on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion through support of the Wayside Equity Training Center.

In addition to training, the foundation will update its guidebook for advancing health equity in the region ([Building Inclusive Communities](#)), which includes tools and resources that agencies can use for addressing health equity.

The foundation will also offer more intensive assistance with the development of Health Equity Plans for select grantee organizations.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

The foundation will use its position in the community to advocate on issues related to health equity. The foundation will produce a health equity blog (*Equity Matters*) six times per year. The blog will highlight equity issues as well as the work being done in the region to address such issues. The foundation will also develop appropriate online and printed materials that reinforce the importance of focusing on health equity and the foundation's work in this area. The foundation will also seek to engage other area funders in helping to support and address equity in their efforts to support local health and human services.

DATA ANALYSIS

To better understand where health inequities exist, the foundation will report on metrics and trends that may disproportionately impact populations by income, geography, or race and ethnicity. The foundation will collect, analyze, and publish data segmented by different population groups, where available. These data will be used by the foundation to inform funding and policy decisions and assist local organizations in their own planning and programming.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The foundation will use its resources to encourage a diverse health and human services workforce in the region. Ethnic, racial, and language diversity will be sought in candidates that apply for and are granted scholarships under the foundation's Health Professions Scholarship Program. Diversity will be considered in the recruitment of participants in the foundation's Health Leadership Program. The foundation will also partner with area colleges and universities to provide graduate level internships to students interested in fields relevant to the work of the foundation. This will include continuing to fund stipends to clinical and public health interns at nonprofit and municipal agencies with the goal of increasing the diverse pool of interns seeking opportunities for training and employment in the region.

OPERATIONS

The foundation is committed to fostering an organization that respects and appreciates diversity in all aspects of its work. To that end:

- 1) The foundation's Nominating Committee will seek candidates that bring diversity and varying points of view and life experiences for membership on the board of trustees, committees, and grants panels.

- 2) The foundation will strive to hire staff that reflects the broad makeup and diversity of the MetroWest community.
- 3) The foundation will work to increase its use of BIPOC and women-owned vendors and will strive to select product and service vendors that are committed to promoting a diverse workplace.
- 4) The foundation will work to include BIPOC and women owned investment firms in the management of its endowment.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The foundation will commit to a process of annually reviewing its progress in meeting the objectives of this plan. This review will be used to update and revise the plan as necessary to ensure that it remains current in addressing the health equity issues and needs of the region.