

## **Grant Initiatives**

As the region emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the MetroWest Health Foundation remains committed to addressing its impact on the health of individuals and organizations. We have been in regular communication with grantees to assess their needs and those they serve. As a result, the foundation is offering grants that seek to address a variety of issues in the wake of COVID and a return to in-person programs and services.

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

- Youth Mental Health
- Community Engagement
- Capacity Building
- Responsive

## **Application Information**

Proposals must be submitted online and be received by the foundation by **4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 7**. Instructions for the online application are available on the foundation's website at [www.mwhealth.org](http://www.mwhealth.org). Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered for review.

## **Bidders Conference**

The foundation will host a virtual bidders' conference with information on funding initiatives and the application process on **September 9**, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Please RSVP to [rdonham@mwhealth.org](mailto:rdonham@mwhealth.org) by September 8.

## **Concept Papers/Calls**

The foundation requires applicants to submit a one-page concept paper or call the foundation prior to a full proposal. Concept papers and calls help the foundation assess whether the proposed project is aligned with its funding priorities. Concept papers,

along with an accompanying cover sheet, or calls must be completed by **4:00 p.m. September 17**. The foundation strongly encourages applicants to call or submit their concept papers in advance of this deadline to allow for timely feedback. Please call or email Rebecca Donham at (508) 879-7625 or rdonham@mwhealth.org.

## **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. We encourage grantees to consider the foundation as a resource throughout the duration of the grant.

## **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 that are 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.

# Youth Mental Health Grants

## Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, children have experienced major disruptions as a result of public health safety measures, including school closures, social isolation, financial hardships, and gaps in health care access. Many parents have reported poor mental health outcomes in their children throughout the pandemic. Research from October 2020 showed that 31% of parents said their child's mental or emotional health was worse than before the pandemic. Some children have also exhibited increased irritability, clinginess, and fear, and have had issues with sleeping and poor appetite. As mental health issues become more pronounced among children, access to care issues may also be increasing. These access issues may exacerbate existing mental health issues among children.<sup>1</sup>

Even before the pandemic, significant numbers of MetroWest adolescents were living with mental health challenges. According to the 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, 20% of high school students reported depressive symptoms and 13% had considered suicide in the past 12 months. LGBTQ youth were more than twice as likely than heterosexual cisgender youth to report depressive symptoms and three times as likely to have seriously considered suicide.

## Activities and Outcomes

The foundation is seeking grant proposals from schools and organizations who serve children and adolescents that address the following objectives:

- 1. Provide mental health screening and intervention services for children and adolescents at risk for mental health challenges.** This can include, but is not limited to, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and school avoidant youth. The foundation will support evidence-based/-informed services and supports **at MetroWest K-12 public schools.**
- 2. Improve access to mental health treatment.** This can include, but is not limited to, supporting referral networks, linkages between child/youth-serving entities and mental health providers, technology solutions, expanded language/cultural capability, behavioral health urgent care models, and integration of mental health services within primary care settings.

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<sup>1</sup> Mental Health and Substance Use Considerations Among Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic, May 2021, Kaiser Family Foundation

## **Funding**

Schools and organizations are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 per year for up to two years. Funds cannot be used to supplant ongoing government operations or support. Applications involving schools must submit a letter signed by the superintendent indicating support of the request.

# ***Community Engagement Grants***

## **Introduction**

COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of directly engaging and working with those most impacted by health inequities to address community health, wellness and safety issues. Higher COVID-19 infection and death rates can be traced back to variety of social determinants that leave residents susceptible to a wide range of acute and chronic health issues. Addressing these issues requires active and intentional community engagement.

Community Engagement Grants are designed to catalyze the voice and energy of the community to address health issues and needs. Grants will be awarded to organizations to focus on specific issues that create barriers to health and wellness. The issues must be identified by those most affected by the barriers in a particular community. Community can be defined by geography or some other unifying characteristic. Collaborations between multiple organizations, especially grassroots groups, is strongly encouraged.

## **Activities and Outcomes**

The foundation is seeking grant proposals from qualified organizations that address the following objectives:

- 1. Community organizing**
  - Outreach, training, convenings, participatory needs assessments or collective action planning to better understand and develop strategies to address health needs
- 2. Policy and/or systems change**
  - Building advocacy for actions that impact community health
- 3. Planning and preparing interventions**
  - Comprehensive needs assessments
  - Feasibility and implementation plans

In each of the above objectives, those most affected by health inequities in the community must be an integral part of the entire process from identifying the issue to developing and implementing strategy to evaluating progress.

## **Funding**

The maximum grant amount is \$25,000 per year for up to two years.

# ***Organizational Capacity Building Grants***

## **Introduction**

When faced with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, community organizations across the MetroWest region quickly pivoted to protect their clients and staff. New service delivery models and safety protocols were quickly established to ensure that residents had access to food and other basic services allowing them to remain as healthy and safe as possible over the course of the pandemic. All of this occurred within a backdrop of uncertainty about staffing, long-term finances and future needs.

As we move beyond the immediate crisis of COVID-19, our attention is focused on ensuring that our region's health and human service providers can further strengthen their capacity to address critical needs. To do this, the foundation is offering Organizational Capacity Building Grants designed to enhance and improve service delivery.

Eligible organizations must be based in MetroWest and have a primary focus on health and/or human services in the region.

## **Activities and Outcomes**

The foundation is seeking grant proposals from qualified organizations that address one of the following objectives:

- 1. Professional development for staff and/or volunteers**
  - Training to enhance knowledge and skills
  - Creation of career ladders to enhance staff recruitment and retention
  - Supervision & support tools for direct service workers
- 2. Improvements to organizational operations**
  - Upgrading, piloting or purchasing new technology
  - Enhancements to financial and/or fundraising systems and practices
  - Improving internal systems and practices, including governance and administration
- 3. Organizational planning**
  - Strategic planning
  - Succession planning
  - Workforce development plans
  - Mergers and acquisitions.
- 4. Increasing capacity to better serve hard-to-reach populations**
  - Outreach campaigns
  - Mobile/virtual service delivery enhancements

- Marketing & communications planning
- 5. Data collection and evaluation for the purpose of program or operational improvement**
  - Service measurement tools and analysis
  - Impact assessment, evaluation & measurement tools

### **Funding**

The maximum grant amount is \$25,000 per year for up to two years.

# ***Responsive Grants***

## **Introduction**

The foundation will award a limited number of responsive grants that address pressing health needs not included in its other categories.

## **Activities and Outcomes**

The foundation is seeking grant proposals from qualified organizations that address the following objective:

**Respond to new and emerging health issues.** This could include but is not limited to, addressing vaccine hesitancy or barriers; new patterns or trends in substance use in the region; and program needs that stem from new state and/or federal health policies or the disruption of services because of COVID-19.

## **Funding**

The foundation will fund a limited number of proposals through its responsive grantmaking. The maximum grant amount is \$20,000. Grants are for one year only and are not eligible for continuation funding.