

# MA COVID-19 Community Grants

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Last Updated October 7, 2020 (updated FAQs in red)

### ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CBO</b>	Community-based organization
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>CEIT</b>	COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>FBO</b>	Faith-based organization
<b>HRiA</b>	Health Resources in Action
<b>LEP</b>	Limited English proficiency
<b>MDPH</b>	Massachusetts Department of Public Health

### ELIGIBILITY

#### Who can apply for this funding?

Massachusetts community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) serving Black, Latinx, and other people of color in one or more of 19 impacted cities below:

1. Boston (specifically  
Dorchester, East  
Boston, Chinatown,  
Hyde Park,  
Mattapan, Mission  
Hill, and Roxbury)
2. Brockton
3. Chelsea
4. Everett
5. Framingham
6. Holyoke
7. Lawrence
8. Lowell
9. Lynn
10. Malden
11. Methuen
12. New Bedford
13. Randolph
14. Revere
15. Salem
16. Saugus
17. Springfield
18. Winthrop
19. Worcester

#### How were these cities identified for this grant opportunity?

The cities eligible for this grant opportunity have the highest cumulative COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth, substantial populations of people of color, and/or high recent average daily case rates.

#### Do we need to be based or located in one of these cities to apply?

No. An organization does not have to be located in one these cities. However, it must be able to show that it has a history of serving people of color in that geographic area and that it has strong connections to those populations there. Some organizations may be based in one city, but also serve people in surrounding eligible cities.

### **What is a CBO and FBO?**

**Community-based organizations** (CBOs) work at the local level to meet community needs. This includes social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and formal and informal community groups, like neighborhood groups or recreational or special-interest clubs. CBOs do not include municipalities, universities, quasi-governmental organizations, or for-profit companies or businesses.

**Faith-based organizations** (FBOs) are similar to CBOs but are faith or religiously motivated and affiliated. This includes congregations (e.g., churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples, among others), organizations founded with faith-affiliation (usually identified in the name, incorporation, or mission statement) and/or formal groups of faith communities that work together on particular issues.

### **Can we apply jointly with another organization?**

Yes, organizations can submit a joint or shared proposal. One organization should be identified as the lead. Be sure to identify what each organization will do and how the funding will be divided.

### **Can we submit more than one proposal?**

Yes, an organization can submit more than one proposal if they intend to propose different approaches for the same city/town or the same approach for more than one city/town.

### **We are not a certified 501(c)3 organization. Can we apply through a fiscal agent that is?**

Yes, you can apply with a non-profit organization that serves as your fiscal agent (meaning it would receive and manage the grant funding). However, it is expected that your organization would be performing the majority of the work and that most of the funding would be used to support your proposed activities. **Proposed budgets should include no more than 15% for indirect or "overhead" costs for your organization or your fiscal agent. Indirect costs do NOT include fringe benefits or payroll taxes, which should be budgeted as part of your proposed personnel costs.**

### **Is a 501c3 health center or hospital eligible to apply?**

Based on the community-based organization definition (see above), health centers *are* eligible to apply given their community-based focus. Due to the local focus of this grant, hospitals *are not* eligible to apply given their larger geographical service area.

### **Can we propose to focus on populations other than Black and Latinx people?**

Yes. The focus of this grant opportunity is organizations serving people of color who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. While Black and Latinx populations have experienced the highest impact in Massachusetts, other non-white populations have also been hard hit and can be supported with this funding.

### **Are there other priority populations?**

Yes. Within communities of color, applicants are encouraged to focus on meeting the needs of people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder, a history of incarceration, who are pregnant or post-partum, are experiencing homelessness and housing instability, live in multi-generational housing, have a disability(ies), and/or have limited English proficiency (LEP). **Multi-generational housing refers to two or more generations living under the same roof. Many researchers also include households with a grandparent and at least one other generation.**

### **Is there an age range for the priority populations?**

No, there is no target age range for this grant opportunity.

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES & ADMINISTRATION**

### **What is the purpose of this grant program?**

Funds are intended to be used to address the specific factors that put Black, Latinx, and other people of color at higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Specifically, funding will support CBOs and FBOs to:

- Educate impacted populations, in coordination with COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT), to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19, including messages about physical distancing, mask wearing, and other risk-reduction behaviors and activities that acknowledge structural barriers faced by these communities.
- In coordination with CEIT where appropriate, develop and provide training and messaging on COVID-19 prevention and risk reduction activities for staff, volunteers, and members who provide support and in-home services (e.g., meals assistance, wellness checks, etc.) to people at higher risk of severe illness.

### **What is the COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT)?**

On September 3, 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration launched a targeted initiative to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in communities with the highest number of positive cases. The Commonwealth's COVID-19 Enforcement and Intervention Team (CEIT), in partnership with local community officials, is leading this effort. The initiative includes regular meetings with local leadership to understand residential and business activities contributing to trends, an even greater level of state focus to stop the spread, and a new public messaging campaign (visit [Mass.gov/StopCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/StopCOVID19)). The initiative initially focused its support efforts in Chelsea, Everett, Lawrence, Lynn, and Revere, and has expand to provide support to Framingham, Brockton, Holyoke, New Bedford, Salem, Saugus, Winthrop, and Worcester.

### **What is the new CEIT public messaging campaign?**

The new public messaging campaign is focused on ensuring residents know they live in a higher-risk community and to help them understand the importance of wearing a mask

and using other best practices to stop the spread. Built around a message of, “You have the power to save a life,” the campaign encourages the use of masks and social distancing and is available in English, Portuguese, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Arabic and other languages common to these communities. The campaign includes:

- A new online resource at [Mass.gov/StopCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/StopCOVID19) (Spanish: [Mass.Gov/DetenCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/DetenCOVID19), Portuguese: [Mass.Gov/PareCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/PareCOVID19); *Additional multilingual online resources available soon*)
- Advertising on billboards, digital, and social media
- Downloadable materials in multiple languages
- Multi-lingual field teams deployed in the communities
- Phone and text communications
- Outreach to local community groups

### **How are we expected to coordinate with the CEIT in our area?**

In cities/towns where CEIT has already provided support, CBOs and FBOs are expected to engage in activities that build upon and expand the work of the CEIT field teams and existing messaging and resources. Awardees will learn more about CEIT efforts and HRiA will support awardees in developing a workplan that coordinates with CEIT efforts. In cities where the CEIT has not engaged, CBOs and FBOs will work with HRiA and Massachusetts Department of Health (MDPH) to ensure their proposed activities align with and adapt existing resources, messaging, and best practices from the CEIT initiative.

### **How should our messaging and communication efforts complement that of CEIT?**

Awardees in all cities and towns will use CEIT messages and materials in their messaging and communication efforts. Should your CBO/FBO identify additional needs, HRiA will coordinate with CEIT to determine whether CEIT will develop a new material and/or whether CEIT can provide translated versions of existing materials in additional languages.

### **Our proposed effort will require translation into languages other than English – is this something CEIT will provide?**

If your CBO/FBO requires training or educational content to be translated into other languages, those costs can be included in the proposal budget. All awardees will be expected to use CEIT-developed messages and materials in their messaging and communication efforts; most materials can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-covid-19-public-messaging-graphics>. Selected materials are currently available in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, simplified and traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Khmer.

### **Can my CBO/FBO use Commonwealth-developed materials such as, signs, posters, etc. to supplement CEIT efforts in our city/town?**

HRiA will coordinate with CEIT to gain access to files and other resources, when appropriate, so that awardees can reproduce materials for dissemination. A large extent

of the paid advertising component will reside with CEIT, and in some cases include input from awardees. Many materials are print-ready and available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-covid-19-public-messaging-graphics>. Additional materials and videos in a variety of languages are available on the Department of Public Health website at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets>. The costs of printing and reproduction can be included in proposal budgets.

**There are many needs in our community. Why is this funding being used in this way?**

There are various federal, state, and local resources focused on COVID-19 in Massachusetts. This grant program was developed under the CDC funding guidelines and is intended to complement and enhance existing state and local efforts. It supports the Commonwealth's focus on implementing social distancing and mask wearing measures as a core community intervention strategy to avoid exposure to COVID-19 and to slow the spread within communities. In addition, the program aligns with and supports recommendations from [MDPH's COVID-19 Health Equity Advisory Group](#).

**What kind of activities can we propose?**

Organizations should propose activities that fall within the broad program purpose described above that meet the specific and unique needs of the identified populations in their local communities. Proposed activities must complement and enhance existing efforts in the community, including existing state CEIT or local COVID-19 education, communications, and messaging. Any messaging should promote wearing a mask, keeping your distance, and getting tested if you are not feeling well. A range of unique and creative ideas are welcome and will be considered. **Organizations can propose activities that build on existing efforts.**

**Can funds be used to pay for salaries, stipends or incentives?**

Yes, funds can be used for staff salaries, stipends, or incentives. Applicants should make a clear and compelling case for the amount and purpose of the funds requested. Proposed budgets should include no more than 15% for indirect or "overhead" costs for your organization or your fiscal agent. Indirect costs do NOT include fringe benefits or payroll taxes, which should be budgeted as part of your proposed personnel costs.

**What activities are not allowed?**

Activities that do not address the overall goals or that do not fall within the general categories above are not eligible. Research-based or pass-through projects (e.g., an organization proposes to distribute funds to other groups) are not eligible for this grant. Funding is not authorized to support COVID-19 testing or food and housing costs. Additionally, this grant is not intended to support the purchase of personal protective equipment *unless a compelling reason can be described for how these expenses would complement or facilitate messaging or local capacity building efforts.*

**We need face masks and other supplies. Can we apply for this grant to purchase these items?**

This grant program is not intended to support the purchase of protective equipment and supplies, *unless a compelling reason can be described for how these expenses would complement or facilitate messaging or local capacity building efforts*. Depending upon the responses received, the Commonwealth may explore options for entities to purchase these items in bulk.

**What administrative activities will we be required to do as part of this grant program?**

CBOs and FBOs that receive a grant award will be expected to take part in a kick-off meeting and training on **November 10, 2020** and an additional training event on **December 2, 2020**. Organizations will also be expected to report on its activities to demonstrate the impact of the program (see program evaluation below).

**If we receive a grant, will we get any help as part of the program?**

CBOs and FBOs that receive a grant award will also get assistance from HRiA to support their proposed activities. This will include training, technical assistance, and communications and other technical support throughout the funding period.

**What are the expectations for program evaluation?**

MDPH will report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) how the grant funds were used to reduce the spread of COVID-19. CBOs and FBOs that receive a grant award will be expected to provide information on how they used the funds, including the number and type of activities completed, people reached, etc. The reporting burden will be low, and you will receive help from HRiA to meet this requirement.

**Are there any specific expectations on numbers of people reached?**

No, there are no specific expectations on numbers of people to reach with these grant funds. We encourage applicants to make a compelling case for the amount of funding they are seeking.

## **GRANT PERIOD AND FUNDING**

**What is the grant period?**

The grant period will be approximately four months, from early November 2020 thru February 28, 2021.

**What is the source of this funding?**

This grant program is supported by federal funding received by the MDPH from CDC.

**How much funding is available?**

Currently, a total of \$650,000 is available for grants.

### **What is the expected amount of each grant award?**

The amount of the awards will depend on the number of successful applicants. We anticipate awards in the range of \$10,000 to \$50,000, but final amounts will vary.

### **Can we apply for more or less than the estimated funding range?**

Yes. Organizations can submit a proposal for a higher or lower funding amount, based on identified need and ability to spend the funds in the four-month grant period. Actual award amounts will depend on the available funding, the number of applicants, and the results of the proposal review process.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **How do we apply?**

Submit your proposal through the online form by **Monday, October 14, 2020 at 9:00am**. To submit your proposal, please click [here](#). The website leads to an online portal which will ask you to complete:

- Basic Organization and Contact Information
- Application Questions
- Attachments

### **Should I submit my organization's budget or the proposed budget for this project?**

Please submit a budget for the project you are proposing for this grant opportunity.

### **How do we get help with the application process?**

There are several ways to get help with your application:

- Attend the informational webinar on **Wednesday, September 30 from 1:00 to 2:00 PM**. Register for the webinar or access the recording [here](#).
- Submit questions by email at [COVID19Grants@hria.org](mailto:COVID19Grants@hria.org).
- Drop by one of the virtual "office hours" to ask questions on:
  - **Monday, October 5, 2020, 12:00 to 1:00 PM**
  - **Thursday, October 8, 2020, 10:00 to 11:00 AM**
- Our team is also available by phone to answer your questions. Send an email to [COVID19Grants@hria.org](mailto:COVID19Grants@hria.org) to set up a call.

## **REVIEW PROCESS AND AWARDS**

### **How will our proposal be reviewed?**

All proposals will be reviewed by a committee.

### **Who will be on the review committee?**

The review committee will include HRiA and MDPH staff. The committee will not include anyone that works for or has a financial relationship with any organization that has applied for funding.

**What criteria will be used to review our proposal?**

Proposals will be reviewed based on the activities proposed, demonstrated need and impact of COVID within the community, the organization's history of and ability to engage the populations it proposes to serve, and the organization's readiness to begin activities within 15 days of award and ability to respond to the identified need within the four-month grant period.

**How will organizations be selected for an award?**

The review committee will read all proposals and take part in an objective review and scoring process. The committee will make recommendations to MDPH, based on the scoring and on consideration of equity across geographic areas and identified populations. All funding decisions will be made by MDPH.

**When will we hear if we have been selected for an award?**

We plan to notify all applicants of award decisions by November 6, 2020.

**If we are selected, when will we receive the funds?**

After award notification, we plan to execute grant awards/subcontracts and mail checks by November 13, 2020.

**Will feedback be available to organizations who are not funded?**

Although all applicants will receive notice on result of their submission, feedback on the quality of proposals will not be made available to organizations that are not funded.