

Why did the foundation need to change its strategy?

Since inception, the foundation has engaged in a deliberate process of strategic planning as way to ensure that our grantmaking and program activities are focused on community health needs. This process has led the foundation to have a measurable impact on the health of children and youth, adults and elders, along with special populations such as those with mental illness, those who are homeless and those who use substances.

The foundation's current strategic plan was developed in 2012, and has guided our most recent efforts to address access to care, adolescent mental health and healthy aging. Recognizing that our current plan is now five-years old, and community needs change over time, the foundation's governing board embarked on a new strategic planning process in the fall of 2017.

What did that planning process involve?

The foundation engaged FSG, a philanthropic strategy consulting firm based in Boston. FSG has assisted the foundation in its past strategic planning work (2003 and 2008). As part of its work, FSG has interviewed over 40 key stakeholders, reviewed the work of similar place-based health foundations, and reviewed current need data from the 2016 MetroWest Regional Health Needs Assessment. The process included a variety of interactive sessions with trustees, grant panel members and staff.

How will this new strategy effect what the foundation funds?

The foundation has traditionally funded by issue area, such as our past work on Access to Care or Healthy Aging. Under this new strategy, foundation funding will be focused less on specific issue areas or programmatic approaches, and more on **cross-cutting and integrated approaches focused on building resilient, healthy and equitable communities.**

Our work to build resilient and healthy communities will require that we continue to focus important issues like access, mental health and opioids as these remain important health issues in our community. However, how we approach these issues may change. For example, rather than making grants to individual agencies to support case management, we may convene agencies to see what tools are needed to better bring health care and social services together to benefit residents.

What does a "cross-cutting and more integrated approach focused on building resilient, healthy and equitable communities" really mean?

It means that our work will not just focus on making grants, but will also focus on working within our 25 communities and with our grantees to 1) advance health equity (diversity and inclusion); 2) ensure that basic health needs are met; 3) facilitate information sharing and learning, especially as new policy changes emerge at both the federal and state level; 4) foster and

support innovation; 5) better integrate health and social services so as to address the social determinants of health; and, 6) continue our work to develop effective organizations and leaders within the region.

Why the emphasis on health equity?

The MetroWest area is one of the healthiest regions of the state. Yet, not all MetroWest residents share in the region's positive health status. Factors such as poverty, racism, neighborhood safety, housing affordability and unemployment all have an impact on the health status of many area families. We need to ensure that all aspects of our work take into account and address such inequities. This includes helping our grantees address inequities in the way they organize and deliver services across the region.

Will any current grants be affected by this change?

There will be no changes to current grants as a result of this new plan. If your current grant is eligible for continuation funding, you will certainly be encouraged to apply for a continuation grant. If you are unsure about eligibility, ask the program officer assigned to your grant for clarification.

Will the foundation still be open to responsive grants?

Yes, we will continue to allocate funding for responsive grants to address health needs that you bring to us through the RFP process.

I recently wrote a proposal for the spring 2018 grant cycle; will this change impact my proposal?

Proposal submitted under the foundation's spring 2018 grant cycle will be reviewed in accordance with our spring grant guidelines and will not be impacted by our new strategy.

How can I figure out where my organization's work fits into this new strategy?

Ask us! The foundation has always prided itself on being accessible and transparent. Our work to implement this new strategy will involve lots of past, current and new organizations and partners. If you are unsure of what our plans mean for your organization, ask us. We also want your feedback. If our new plan doesn't make sense to you, tell us. Your feedback will help ensure that our work remains on target.