

Grant Initiatives

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

- Girls' Mental Health
- Improving Health Equity
- Health and Housing Stability
- Responsive

Application Information

Proposals must be submitted online and be received by the foundation by **4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 19**. Instructions for the online application are available on the foundation's website at www.mwhealth.org. Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered for review.

Concept Papers

The foundation uses concept papers as a way to initiate 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. These required documents must be submitted no later than Friday, October 6. The foundation strongly encourages applicants to submit their concept papers in advance of this deadline to allow for timely feedback. Concept papers and/or questions should be directed to the following program officer:

- For Girls' Mental Health and Responsive grants:
 - Rebecca Donham, rdonham@mwhealth.org, (508) 879-7625 x202
- For Improving Health Equity and Health and Housing Stability grants:
 - Rebecca Gallo, rgallo@mwhealth.org, (508) 879-7625 x207

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 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.

Girls' Mental Health

Introduction

According to the 2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, there have been considerable and concerning increases in anxiety, depressive symptoms, self-injury and suicidal ideation among MetroWest adolescents since 2018. These increases are disproportionately driven by higher reports among females. Girls are more than twice as likely as boys to report mental health problems, with disparities increasing in recent surveys, particularly for suicidal thoughts and behaviors. In addition, girls report more cyberbullying victimization, less sleep and higher usage of social media than boys, behaviors that are negatively correlated with mental health.

Activities and Outcomes

The foundation is seeking grant proposals from schools, municipalities and community-based agencies that promote healthy lifestyles and environments that enable girls to manage stress, anxiety and depression. These could include responsible social media use/social media literacy; self-efficacy skills development; healthy habits, such as sleep, nutrition and exercise; and cyberbullying prevention and peer support enhancement.

Funding

Schools and youth-serving agencies are eligible to apply for up to \$30,000 for one year. Funding can be used for consultation, curriculum materials, program/activity supplies, staff time and other direct program expenses.

Grantees will be expected to participate in periodic technical assistance convenings. Applications involving schools must include a letter signed by the superintendent indicating support of the request.

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 in the region, the foundation is focusing on four issue areas where they are significantly impacting health outcomes in the region. Proposals must identify the specific disparities within one of the focus areas the project seeks to address and include a targeted plan to reach communities most impacted by the identified health disparity.

Activities and Outcomes

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

- 1. Maternal health outcomes:** Requests can include but are not limited to programs that provide support to women/birthing people while pregnant and in the first year after giving birth; training for professionals who support women/birthing people while pregnant and in the first year after giving birth; education campaigns designed to raise community awareness.
- 2. Access to primary and specialty care:** Requests can include but are not limited to projects that reduce transportation barriers, linguistic barriers and improve care coordination.
- 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.
- 4. MassHealth Redetermination:** Requests can include but are not limited to projects that increase awareness in the community about the redetermination process; reduce linguistic barriers; and train staff/volunteers to assist with re-enrollment or enrollment in alternate insurance programs when appropriate.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$25,000 for one year.

Health and Housing Stability

Introduction

Housing costs are a major financial burden for MetroWest residents of all ages and demographic backgrounds. The focus of this funding is seeking to mitigate the impact on older adults, families with children, and newly arrived immigrants and refugee populations. The UMass Boston Elder Index ([Homepage | Elder Index](#)) calculates that in order for a single older adult, who is renting their home in Middlesex County to meet their basic needs, they need over \$41,000 a year, which is 144% of the national average. Even for those who own their home with no mortgage, they need over \$31,000 a year to meet basic needs, which is 133% of the national average. The cost of housing and other basic needs, like food, are rising. For older adults on a fixed income, maintaining their home or paying market rate rental prices is unsustainable.

The high cost of housing and of living in the region also makes it challenging for families and newly arrived immigrants to afford basic needs. There has been an increase in migrants who are housed in temporary shelter across the state, including in the MetroWest region. This means an increase in the need for support services and basic healthcare.

Activities and Outcomes

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

- 1. Decrease housing insecurity among older adults:** Requests can include but are not limited to projects that provide support services to help older adults stay in their homes.
- 2. Increase support services to families with children and newly arrived immigrant populations residing in temporary housing in the MetroWest region:** Requests can include but are not limited to projects that provide increased access to primary and behavioral health care services and help in meeting basic needs.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$25,000 for one year. The foundation will not pay for rental assistance or resident home repairs.

Responsive Grants

Introduction

The foundation will fund a limited number of responsive grants, defined as health projects that fall outside of the foundation's defined initiatives. These grants will focus on providing limited and short-term funding for approaches to address unmet health needs in communities served by the foundation.

Activities and Outcomes

Because responsive grants are short term, the foundation encourages submission of applications for which ongoing support and sustainability are not required. In this round of funding, the foundation will provide grants that specifically address one of the top issues identified through the *2023 Community Health Assessment*. These are as follows:

Mental Health: offering short-term mental health interventions that seek to expand access to care for youth and/or adults; offering mental health awareness training and education; and/or implementing technology-based solutions.

Substance Use: implementing evidence-based prevention programs and curricula; launching stigma reduction efforts; expanding use of peer specialists; and/or offering social supports for youth in recovery.

Food Security: increasing access to fresh, healthy foods, including projects that aim to decrease the SNAP and WIC gaps; offering nutrition education; and/or increasing access to culturally relevant foods.

Built and Natural Environment: creating community spaces and programs that aim to improve health through decreasing social isolation and building and strengthening social connections within communities.

Funding

The maximum grant amount is \$20,000 for one year.