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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation Issues Initial Grants Through ‘Racial Justice in Health’ Program

BOSTON (Jan. 18, 2022) – The [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation](#) today announced it has awarded the first grants through its new *Racial Justice in Health* program that will support grassroots nonprofit community organizations led by people of color. These grants were part of the Foundation’s overall grantmaking activity in 2021 that totaled nearly \$4 million and continued philanthropic support for dozens of statewide initiatives involving behavioral health and health care access.

The *Racial Justice in Health* program aims to strengthen the grant partners’ capacity and expertise in health care advocacy, through peer learning and technical assistance. The selected organizations are committed to dismantling institutional and structural racism in health care. The two-year program is supported by two funding partners, [Rx Foundation](#) and [CareQuest Institute for Oral Health](#).

“These initial grants will enhance the capacity of grassroots organizations led by people of color to influence positive change in the health-related challenges that most concern their communities,” said Audrey Shelto, President and CEO of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. “Our goal is to advance policies and practices that promote racial justice and health equity, and for those policies to be shaped and led by those who are most impacted.”

The following organizations received \$50,000 each in an initial year of funding for their initiatives involving community engagement, building grassroots power and developing campaigns:

- **Asian Women for Health**, a peer-led, statewide network based in Somerville dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of Asian women, including cancer survivors and immigrants, through education, advocacy and support.
- **Brookview House**, a Black and Latinx women-led nonprofit organization in Dorchester that provides support services and programs that confront the root causes of homelessness and poverty for low-income mothers and works for justice, equity and systemic change for low-income families.



- **GreenRoots**, an organization that bridges environmental justice and public health by engaging the most impacted residents in the highly industrial neighborhoods of Chelsea and East Boston.
- **La Colaborativa**, which empowers Latinx immigrants in the Chelsea area to enhance the social and economic health of the community and to hold institutional decision-makers accountable to the community.
- **Legendary Legacies**, a Worcester organization that provides case management, mentoring, skills development, and re-entry services for young men of color, including fathers and previously incarcerated or gang-affiliated individuals.
- **Pioneer Valley Workers Center**, a Northampton nonprofit that builds the collective power of low-wage and immigrant workers in Western Massachusetts' agricultural and restaurant industries.
- **Somali Development Center**, a Roxbury-based nonprofit providing educational and social services to refugees and immigrants in Greater Boston who are primarily from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Djibouti.
- **The Welcome Project**, a Somerville-based nonprofit organization that builds the collective power of immigrants to participate in and shape community decisions through programming for youth and adults and families.

The Foundation's grantmaking activity in 2021 included a third and final year of funding through the *Expanding Access to Behavioral Health Urgent Care* program for six community-based organizations; one year of funding to support 14 community health centers and community-based organizations deliver health insurance navigation and enrollment services through the *Connecting Consumers with Care* program; and two years of operational support to 11 health advocacy organizations through the *Strengthening the Voice for Access* grant program.

The Foundation also continued to provide one-time grants through its *Special Initiatives* program, supporting 12 nonprofit organizations that are working to improve health care access for Massachusetts residents who have been economically, socially, ethnically or racially marginalized.

About the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation

The mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to expand access to health care for low-income and vulnerable individuals and families in the Commonwealth. The Foundation was established in 2001 with an initial endowment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. It operates separately from the company and is governed by its own Board of Directors. For more information, visit www.bluecrossmafoundation.org.