

INTRODUCTION

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

The MetroWest Health Foundation believes that all organizations have a role to play in advancing this work. Core principles that the foundation believes are important for creating equitable communities are:

- Individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives are accepted and respected in the work to build community;
- All individuals, including traditionally 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, and power play in health inequities.

The foundation's unique role is to: 1) support the transformative work of local health and human service 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 where health disparities exist; 4) analyze and make available local data to inform this work; and 5) support efforts to increase the pipeline of Black, Indigenous and people of color 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.

The foundation, through its grantmaking process, will solicit grant applications from area organizations and municipal entities that seek to address the systemic barriers that drive health inequities. These may include actions to:

- 1) Build capacity to support community organizing work focused on community health.
- 2) Build capacity to recruit and retain a talented and diverse workforce.
- 3) Address the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color or specific populations (i.e. adolescent girls)

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 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) Wayside Equity Center- Equity 101 Trainings: Series of 12 workshops focused on how organizations can incorporate equity into all their practices and programming. It is open to all grantees and MetroWest nonprofit and municipal agencies.
- 2) Wayside Equity Center – Equity Action Plan Development: Series of 10 sessions designed for a small cohort of agency leaders to learn the practical skills and to develop and implement organizational action plans.
- 3) Municipal Public Health Training: Leadership series for local public health staff with multiple topics, including taking action to address racism as a public health issue.
- 4) MetroWest Health Leadership Program: The curriculum includes training focused on leading through an equity lens.

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

The foundation will identify and assist grantee organizations who may require further work to enhance their internal Health Equity Plans.

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*) approximately 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 its funding, policy and program 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 also be considered in the recruitment of participants in the foundation's Health Leadership Program. The foundation will continue 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 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 work to increase its use of BIPOC-owned and women-owned vendors, including in its investments and will strive to select product and service vendors that are committed to promoting a diverse workplace.

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.