

## Grant Initiatives

The MetroWest Health Foundation's [2018-2023 strategic plan](#) guides our grantmaking and program activities. This plan calls for the foundation to focus on integrated approaches that build resilient, healthy and equitable communities. In doing so, we look to engage communities – residents, leaders, grantees and others – in a shared goal of creating long-lasting change. The plan also expands our focus on health equity so that all residents have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.

In keeping with the recommendations of the plan, we are pleased to solicit proposals from eligible nonprofit and government organizations for the following grantmaking initiatives:

- Community Health Innovation
- Workforce Enhancement
- Health Equity
- Vaping Prevention, Cessation and Education
- Responsive

## Application Information

Proposals must be submitted online and be received by the foundation by **4:00 p.m. on THURSDAY, March 26**. 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.

The application process consists of easy-to-follow steps, including completion of Word and Excel narrative and budget forms, entry of information directly into the online system, and uploading of required documents. The system allows users to save an unfinished application and return to it later for completion. More information and resources about applying for a grant can be accessed through the foundation's [Applicant and Grantee Guide](#).

## Grant Applicant Open Houses

The foundation will host two open houses on **February 13 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. and February 14 from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** Potential applicants are encouraged to stop by to discuss their funding idea; learn about the online application process; understand what our reviewers look for in a successful proposal; increase their understanding of logic models; and answer any questions. You do not need to RSVP – just come to our offices at 161 Worcester Road, Suite 202, in Framingham.

## **Concept Papers**

The foundation requires applicants to submit concept papers prior to a full proposal. Concept papers help the foundation assess whether the proposed project is aligned with its funding priorities. One-page concept papers must be accompanied by a cover sheet and a draft logic model and be submitted by **4:00 p.m. on March 5**. Please send concept papers to Rebecca Donham at [rdonham@mwhealth.org](mailto: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.

# ***Community Health Innovation Grants***

## **Introduction**

The MetroWest region is one of the healthiest in the state, yet inequities in health outcomes persist. Health status still depends too much on one's zip code, race, education and income. Significant challenges remain in addressing systemic issues around capacity, access and opportunity.

The foundation's Community Health Innovation Grants are designed to identify and invest in the planning and development of ideas and strategies that can address some of the health challenges facing our region. These can be new or a transformation of existing practices. This grant program is an opportunity for area organizations, policy makers and individuals most affected by a health issue, to collectively engage in a problem-solving process that will lead to more effective, equitable and sustainable solutions. ***This is program to engage in a "rethinking" process that allows applicants to collaboratively examine issues, generate innovative ideas and develop a plan for how the innovation could be achieved and scaled. It is not a grant program to fund existing or new services.***

The foundation believes that that the best way to achieve significant and lasting improvements in community health is through cross-sector collaboration. By working together, in an open and meaningful way, stakeholders can reframe and fundamentally disrupt systems that perpetuate health inequities.

## **Activities and Outcomes**

The foundation seeks to support a lead nonprofit or municipal agency acting on behalf of a group of collaborative partners (i.e. government, business, community, religious, educational, and grassroots groups). The partners must engage in a targeted planning process designed to find innovative ways to address specific health issues facing the region. The intent of these grants is to support an authentic and inclusive planning process leading to innovative ideas and strategies. Collaboratives must include those who are directly affected by the health issue to be addressed.

While not all partners must be identified at the time of the application, at least three entities, representing different sectors, must be included in the application phase. For example, a nonprofit could apply for a partnership with an educational institution and a grassroots community group. In addition, a plan for recruiting and engaging those most affected by the issue should be outlined. Preference will be given to collaboratives whose focus is on changing systems that contribute to health inequity as well as those that focus on the populations most likely to experience health inequalities. These include people of color, individuals who are homeless, those affected by mental health and/or substance use disorders, members of the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and others who encounter health inequities.

Community Innovation grants are by ***invitation only***. If you have an idea for an Innovation Grant, please contact Rebecca Gallo at [rgallo@mwhealth.org](mailto:rgallo@mwhealth.org) or 508-879-7625 to discuss it. If your idea seems like a potential fit, you will be invited to submit a concept paper.

## **Funding**

Funds are available to support up to one year of convening and planning, rather than implementation of an identified “solution.” To ensure equitable and fair access to the process, funds may be used to assist individuals and organizations in participating in the process. This could include staff time, transportation, meals, childcare, translation, etc.

There is no maximum application amount. Applicants are encouraged to think critically about what it will take to accomplish the goals of the process. Proposed budgets will be rigorously analyzed to ensure both equity in participation and discipline in the use of funds. The process will be highly competitive and only a limited number of proposals are expected to be funded. Successful proposals will be those that meaningfully engage key stakeholders, willingly share ownership and decision-making among the collaborative’s partners, and creatively bring existing and new community resources to the issue being addressed.

Under this initiative, grantees that successfully identify innovative solutions will be invited to apply for implementation grants. In addition, grantees and their partners will be expected to participate in foundation-initiated trainings on community organizing, fostering innovation and systems change. Dates for trainings will be provided well in advance.

# ***Workforce Enhancement Grants***

## **Introduction**

According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, the United States will face a shortage of between 40,800 and 104,900 physicians by 2030. Factors driving the shortage include an increase in the percentage of residents who are insured, increase in the older adult population, and the retirement decisions of practicing physicians. In MetroWest, the 2019 Community Health Assessment reported that the long wait time for an appointment was the number one barrier to receiving physical health services cited by survey respondents.

The shortage of behavioral health providers is even more acute. According to a 2017 Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation report, wait times for child and adolescent mental health services, providers who accept MassHealth, and clinicians who speak languages other than English are the greatest barriers to receiving care. The MetroWest Community Health Assessment reported that the long wait time for an appointment was the second leading barrier to receiving behavioral health services among survey respondents, behind insurance coverage issues.

## **Activities and Outcomes**

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

- 1. Expand career opportunities for those seeking work in primary care and behavioral health:**
  - a. Develop alliances between educational institutions and the region's health and human service agencies that create career pathways for local students;
  - b. Expand opportunities for using peer coaching and peer recovery support services.
  
- 2. Explore methods to enhance the recruitment and retention of primary care and behavioral health staff:**
  - a. Create or enhance agency career development and mentoring programs;
  - b. Test new recruitment and retention methods;
  - c. Develop models for education loan repayment.
  
- 3. Support and promote a diverse workforce:**
  - a. Develop and/or implement a strategy to recruit and retain staff at all levels who represent the community being served;
  - b. Create pipelines for diverse staff to move into leadership roles;
  - c. Create educational opportunities for staff who speak Portuguese and/or Spanish to become licensed clinicians;

- d. Develop innovative methods to recruit and retain Portuguese and Spanish-speaking clinicians.
4. **Implement technology solutions (telehealth, apps) that create increased efficiencies and/or improve access to needed specialties and practitioners.**

## **Funding**

Grants are for a maximum of \$30,000. Funding cannot be used for incentives, bonuses and loan repayment. Grants are made for one year with the possibility of two additional years of continuation funding.

More information on the health and human service workforce crisis is included in the foundation's new policy brief, [\*When Care Isn't There\*](#).

# Health Equity Grants

## Introduction

The foundation is committed to putting health equity at the core of our efforts to improve health in the region. Grant funding focused on organizational development is one strategy we employ to promote equity.

We believe that if those providing services are committed to equity in staff and board recruitment and retention, as well as to including those most affected by an issue in decision-making processes, then we can begin to move towards greater health equity in the region.

Grants in this category are designed to help agencies further build the capacity needed to systematically address health inequities in MetroWest. For more information on the foundation's health equity strategy, see our [2020 Health Equity Plan](#) and supporting documents.

## Activities and Outcomes

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

- 1. Develop and implement organizational Health Equity Plans.** Support for creating a plan to advance health equity within your agency or to implement aspects of a plan that has been developed. The plan should include input from key stakeholders including those utilizing services; staff; volunteers; senior management; and the Board of Directors. For an example of components to include in your plan see the foundation's [Building Inclusive Communities Guidebook](#) (page 17).
- 2. Support for development and implementation of health equity training and education programs.** Internal training for staff and volunteers as well as community-wide education programs will be considered.
- 3. Capacity building grants to support agencies led by people of color working on issues of health equity in their communities.** Support to improve sustainability and increase the reach of agencies led by people representative of the populations they serve. Some examples of capacity building are strategic planning and growth; professional development for staff and/or volunteers; improving financial systems; improving or creating evaluation systems; and board development. Agencies led by people of color are defined as agencies with people of color in leadership positions on the board and staff levels, as well as involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.

## **Funding**

Grants are for a maximum of \$30,000. Grants are made for one year with the possibility of two additional years of continuation funding.

# ***Youth Vaping Prevention, Cessation and Education Grants***

## **Introduction**

The reduction in youth smoking rates over the past 12 years is a public health success. According to the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, 35% of high school youth in the region reported lifetime smoking in 2006 compared to just 12% in 2018, and current use of cigarettes among this age group dropped from 15% in 2006 to just 3% in 2018.<sup>1</sup> However, over the past few years these gains are being reversed by drastic increases in youth e-cigarette use. According to the same 2018 survey, 41% of MetroWest high school students used e-cigarettes (“vaped”) in their lifetime compared to 28% in 2016 (the first year the survey measured e-cigarette use).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, current e-cigarette use increased from 15% in 2016 to 28% in 2018.<sup>3</sup> The tobacco industry has touted e-cigarettes as a healthier alternative to conventional cigarette smoking. While this may be true for adult smokers, the rate at which adolescents who had not previously used tobacco products are using e-cigarettes is concerning. E-cigarettes contain high levels of nicotine and youth who vape are four times more likely to smoke conventional cigarettes than their peers who do not vape.<sup>4</sup> Research also points to nicotine’s harmful effects on the developing brain (until age 25), including becoming addicted faster, having more difficulty quitting and a having higher risk for addiction to other substances in the future.<sup>5</sup>

The Massachusetts State Legislature recently passed a law restricting the sale of all flavored tobacco, including mint and menthol with the exception of those sold and consumed in smoking bars. In order to decrease e-cigarette use among youth, it is also essential to continue and enhance comprehensive prevention efforts, offer cessation support and resources to youth, and educate all in the community, especially youth, caregivers and those working with youth about the negative long-term health impacts of e-cigarette use.

## **Activities and Outcomes**

The foundation is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to provide:

**Prevention, cessation and education programs or activities designed to decrease youth e-cigarette use.** Proposals can target youth, parents, educators and/or those who work with youth (i.e. coaches, out of school time program staff, etc.). They can be specific to one school district or agency, but collaborative approaches across municipal departments and agencies

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<sup>1</sup> *MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey: 2018 Regional Highlights Report. Grades 9-12.* EDC. <https://www.mwhealth.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Adolescent%20Health%20Survey%202018%20High%20School.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The Truth Initiative: <https://truthinitiative.org/our-top-issues/vaping-issue>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

within a town/city or that include multiple towns/cities are encouraged. Funding can be used for developing comprehensive strategies to address youth vaping or to implement interventions. Programs should be grounded in best practices in youth tobacco prevention. See select resources below (*Note: this is not an exhaustive list and the foundation does not specifically endorse strategies or programs*).

[\*Addressing Vaping: Strategies for Youth Prevention and Cessation\*](#)

[\*Massachusetts Department of Public Health: The New Look of Nicotine Addiction\*](#)

[\*Stanford Medicine: Tobacco Prevention Toolkit\*](#)

**Funding**

Grants are for a maximum of \$30,000. Funds cannot be used for equipment, such as vaping detectors and cameras. Grants are made for one year with the possibility of two years of additional funding.

## ***Responsive Grants***

### **Introduction**

The foundation offers limited funding for projects that fall within our mission to improve the health and wellness of our 25 MetroWest communities but are outside of our priority focus areas.

### **Activities and Outcomes**

Responsive grants are one-time, non-renewable grants. Therefore, the foundation encourages submission of applications for which ongoing support is not required or can be financially or programmatically sustained from sources other than the foundation.

The foundation will support activities that are beyond the applicant's existing program of services. This could include pilot testing a new program, replicating a model that has shown promise elsewhere, capacity building activities, training, the purchase of equipment and/or materials, or health promotion activities not already occurring in the region.

Applicants must be prepared to collect and report on short-term outcomes by the end of the grant period.

### **Funding**

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

## HEALTH EQUITY 201 WORKSHOP

Join us for **Health Equity 201** presented by Mo Barbosa\* from Health Resources in Action. Last spring, Mo led Health Equity 101 for foundation grantees and other community leaders. This workshop will build on these concepts and go more in-depth into how we can move to action in our community. You are welcome to attend even if you did not attend last year's workshop.

**Date and Time:** April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 8:30am – 3:30pm

**Location:** The Verve Hotel (formerly the Crowne Plaza),  
Rt. 9 East, Natick

**Register at:** <https://tinyurl.com/uleyrd4>

The MetroWest region is one of the healthiest in the state, but everybody does not benefit equally. Differences in health outcomes based on race, education-level, income and zip code persist. Nonprofit and municipal agencies have the power to call out these inequities and work towards a more equitable region.

This is only possible if we understand the root causes and have the tools to engage community to work towards greater equity.

The workshop is open to all. Current foundation grantees are required to attend. Space is limited so register soon.

*\*Mo Barbosa is Director of Community Engagement at Health Resources in Action. Prior to joining HRiA, Mo was Program Coordinator for the Fellowship Center in St. Louis, MO and Director of the Area 4 Youth Center in Cambridge, MA*

If you have any questions, contact Rebecca Gallo at [rgallo@mwhealth.org](mailto:rgallo@mwhealth.org) or 508-879-7625.