

MA COVID-19 Community Grants

Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grants Programs

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Serving Organizations Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Last Updated April 9, 2021

ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community-based organization
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
FBO	Faith-based organization
HRiA	Health Resources in Action
IPSO	Indigenous Peoples Serving Organizations
LEP	Limited English proficiency
MDPH	Massachusetts Department of Public Health
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
TSO	Tribal Serving Organizations/Entities
T/IPSOs	Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Serving Organizations/Entities

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply for this funding?

Massachusetts Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Serving community-based organizations (T/IPSOs) serving members of the state and federally recognized Tribes, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous communities in Massachusetts may apply for funding.

Why are Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Serving Organizations identified for this grant opportunity?

Members of state and federally recognized Tribes, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. T/IPSOs have established and trusted relationships with these communities and have been working with these communities to address the impact of COVID-19, as well as social determinants of health. Such T/IPSOs are eligible for this grant opportunity.

Does our organization/entity or services need to be based or located in a specific community to apply?

Recognizing that members of the federally and state recognized Tribes, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous Peoples live throughout Massachusetts, including rural and urban areas, applicants do not need to be based in a specific community. That said, this initiative seeks to ensure that members throughout the state have access to these initiatives; therefore, an applicant must show that it has a history of serving Tribal and Indigenous Communities in that geographic area with strong connections to populations there. Some organizations may be based in a city, but also serve people in surrounding eligible cities. Willingness to collaborate with [Vaccine Equity Communities](#) where major members of the communities might reside will also be important.

What is a CBO, FBO and T/IPSO?

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 like 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 specific issues.

Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Serving Organizations/Entities (T/IPSO) are like CBOs or FBOs or may culturally see themselves as both. These organizations/entities work to meet the needs of their community members and can focus locally, regionally, statewide, or where their members reside. They can include sovereign Tribal Governments.

Can we apply jointly with another organization?

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

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, manage, and track the grant funding). However, it is expected that your organization would be performing most 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.

Are there other priority populations?

Yes, the Massachusetts Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Serving community-based organizations (T/IPSOs) serving members of the state and federally recognized Tribes, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous communities in Massachusetts may apply for funding, with particular emphasis on the following populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19:

- Members who do not speak English, or who prefer to speak in another language
- Members who do not have access to transportation, either personal or public, or who face barriers getting to a vaccination site
- Members who do not feel comfortable receiving the vaccine in a traditional healthcare setting, such as individuals from the LBGTQ+ community
- Members with disabilities and those who have access and functional needs
- Members experiencing homelessness
- Members 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.

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 Tribes, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous communities at higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Specifically, funding will support T/IPSOs to:

- *Educate impacted populations, including Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous Peoples, to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19, by developing and disseminating culturally-relevant messages and materials about physical distancing, mask wearing, and other harm-reduction behaviors and activities.*
- *Engage and educate impacted populations, including Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, Pacific Islanders, and Indigenous Peoples in conversations and education about COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy, and address questions, concerns, and barriers to accessing vaccines.*

Can my T/IPSO use Commonwealth-developed materials such as, signs, posters, etc. for the members we serve?

Yes, T/IPSOs are expected to align their messaging with state materials and must submit materials for pre-approval before sharing publicly. HRiA will coordinate with MDPH 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 MDPH, 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 website at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets>. Vaccine-specific information is available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/trust-the-facts-get-the-vax#ensuring-the-vaccine-is-safe-> and <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-covid-19-vaccine-education-and-outreach-materials>. 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 seeks to increase awareness of COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy and access to vaccines as part of the Administration's Vaccine Equity Initiative. This funding aligns with and supports recommendations from [MDPH's COVID-19 Health Equity Advisory Group](#).

What kind of activities can we propose?

Organizations/entities 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 communities. Proposed activities must complement and enhance existing efforts in the community, including existing state or local COVID-19 education, communications, and messaging. In addition to messaging related to the vaccine, 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/entities 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 which is different than being a fiscal agent or a partnering applicant) are not eligible for this grant. Funding is not authorized to support COVID-19 testing or food, childcare, and housing costs. Additionally, this grant is not intended to support the purchase of personal protective equipment.

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. Grant recipients can request PPE as part of their outreach activities and HRiA and DPH will strive to fulfill those requests.

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

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. Organizations/entities will also be expected to report on their activities and expenditures 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?

T/IPSOs, similar CBOs and FBOs that receive a HRiA 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 must report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) how the grant funds were used to reduce the spread of COVID-19. T/IPSOs, CBOs, and FBOs that receive a grant award will be expected to provide information weekly on how they use the funds, including the number and type of activities completed, people reached, etc. An end of award progress report is tentatively due January 7th, 2022. You will receive help from HRiA to meet evaluation requirements. Recipients of these funds are required to comply with CDC requirements; specific compliance language can be shared upon request.

Are there any specific expectations on numbers of people reached?

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

My organization is already an awardee of the HRiA Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grants Program. Can my organization re-apply for additional funds?

No, you are not eligible for this funding opportunity if your organization is already an awardee of the HRiA Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grants Program.

GRANT PERIOD AND FUNDING

What is the grant period?

The grant period will be approximately eight months, from early May 2021 through December 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 \$184,000 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 will be up to \$48,000, 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 eight-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 **Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 11:59pm**. To submit your proposal, [please click here](#). The website leads to an MSe form which will ask you to complete:

- Basic Organization and Contact Information
- Application Questions

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:

- Watch the pre-recorded funding announcement webinar that will be posted on our website (<https://hria.org/MACovidCommunityGrants/TIPSO/>) **April 13, 2021 at 5:00PM.**
- Submit questions by email at COVID19Grants@hria.org.
- Drop by the virtual session to ask questions on **April 20, 2021 at 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM.** To register, [please click here](#).
- Our team is also available by phone to answer your questions. Send an email to 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 alignment with funding priorities, 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 eight-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 mid-May 2021.

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

After award notification, we plan to execute grant awards/subcontracts and mail checks by mid to late May.

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.