

Grant Initiatives

The MetroWest Health Foundation recently completed a new strategic plan that will guide our grantmaking and program activities for the next five years. This plan calls for the foundation to move from an issue-based programmatic approach to a cross-cutting and more integrated approach focused on building resilient, healthy and equitable communities. Our new focus will be on engaging 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
- Health Equity
- Responsive

Application Information

Proposals must be submitted online and be received by the foundation by **4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 19, 2018**. Instructions for the online application are available on the foundation's website at www.mwhealth.org.

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. Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered for review.

Bidders Conference

The foundation will host a bidders' conference with information on funding initiatives and the application process on **Monday, September 24, from 3:00-4:30 p.m.** at the foundation's offices, located at 161 Worcester Road, Suite 202, in Framingham. Attendance is not required but is strongly encouraged.

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 pm on **September 28**. Please send concept papers to Rebecca Donham at 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

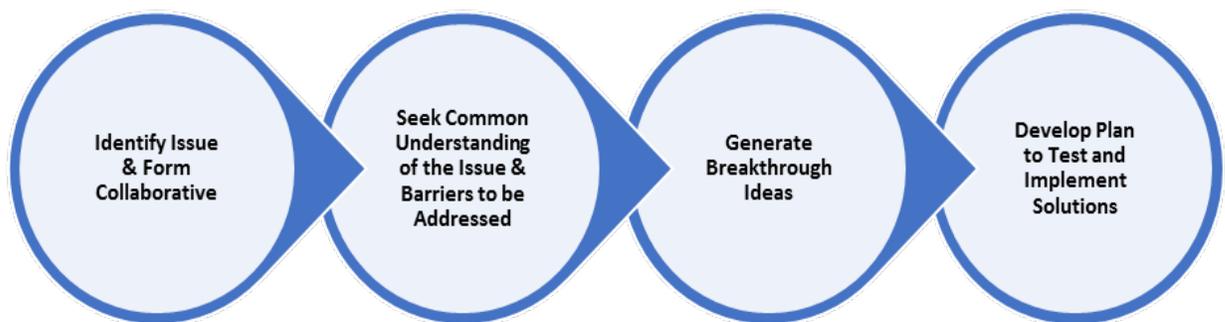
Introduction

The MetroWest region is one of the healthiest in the state, yet there are still inequities in the region’s health outcomes. Health status still depends too much on one’s zip code, race, education and income, and 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 new solutions that can address some of the health challenges facing our region. The innovation grant program is an opportunity for area organizations to collectively engage in a problem-solving process that will lead to more effective, equitable and sustainable solutions. This is not a grant program to fund existing or new services. Rather, it is program to engage in a “rethinking” process that allows applicants to collaborate, examine issues, generate innovative ideas and develop a plan for how the innovation could be achieved.

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.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION PROCESS



Activities and Outcomes

The Foundation seeks applications from nonprofit agencies on behalf collaborative partners (i.e. government, business, community, religious, educational, and grassroots groups) to 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 process leading to innovative ideas and strategies. Collaboratives must include those who are directly affected by the health issue to be addressed.

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. 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.

Proposals should address a specific community health issue. Numerous community health reports exist that highlight complex community health needs. These include Community Health Assessments for [MetroWest](#) and [Greater Milford](#) and the [MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey](#).

Funding

Funds are available to support up to one year of convening and planning, rather than 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, child care, 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 around Design Thinking and other methods of fostering innovation and systems change.

Health Equity Grants

Introduction

Under its new strategic plan, the foundation will advance health equity with the goal of supporting broad community resident representation and participation in health-related initiatives and increasing diversity and equity capacity of the health and social service workforce.

This will be achieved by 1) supporting health equity and inclusion transformation in MetroWest organizations; 2) training the region's health and social service workforce to meet diversity, equity and inclusion needs; and 3) increasing the diversity pipeline of future leaders in the health and social sectors.

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 [FY19 Health Equity Plan](#) and supporting documents.

Activities and Outcomes

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

- 1. Support and promote a diverse workforce.** Support for recruiting and retaining staff at all levels of an agency that represent the community being served, as well as ongoing training for all staff on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The foundation will support projects that create pipelines for diverse staff to move into leadership roles; innovative ideas on recruitment of diverse candidates; programs designed to retain diverse staff; and cultural competency training for staff and volunteers.
- 2. Increase the number of Portuguese and Spanish speaking mental health clinicians.** Support for projects that create educational opportunities for staff who speak Portuguese and/or Spanish to become licensed clinicians and innovative ideas on recruitment and retention of Portuguese and Spanish speaking clinicians.
- 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 is 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.

- 4. Increase organizational understanding of barriers to achieving health equity and strategies for addressing those barriers.** Support for innovative ideas on building the knowledge of and buy-in from board members and agency leadership for addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. This also includes engaging the populations being served in identifying barriers they face in achieving optimal health and potential ways to overcome those barriers.

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.

Responsive Grants

Introduction

The foundation will fund limited 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 through the following specific responsive categories:

- 1) Activities that respond to pressing health concerns. Documentation of need can be identified through regional Community Health Assessments (CHAs), Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs), the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey and other surveys and needs assessments.
- 2) Capacity building, which could include planning for future sustainability, one-time consultation, replication of state or national models that do not require future funding, new technology, equipment and/or materials, and pilot or start-up programs with identified funding sources beyond the pilot year.

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 for one year only and are not eligible for continuation funding.