



### **Special Initiatives COVID-19 Response Grants**

As the implications of COVID-19 unfold, we know that the full implications of this "new normal" are hard to anticipate. We are acutely aware that this crisis will manifest differently in different communities. While we know that anyone can contract the virus, we also understand that the impacts on communities of color and rural communities could be particularly severe. To address this need, and in keeping with the Foundation's mission and focus areas, the Special Initiatives COVID-19 Response Grants will direct resources to community-based organizations serving those populations who could be disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus.

### **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 expand access to health care for low-income and vulnerable people in Massachusetts by:

- Engaging in a variety of COVID-19 related activities that are 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.
- Supporting individuals and families in addressing health-related social needs caused by COVID-19, helping them to navigate available social services, such as housing and food security.

### **Funding Guidelines and Criteria:**

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

- Focus on activities that impact health or expand access to health care and coverage for low-income and vulnerable consumers.
- Describe a program that doesn't precisely conform to the requirements of other Foundation program focus areas, yet aligns with the Foundation's mission and strategic focus areas of 1) coverage and care, 2) behavioral health, including telehealth, and 3) social equity and health.
- Clearly describe a deliverable or tangible outcome in twelve (12) months.

The Foundation will not consider requests to support the following:

- direct medical and clinical care
- salaries for new positions with no evidence of sustainability beyond the grant period
- event or conference sponsorship

## Eligible Applicants and Selection Process

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 robust programming and services for 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 in response to the situation and organizational needs. All such changes will be communicated to applicants.

## 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 after each Board meeting.

Requirement	Proposal Due Date	Notification of Award No Later Than
Submit full proposal through online portal.	April 24, 2020 August 21, 2020	June 17, 2020 October 27, 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. (1,000 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. **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)
5. **Evaluation:** What are the measures of success for this twelve-month grant period? (2,500 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. **Letter of Support:** Upload one letter of support that illustrates your organization's capacity for making a measurable impact on the issue to be addressed by the program.

**V. 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](mailto:Jacquie.Anderson@bcbsma.com)

617-246-5434

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

Evelyn Monteiro, Grants Management Administrator; [Evelyn.Monteiro@bcbsma.com](mailto:Evelyn.Monteiro@bcbsma.com); 617-246-4850