

# MA COVID-19 Community Grants

## Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grants Request for Proposals (RFP) April 2021

### At-A-Glance

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Available Funding</b>              | Total of \$~1.2M available; we expect grants will be up to ~\$50,000  |
| <b>Funding Period</b>                 | May 2021 – December 2021  |
| <b>Eligible Applicants</b>            | Massachusetts community-based and faith-based organizations serving Asian, Black, Latinx, and other people of color in cities and towns hardest hit by COVID-19 (see “Who is eligible to apply”)  |
| <b>Eligible Activities</b>            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Provide education to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19, including messages about vaccines, physical distancing, mask wearing, testing, and other harm-reduction behaviors and activities.</li><li>2) Engage local communities in conversations and education about COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy, and address questions and concerns.</li></ol> |
| <b>Application Deadline</b>           | <b>Monday, April 19, 2021 at 11:59 PM</b>   |
| <b>Contacts</b>                       | <a href="mailto:COVID19Grants@hria.org">COVID19Grants@hria.org</a>  |
| <b>Webpage &amp; Application Form</b> | <a href="https://HRIA.org/MACOVIDCommunityGrants">HRIA.org/MACOVIDCommunityGrants</a>   |

### Background

On March 17, 2021, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the release of federal funds as part of its Vaccine Equity Initiative to increase vaccine trust, acceptance, and administration rates among priority populations. This Initiative focuses on 20 cities and towns with the greatest COVID-19 case burden, considering social determinants of health and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-equity-initiative>). These cities and towns are Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, and Worcester.

The **MA COVID-19 Community Grants Program** (<https://hria.org/macovidcommunitygrants/>) was designed to help organizations raise awareness in their communities about best practices that people can take to stop the spread, including messaging on vaccine safety and efficacy, ensuring physical distancing, mask wearing, and other harm-reduction practices. As part of an initial round of funding, current awardees have been engaging in culturally and linguistically appropriate community outreach, communication, and education. Strategies have included engaging youth peer leaders, trusted community leaders, and those with shared lived experience to promote messages. Social and other media have been used to amplify the reach of messaging and communications.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) will extend the Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grants Program to more communities and populations of focus, in support of the Commonwealth’s efforts to vaccinate its residents, while continuing to promote practices to prevent the spread. The goal of this program is to reduce COVID-19 infections, morbidity, and mortality in Asian, Black, Latinx, and other people of color in

our hardest hit cities, as well as to support education and awareness of vaccination efforts in Massachusetts. The grants will be administered and managed by [Health Resources in Action](#) (HRiA), a non-profit public health organization that helps people live healthier lives and create healthy communities through prevention, health promotion, policy and research.

### **Program Overview - What will the COVID-19 Community Grants support?**

Funding will support community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to:

- *Engage local communities in conversations and education about COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy, and address questions and concerns.*
- *Educate impacted populations to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19, including messages about physical distancing, mask wearing, and other harm-reduction behaviors and activities.*

Funds are intended to be used to address the specific needs of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other people of color and the factors that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Proposed activities must complement and enhance existing efforts in the community, including state or local COVID-19 education, communications, and messaging.

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

### **Who is eligible to apply?**

Massachusetts-based CBOs and FBOs serving Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other people of color in the 20 prioritized communities and with an emphasis on the following populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19:

- Individuals who do not speak English, or who prefer to speak in another language
- Individuals who do not have access to transportation, either personal or public, or who face barriers getting to a vaccination site
- Individuals who do not feel comfortable receiving the vaccine in a traditional healthcare setting, for example individuals from the LGBTQ+ community
- Individuals with disabilities and those who have access and functional needs
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with mental illness and/or residents with substance use disorder

HRiA and the MA Department of Public Health (MDPH) recognizes the intersectionality of these identities and lived experiences, and CBOs/FBOs should respond to the holistic needs and preferences of individuals and communities.

The 20 impacted cities and towns listed below:

- Boston
- Brockton
- Chelsea
- Everett
- Fall River
- Fitchburg
- Framingham
- Haverhill
- Holyoke
- Lawrence
- Leominster
- Lowell
- Lynn
- Malden
- Methuen
- New Bedford
- Randolph
- Revere
- Springfield
- Worcester

While there are no restrictions on applications from CBOs/FBOs serving these cities/towns, **priority will be given to applicants** located and working with BIPOC populations in:

1. Fall River
2. Fitchburg
3. Haverhill
4. Leominster
5. Randolph

Additionally, priority will be given to applicants that work with BIPOC populations that are not already being served by the current grant recipients.

### What activities are not eligible?

- Research-based or pass-through projects (i.e., an organization proposes to distribute funds to other groups) are ineligible for this grant, as are the support of COVID-19 testing or food and housing costs. Additionally, this grant is not intended to support the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE). Grant recipients can request PPE as part of their outreach activities and HRiA and DPH will strive to fulfill those requests. We recognize there are many needs in your communities. To find additional resources related to COVID-19, please visit the following links:
  - **Philanthropy Massachusetts:** <https://www.philanthropyma.org/grantmakers-philanthropic-advisors/resources/disaster-and-emergency-relief-resources>
  - **Massachusetts Nonprofit Network:** <http://massnonprofitnet.org/nonprofit-resources/coronavirus-massachusetts-nonprofits/>

### How will this proposal be reviewed?

Your application will be reviewed by a committee who will make recommendations to Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The following criteria will be considered and prioritized during the process:

- **Alignment with Funding Priorities**
  - Organizations directly reach priority populations and cities/towns currently most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Community Engagement**
  - Organizations have history of and ability to authentically engage community members, including the priority population(s) mentioned above.
- **Readiness**
  - Organizations demonstrate a readiness to begin outreach and engagement with the community within 15 days of award. Organizations should provide evidence of their readiness to respond to the identified need and their plan to implement approaches within the eight-month grant period through December 2021. This includes, but is not limited to, having strong community engagement approaches and staff and partnerships that can be mobilized to accomplish the work.

### What are we expected to do if we receive this grant?

If your organization is selected to receive a grant, HRiA staff will work with you and your staff/volunteers to:

- Assess communication- and education-related needs and strengths in your community(-ies) to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and support your efforts to identify communication (e.g.,

translating and adapting language, social media, messaging) and education opportunities that build on your existing activities, networks, and communication channels.

- Enhance your capacity to deliver education and/or training by providing technical assistance to your staff and/or volunteers.
- Ensure you are able to complete weekly evaluation and reporting activities to measure your progress and accomplishments.

Awardees will be required to participate in ongoing trainings and convenings as part of a larger cohort of awardees. Training dates will be shared with awardees after funding decisions are made.

### **How do we submit a proposal?**

Submit your proposal through the online form by **Monday, April 19, 2021 at 11:59 PM**. 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

*To return to an already started application, visit your [Account Page](#). For technical and logistical questions related to accessing the online grantmaking portal, or if your organization encounters any barriers to submitting your proposal through the portal, please contact [COVID19Grants@hria.org](mailto:COVID19Grants@hria.org).*

### **What happens after we submit a proposal?**

You will be notified of the status of your submission in early May.

### **How can we learn more?**

A pre-recorded **funding announcement webinar** will be posted on our website on **April 7, 2021 at 5PM**. You can view this pre-recorded webinar at [hria.org/MACOVIDCommunityGrants](https://hria.org/MACOVIDCommunityGrants).

HRiA will also host an online drop-in session that applicants can join to ask questions on **April 12, 2021 at 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM**, registration link here <https://bit.ly/3cV8qFO>.

HRiA will host a formal question and answer (Q&A) period for applicants about this funding opportunity. Please submit all questions regarding this funding opportunity to [COVID19Grants@hria.org](mailto:COVID19Grants@hria.org) by April 12, 2021 at 12:00 PM. We will send responses to specific questions via e-mail and responses to more generalizable questions will be incorporated into a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document by April 13, 2021 on [hria.org/MACOVIDCommunityGrants](https://hria.org/MACOVIDCommunityGrants). Finally, we will continue to address additional questions sent to [COVID19Grants@hria.org](mailto:COVID19Grants@hria.org) until Friday April 16, 2021 at 12:00 PM