



Special Initiatives COVID-19 Response Grants Proposal Deadline August 21, 2020

As the implications of COVID-19 continue to unfold, we know that the consequences of this "new normal" are hard to anticipate. As community members and organizations navigate both the response and the recovery phase of the pandemic, the public health care crisis is anticipated to be closely followed by significant behavioral health issues.¹ While most of the attention on COVID-19 has focused on slowing the spread of the virus, the behavioral health impact of this crisis will leave its own pandemic behind. The Foundation recognizes that these two intersecting forces require a dual focus of meeting the basic needs and critical physical health services for community residents and responding to the emerging behavioral health needs related to these challenging times.

While we know that anyone can suffer from behavioral health issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we also understand that for some, the health implications and trauma will be magnified. COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on people of color, (especially Latinx and Blacks), and combined with the impact of recent and longstanding racial injustices, these communities may face even more behavioral health challenges. In addition, residents in rural communities may have more limited access to relief resources to address the impact of the pandemic. To address these issues, and in keeping with the Foundation's mission, the Special Initiatives COVID-19 Response Grants will direct resources to community-based organizations that serve people of color and those in rural communities in Massachusetts, particularly those that are addressing behavioral health needs.

Program Overview

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) Foundation will provide a limited number of one-year grants of up to \$25,000 to Massachusetts organizations undertaking activities that engage in a variety of COVID-19 related activities. These activities must be aligned with the Foundation's strategic priorities to promote access to quality care and coverage, behavioral health services, and social equity and health for low-income and vulnerable residents of the Commonwealth.

Key activities may include:

- Supporting individuals and families in addressing health-related social needs caused by COVID-19, helping them navigate available social services, such as housing and food security, in partnership with or in close alignment with a health care provider.
- Supporting individuals and families in addressing behavioral health needs caused by COVID-19 and its social and economic repercussions.
- Supporting communities in strengthening and building resilience to support individuals and families as they cope with COVID-19 and its aftermath and enhance community preparedness for future physical and/or behavioral health crises.
- Any combination of these activities.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/05/04/mental-health-coronavirus/>

Funding Guidelines and Criteria:

The Foundation will award one-year, non-renewable grants of up to \$25,000. The Foundation reserves the right to make grant awards in amounts less than \$25,000. Successful proposals will:

- Describe a compelling statement of need
- Describe how the proposed activities will focus on and specifically meet the needs of people of color and/or rural communities
- Describe a program that addresses the compelling need and the physical and/or behavioral health of the target population
- Describe the unique impact your organization anticipates having in 12 months as a result of this funding

The Foundation will not consider requests to support the following:

- A program that mirrors the Foundation’s other granted program areas
- Direct medical and clinical care
- Proposals that focus solely on technology or personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Salaries for new positions with no evidence of sustainability beyond the grant period
- Event or conference sponsorship

Eligible Applicants

In reviewing proposals for Special Initiatives COVID-19 Response Grants, the Foundation will only consider those organizations that:

- Primarily serve low-income and vulnerable people, particularly individuals receiving MassHealth or other subsidized health insurance.
- Demonstrate a track record of ongoing programming and services for people of color, rural communities, low-income, and vulnerable Massachusetts residents.
- Are community-based and serve communities of color and/or rural communities that have been identified as having high rates of uninsured in the Foundation’s report, [*The Geography of Uninsurance in Massachusetts: an Update for 2013–2017*](#).

The Foundation does not fund for-profit companies, religious organizations, nor individuals. The Foundation aims to support as many organizations as possible; therefore, preference is given to organizations that we have not recently funded.

Note: *COVID-19 Response Grants guidelines may change as the needs of Massachusetts residents evolve. All such changes will be communicated to applicants and posted on the Foundation’s website.*

Deadlines and Submission Requirements

Full proposals must be submitted through the Foundation's online portal, according to the schedule below. Applicants will be notified about the status of their proposal via email, according to the following schedule:

Requirement	Proposal Due Date	Notification of Award No Later
Submit full proposal through the online portal.	August 21, 2020	September 30, 2020

Full Proposal Narrative

1. **Statement of Need:** Describe the issues related to COVID-19 that your organization is facing—either internally and/or in meeting the needs of your clients. (2,000 characters)
2. **Target Population:** Describe the communities of color and/or rural communities who will benefit from the program. (2,000 characters)
3. **Program Description:** How will the requested funding help your organization address the COVID-19 needs you described above? (3,000 characters)
4. **Impact:** What unique impact does your organization anticipate having in 12 months as a result of this funding? (2000 characters)
5. **Health Equity:** In what ways is your organization working to have a greater impact on those experiencing health inequities due to racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and other structural and institutional barriers? What challenges are you having in achieving your intended impact? (1,000 characters)

Additional Attachments

Organizations will be required to submit the following attachments:

- I. **Project Budget Worksheet:** Utilizing the budget worksheet available for download, describe how the funding would be allocated to cover expenses.
- II. **Budget Narrative Template:** The narrative should be designed to justify the budget. The narrative details must help explain how and where the grant funds will be used.
- III. **Organization Budget:** Upload your organization's board or department-approved budget for the most recent full year.
- IV. **Tax Exempt Designation:** Upload a current 501(c)(3) IRS tax status documentation letter. If you have a fiscal agent, please attach a copy of that organization's IRS ruling, as well as a brief letter stating their commitment to receive the funds as the fiscal agent.

Questions

Applicants are welcome to contact Foundation staff with any questions as they develop their proposals. For proposal development questions, please contact:

Jacquie Anderson, Senior Director of Grantmaking
Jacquie.Anderson@bcbsma.com

For technical and logistical questions related to accessing the online grantmaking portal, please contact:

Evelyn Monteiro, Grants Management Administrator
Evelyn.Monteiro@bcbsma.com

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION
LINE ITEM BUDGET WORKSHEET

Organization Name:

Grant Program Area:

Grant Period: from ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

Personnel	Base Salary	FTEs	Total	BCBSMA Grant	Other Support
Project Director					
Project Staff					
Administrative Staff:					
Other Staff:					
Fringe Benefits (____%)					
Sub-Total					
Other Direct Costs:					
Office Operations					
Equipment					
Meeting Expenses					
Marketing/Communications/Outreach					
Travel					
Project Space					
Evaluation					
Other:					
Sub-Total					
Purchased Services					
Consultants					
Contracts					
Sub-Total					
Indirect Costs (15% Foundation approved rate)*					

TOTAL



Budget Narrative Template

An important component of the submission process is the preparation of a budget narrative. Your best judgment should be used when projecting program expenses.

You should:

- Complete all **Categories** and **Sub-categories** in the table shown below and explain how the funds for this line item will be spent.

NOTES:

- If any of the Categories (e.g. Personnel, Other Direct Costs) or Sub-categories (e.g. Other Staff, Travel, Consultants) are not included in your budget, you may delete them from the table.

Category	Narrative
Personnel: list each position and name of individual under the appropriate sub-category, along with base annual salary, FTE (full-time equivalency or percentage of effort), amount requested, and a detailed description of their planned activities related to the project.	
Project Director	
Project Staff	
Administrative Staff	
Other	
Category	Narrative
Other Direct Costs: for each category, list the components by item and amount. For Project Space, provide the basis used to calculate the amount requested.	
Office Operations	
Equipment	
Meeting Expenses	
Communications/ Marketing/Outreach	
Travel	
Project Space	
Evaluation	
Other	
Purchased Services	
Consultants	
Contracts	