



Special Initiatives Grant Guidelines

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 through its Special Initiatives grant program. Grants will support nonprofits seeking to make a positive impact on health or health care access in Massachusetts for people with low-income and residents of Massachusetts who have been economically, socially, ethnically, or racially marginalized. These activities must be aligned with the Foundation's strategic priorities to promote access to quality care and coverage, promote access to behavioral health services, and eliminate structural racism and racial inequities in health.

Key activities may include:

- Developing an innovative pilot or demonstration project that responds to the health-related needs of the community as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or racial inequities
- Evaluating organizational changes implemented due to the pandemic or the recent racial justice movement that seek to make a positive impact on health or health care access for economically, socially, ethnically and racially marginalized clients
- Demonstration or pilot programs that are aligned with the Foundation's strategic priorities to promote access to quality care and coverage, behavioral health services, and eliminate structural racism and racial inequity in health for economically, socially, ethnically and racially marginalized residents of the Commonwealth, but which are outside of the scope of an existing Foundation grant program.

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 a year. This grant program does not require a Letter of Inquiry. The Foundation reserves the right to make grant awards in amounts less than \$25,000. Successful proposals will:

- Reflect one of the key activities noted above
- Demonstrate a clear sense of the problem to be addressed and a concrete approach to addressing it
- Identify a realistic project scope achievable within a one-year timeframe
- Clearly articulate a plan for community engagement and building in time for that work (if applicable)
- Identify key partners (if applicable) and specific roles they will play in program implementation and an early establishment of any key agreements, if they have been identified
- Identify the concrete goals that you would like to achieve, ensuring that they are specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic with a clear timeframe

For the Special Initiatives grant program, the Foundation will not consider requests to support the following:

- Supplies (such as shirts, water bottles), and basic needs items (food, hygiene items, rental assistance). Direct medical and clinical care
- Salaries for new positions with no evidence of sustainability beyond the grant period

- Event or conference sponsorships
- For-profit companies, religious organizations
- Individuals

Eligible Applicants

In reviewing proposals for Special Initiatives grants, the Foundation will only consider those organizations that primarily serve people with low-income and people who have been socially, economically or racially marginalized. The Foundation will prioritize applications from organizations led by People of Color. The Foundation aims to support as many organizations as possible, therefore, preference is given to organizations that we have not recently funded.

Deadlines and Submission Requirements

Full proposals must be submitted through the Foundation’s online portal according to the schedule below.

Requirement	Proposal Due Date	Notification of Awards
Submit full proposal through online portal; no Letter of Inquiry (LOI) required.	April 22, 2021 September 8, 2021	June 1, 2021 October 15, 2021

Full Proposal Narrative

1. Statement of Need: What issue(s) is being addressed by this project? (1,000 characters)
2. Population of Focus: Who will benefit from, be affected by this project? (1,000 characters)
3. Project Description: What is the project you are developing to address this issue? Please include goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic given the one-year grant timeframe (4,000 characters).
4. Project Management: Who are the people that will lead this effort and what factors most predict their ability to achieve success (1,000 characters)
5. Community Engagement: Articulate your community engagement strategy (if applicable).
6. Collaboration: Identify key partners (if applicable) and specific roles they will play in program implementation and if you have an early establishment of any key agreements (1,000 characters)
7. Structural Racism and Inequities in Health: Please describe organizational (rather than project specific) efforts to address internal or external organizational policies/practices that perpetuate structural racism and negatively affect your constituents’ health outcomes. (3,000 characters)

Additional Attachments

Organizations will be required to submit the following attachments:

- I. Project Budget Worksheet**: Utilizing the budget worksheet available on the portal, 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 for readers 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 Letter**

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

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	