



## Special Initiatives Grant Guidelines

### Program Overview

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) Foundation will provide a limited number of non-renewable one-year grants of up to \$50,000 through its Special Initiatives grant program. Grants will support nonprofits seeking to positively impact health or health care access for Massachusetts residents who have been economically, socially, culturally, or racially marginalized. Organizational grant program activities must align with at least one of the Foundation's strategic priorities to promote access to quality care and coverage, access to behavioral health services, and the elimination of structural racism and racial inequities in health.

### Key activities may include:

- An innovative pilot or demonstration project that responds to health and health-related needs of the community, that if successful, could be replicated and scaled.
- An evaluation, assessment, or measurement initiative that advances knowledge about a health or health care issue aligned with the Foundation's strategic focus areas and mission and could position an organization to improve practice internally, and to the extent possible, could be shared and disseminated to advance knowledge, practice, or policy.

Key activities must align with one or more of the Foundation's three [strategic priorities](#) to promote access to quality care and coverage, behavioral health services, and to eliminate structural racism and racial inequities in health **but which are outside** of the scope of an existing Foundation grant program. Projects must serve the Foundation's population of interest: economically, socially, culturally, and racially marginalized residents of the Commonwealth.

### Funding Guidelines and Criteria:

The Foundation will award non-renewable one-year grants of up to \$50,000, with proposals accepted and reviewed twice 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 \$50,000. Successful proposals will:

- Reflect one of the key activities noted above
- Highlight the problem to be addressed and a concrete approach to addressing it
- Identify a project scope that is achievable within the one-year timeframe of the grant program
- Identify an attainable plan for community engagement and building (if applicable)
- Identify key partners (if applicable) and specific roles 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:

- Expansion or ongoing support of an already existing program
- Event or conference sponsorships
- Direct medical and clinical care
- Stand-alone staff training that is not an integral part of the proposed program
- Marketing and outreach supplies (such as shirts, water bottles) and basic needs items (food, hygiene items, rental assistance).
- Salaries for new positions with no evidence of sustainability beyond the grant period
- Capital expansion
- 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 who have been socially, economically, culturally, or racially marginalized (as described in question #2 of the proposal narrative). 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**

According to the schedule below, applicants must submit full proposals through the Foundation's online portal.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proposal Due Date</b>	<b>Notification of Awards</b>
Submit full proposal through the online portal; <b>no Letter of Inquiry</b>	April 5, 2022 August 15, 2021	June 2022 November 2022

***All proposals are due by 12:00 p.m. on date of the deadline. Please note there will be no technical support available for the online portal after the noon deadline.***

### **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 and be affected by this project? (1,000 characters)
3. Project Description: What project are you developing to address this issue? Please include goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic given the one-

year grant timeframe. What do you see as the next steps after this project? (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). (2,000 characters)
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 will be allocated to cover expenses. The Foundation will prioritize applications for projects that will be substantially supported by the grant funds from the BCBSMA Foundation. *Applicants with questions about whether their proposal meets this threshold are encouraged to contact the Foundation.*
- II. **Budget Narrative Template**: The budget narrative should justify the budget. The narrative details must help explain how and where the grant funds will be used. If additional funding is required, note where the additional funding is coming from, whether it is secured, and what proportion of the overall project budget would be supported by the grant from BCBSMA Foundation.
- 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:

Jacque Anderson, Senior Director of Grantmaking  
[Jacque.Anderson@bcbsma.com](mailto:Jacque.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](mailto:Evelyn.Monteiro@bcbsma.com)

**Organization Name:**

**Grant Program Area:**

**Grant Period:** from \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

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

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**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 relevant to your budget, you may delete them from the table.

Category	Narrative
<b>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.</b>	
Project Director	
Project Staff	
Administrative Staff	
Other	
Category	Narrative
<b>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.</b>	
Office Operations	
Equipment	
Meeting Expenses	
Communications/ Marketing/Outreach	
Travel	
Project Space	
Evaluation	
Other	
<b>Purchased Services</b>	

Category	Narrative
Consultants	
Contracts	
Additional Funding	