

Request for Letters of Inquiry

Executive Summary

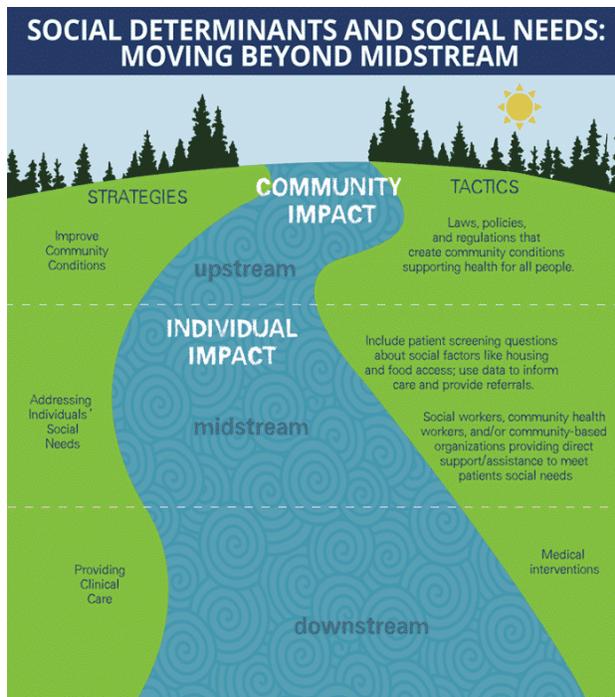
The Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Community Health Improvement requests Letters of Inquiry for a competitive process to support two key areas of the social determinants of health: workforce development and increasing access to behavioral health services through community health workers. The awards are available through the Determination of Need investment program, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Background

As required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Determination of Need [regulations](#) that governs health care facilities, Massachusetts General Hospital (Mass General) is investing a total of \$3,380,420 in community-based health initiatives (CHI). The Mass General Community Advisory Board (CAB) determined three priorities to fund based on the [2019 Community Health Needs Assessments](#) conducted in Boston and North Suffolk (Revere, Chelsea, and Winthrop). The Mass General CAB has determined that \$2,251,362 will support workforce development and increasing access to behavioral health services through Community Health Workers (CHWs) through a competitive award process. An additional \$1,125,681 will be invested in creating or preserving affordable housing using a separate process not part of this Letters of Inquiry (LOI).

Purpose

The purpose of this request for LOIs is to begin a two-phase competitive process to award funding to non-profit community-based organizations or local governments to address 1) workforce development or 2) behavioral health through innovative approaches using CHWs in the cities/towns of Suffolk County (Revere, Chelsea, Winthrop, and/or Boston). This process seeks initiatives that will address upstream, root causes of poor health outcomes and disparities and/or activities that mitigate or reduce health-



related social needs through population-level interventions. *All proposals should have a policy or system change component to its initiative.* Selected organizations with highly rated LOI will be invited to submit a 5-page Request for Proposals (RFP).

Graphic from Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short Of Addressing Social Determinants Of Health by Brian Castrucci and John Auerbach, Health Affairs blog, publish January 16, 2019. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.20190115.234942/full/>

Workforce Development

There is evidence that vocation training for adults and sector-based workforce initiatives increase employment and earnings for low-income adults, disadvantaged workers, and the long-term

unemployed (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps). Jobs and financial security are closely tied to health outcomes, ability to have health insurance and other benefits, and housing stability. Unemployment can lead to negative health outcomes, like depression, anxiety, and distress. (Antonisse, 2018). Job and financial security also allow for savings and the ability to handle financial crises if they arise. This allows families to accumulate wealth and expand opportunities to the next generation, like education and homeownership. (Traub, 2017)

Funding for this strategy aims to support workforce development programs for adults, with a focus on resume building, job readiness, skills training, education, ESOL and through the cultivation of relationships with employers, trade, and unions. Examples of policies or systems changes could include, but not limited to, working with employers to change eligibility requirements for hire, increasing minimum wage to living wage, working to remove system failures like wage theft or improving systems of retention and career advancement.

Improving Access to Behavioral Health through Community Health Workers

Community Health Workers (CHWs), Navigators, and Recovery Coaches with mental health training play a critical role in addressing behavioral health needs of community members who may be reluctant to seek services because of access, stigma or inability to find a provider who speaks their language or understands their culture. CHWs can improve access to mental health services by sharing responsibilities with mental health providers, increasing conversations within the community and advocating for behavioral health services. CHWs have a positive impact in increasing behavioral health utilization, particularly with underserved populations. Training CHWs not only helps to link individuals to culturally sensitive behavioral health care services, it also provides employment opportunities for knowledgeable community members with lived experience. (Weaver & Lapido, 2018) Individuals suffering from behavioral health problems face many barriers that impact quality of life and health outcomes. Mental Health disorders are linked to poor social, cultural, and economic outcomes. (W.H.O., 2013)

Funding for this strategy aims to increase the pool of Community Health Workers and Recovery Coaches with specialized mental health/substance use training who: represent low-income, immigrant, LGBTQ, seniors, and/or communities of color through coordinated, funded recruitment and training programs. Examples of policies or systems changes could include, but not limited to, helping to reduce the barriers to matriculation/completion of degree program for mental health workers of color, reducing the barriers for mental health coverage, or addressing the community conditions contributing to mental health (racism, poverty, etc.)

Amount and Length of Funding

The Mass General CAB has allocated \$1,125,681 to each priority to be spent over three (3) years. It is expected that two-three (2-3) grants up to \$125,000 per year for no more than three years will be awarded for each priority. Funding is expected to be awarded on October 1, 2020 and will end September 30, 2023. Each grant can be renewed up to three years, assuming grantee meets all reporting requirements and is in good standing.

Strategy:	Workforce Development	Behavioral Health CHWs
Funding:	\$1,125,681	\$1,125,681
Years:	3	3
Number of Awards	2-3	2-3

Anticipated Timeline

Description	Date
Request for LOI Released	June 15, 2020
Bidders Conference/Information Session	June 19, 2020, 12-1:30pm
Online Technical Assistance Session	June 24, 2020, 4 – 5pm
LOIs Due	July 2, 2020, 3pm
Organizations Notified of Selection for RFP	July 21, 2020
RFP Due	September 1, 2020, 3pm
Notification of Awards	September 28, 2020
Expected Start Date and Contract Execution	October 1, 2020
End Date	September 30, 2023

Eligibility

- **Please note that proposals from within the Mass General Brigham system are NOT eligible for this funding.** Only 501(c) 3 **OR** 509(a) Community-based non-profit organizations, coalitions, or local governments are eligible to apply.
- A coalition is a community-based formal arrangement for cooperation and collaboration among diverse groups or sectors of a community who all agree to work together in pursuit of a common goal. Community coalitions connote a type of collaboration that is sustainable over time.
- Initiatives must be based in the following cities/towns of Suffolk County: Revere, Chelsea, Winthrop, and/or Boston.
- Entities may submit two LOIs, one for each strategy.

Guidelines on Use

Grant funds may be used for staff salaries, consultant fees, operating expenses, and indirect costs associated with the strategy. Indirect costs may not exceed 15% of the direct expenses.

Funds may not be used for clinical or medical care, to build endowments, fund operating deficits, or influence elections. Requests will not be considered for construction of new facilities, substantial renovation of existing facilities, or to support capital campaigns. No grants will be made to individuals.

As a condition for accepting grant monies, grantees must commit to completing annual and final programmatic and expenditure reports detailing the use of the funds and the impact achieved.

Bidders Conference/Information & Technical Assistance Sessions

The Bidders' Conference/Information and Technical Assistance sessions is scheduled as follows and will be held via an online webinar — dates/times are subject to change.

Bidders' Conference/Information Session: June 19, 2020 at 12:00 - 1:30 pm ([Registration Link](#))

Purpose: Review purpose of funding and components of RFP; review scoring, submission details

Technical Assistance Session: June 24, 2020 at 4:00 – 5:00 pm ([Registration Link](#))

Purpose: Answer questions or concerns about content, submission process or purpose

Applicants may make written inquiries concerning this Request for LOIs until no later than **June 23, 2020 at 5:00 pm**. Written inquiries must be sent to MGHDON@partners.org. Questions and answers will be posted to <https://www.massgeneral.org/community-health/cchi/> by June 25, 2020.

Application Process and Instructions

Applicants need to complete and submit the following information listed below to be considered for this grant opportunity. The Letter of Inquiry should be no more than two pages and signed by the Executive Director, CEO, or equivalent of the organization.

1. Provide a brief statement describing your organization's mission and vision, or overall purpose. (5 points)
2. Briefly describe your target population, geographical area, the current need, and how you plan on using the funds to meet this need. (20 points)
3. Briefly explain if your initiative is evidence-based or evidence-informed, or why there may not be evidence for it yet. (not scored)
4. How may residents benefit from this program/project/initiative? How many residents do you hope to serve? (10 points)
5. What upstream policy or system change will your initiative affect? (20 points)
6. What outcomes do you hope to achieve with this funding? (15 points)
7. How will you engage residents, including those underrepresented, in decision-making processes of the proposed program/project/initiative? (15 points)
8. Are there complementary organizations in your community who work with your target population? If so, please describe how you will collaborate and/or ensure your efforts are not duplicated and are coordinated and aligned. (15 points)

Total: 100 points (Points are utilized in the review process for scoring each applicant's responses on its own merits and will be considered for invitation to larger RFP.)

Applicants will be notified by July 21, 2020 if they will move onto the RFP process.

Application Submission Information

The LOI should not exceed 2 pages using a 12-point font. All completed LOIs must be **received by 3 p.m. on Thursday, July 2, 2020**. Applicants should PDF their letter, name the PDF the title of your project, and email or upload file to <https://www.grantrequest.com/application.aspx?SA=SNA&FID=35245&sid=2364>

Citations and Recommended Readings:

"Vocational Training for Adults," County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, March 7, 2019.

"Sector-based Workforce Initiatives," County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, January 30, 2019.

Larissa Antonisse and Rachel Garfield, "The Relationship Between Work and Health: Findings from a literature review," August 7, 2018.

Amy Traum et al., "The Asset Value of Whiteness: Understanding the Racial Wealth Gap," 2017.

Addie Weaver and Adrienne Lapoido, "Mental Health Interventions with Community Health Workers in the United States: A Systemic Review," Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 29, 1, 2918.

"Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020," World Health Organization, 2013.

Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short Of Addressing Social Determinants Of Health by Brian Castrucci and John Auerbach, Health Affairs blog, publish January 16, 2019.
<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20190115.234942/full/>

"2019 Community Health Needs Assessment," MGH Center for Community Health Improvement, September 2019. <https://www.massgeneral.org/assets/MGH/pdf/community-health/cchi/20191016-CHNA-report.pdf>