

## Massachusetts Community Health Fund

### Inquiry of Ideas for Policy, Systems and Environmental Change Approaches

#### What is the Massachusetts Community Health Fund?

The Massachusetts Community Health Fund (Community Health Fund) is an opportunity to reduce health inequities in communities across Massachusetts. The Community Health Fund is both a grantmaking and capacity-building resource to assist organizations and communities in addressing the root causes of health inequities, specifically, institutional and structural racism.

The Community Health Fund's resources are from hospitals and other healthcare entities that go through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Determination of Need Program. In January 2017, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) completed a landmark revision of the Determination of Need (DoN) regulation which led to the creation of the Community Health Fund. Click [here](#) for additional information on the Determination of Need program)

In 2019, the [Community Health Fund Advisory Committee](#) developed a vision to guide the Community Health Fund: All Massachusetts residents have an equitable opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life. This vision aligns with DPH Commissioner Dr. Monica Bharel's goal to eliminate health inequities through addressing the social determinants of health.

To work towards realizing this vision, the Community Health Fund will invest in community-centered approaches that are intentional in addressing the root causes of inequitable health outcomes. Focus will be on communities outside of Boston, that have not benefitted historically and routinely from previous local DoN community health funding, and have high rates of health inequities. (see [Who is Eligible to Submit an Idea](#)).

The Community Health Fund focuses on addressing health and racial inequities and is guided by the following principles:

- The [Social Determinants of Health \(SDoH\)](#) account for significant variation in [health outcomes](#).
- Policies, systems, and social/physical environments are historically based in [structural and institutional racism](#) and other forms of oppression.
- Structural and institutional racism and other forms of oppression need to be understood and disrupted to eliminate inequities in population health outcomes and the social determinants of health (SDoH).

Community Health Fund staff are available to discuss the Community Health Fund and its activities. Contact [CHFund@HRiA.org](mailto:CHFund@HRiA.org).

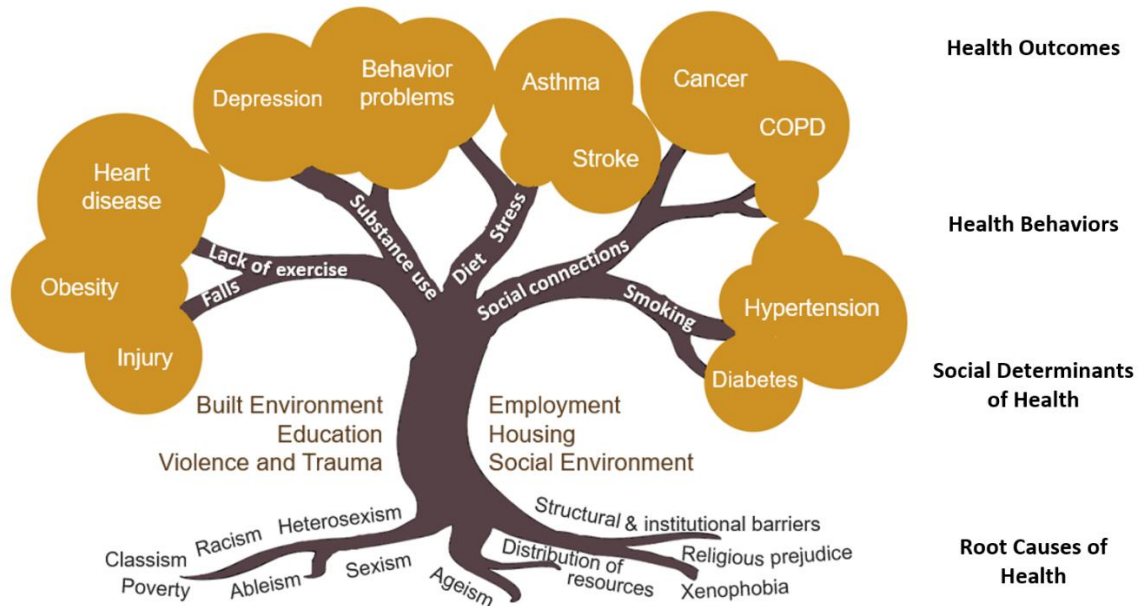
#### What will the Community Health Fund support?

The Community Health Fund is seeking ideas that work to identify, understand, and address [Root Causes of Health](#) as the foundation for strategies that change community conditions and positively impact health outcomes, see Figure 1. The Community Health Fund is looking to invest in approaches that will:

- **Improve population health outcomes** in communities outside of Boston, that have not benefitted historically and routinely from previous local DoN community health funding, and have high rates of health inequities. The Fund places an emphasis on four health outcomes as defined by DPH: substance use disorders, mental illness/mental health, housing stability/homelessness, and preventing chronic disease with a focus on cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.
- **Address six social determinants of health**, prioritized by the DPH Commissioner that can change community level conditions to create more opportunity for healthy living including the Built/Physical Environment, Education, Employment, Socio-Cultural Environment, Housing, and Violence & Trauma.

- **Disrupt the Root Causes of Health Inequities-- Institutional and Structural Racism and other forms of oppression** – and its effects on well-being and health outcomes. The Community Health Fund is using a Leading with Race and Racism approach which recognizes that people of color in Massachusetts have historically and consistently had less opportunity to lead a healthy life. The Community Health Fund also recognizes that the Root Causes of Health can create barriers to health for all types of populations. As a result, the Community Health Fund wants communities to Lead with Race and Racism explicitly but not exclusively.

**Figure 1. The Health Tree: Connecting Health Outcomes to Root Causes**



Community Health Funds will be distributing funding in two areas:

- **Policy, Systems, and Environmental change strategies (PSE strategies).** Policy change approaches may include a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions. Systems change approaches may include changes that impacts all elements, including social norms of an organization, institution, or system. Environmental change approaches may include changes to the physical, social, or economic environment. Strategies may focus on geographic or population-based communities at the local, regional, or statewide levels. *The Community Health Fund expects to fund multiple awards between \$50,000 and \$200,000 per year for up to 5 years per award to advance policy, systems, and environmental change approaches. Awards may support both planning and capital investments (e.g. low-interest loans for new healthy retail) within policy, systems and environmental change strategies.* Examples of PSE strategies may be found [here](#).
- **Regional Community Health Improvement Planning Processes (CHIP).** To support the development and/or implementation of local and/or regional community health improvement planning processes. For more information on how to submit an idea for the Regional CHIP funding opportunity click [here](#).

#### **Who is Eligible to Submit an Idea to the Community Health Fund’s PSE Strategies?**

Massachusetts based non-profit 501(c)3 organizations and municipalities are eligible to submit ideas to the Community Health Fund’s PSE Strategies Funding stream.

For this round of funding, the Community Health Fund will prioritize funding support to communities outside of Boston, that have not historically and routinely benefitted from previous local DoN community health funding, and have high rates of health inequities. Strategies may focus on geographic or population-based communities at the local, regional, or statewide levels. The Community Health Fund will also accept Inquiries of Ideas (IOIs) from agencies and organizations

geographically based in Boston who are interested in doing health and racial equity work statewide or in communities outside of Boston. For additional information click [here](#).

If you are looking for more information about local DoN community health initiatives in Boston, please email [CHFUND@HRiA.org](mailto:CHFUND@HRiA.org).

### **How will my idea be reviewed?**

All completed submissions will be reviewed by a statewide allocation committee in October. Ideas will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Equity:** Demonstration that the idea is addressing a geography/population experiencing high rates of inequities; Demonstration that the ideas and approaches are community led, particularly by populations experiencing inequities, etc.
- **Impact:** Demonstration of logic connecting the approach to addressing the root cause → SDoH → Health Outcome.
- **Collaboration:** Demonstration of multi-sector partners with diverse perspectives.
- **Feasibility:** Likelihood of resources supporting success.

### **How do I submit an idea for Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) change approaches?**

Ideas should be submitted through the online form by **Wednesday, October 2, 2019 by 2:00 p.m.** To submit your idea(s) please click [here](#). The website leads to an online idea portal which will ask you to **A: Complete a Cover Form** and **B: Upload an Inquiry of Idea (IOI)**. The instructions for each step are below.

#### **PART A: Cover Form**

This on-line form requests basic information about the organization submitting the idea. Items include:

- **Lead Non-Profit or Municipality:** Complete requested fields (name of organization or municipality, Tax ID number-if available)
- **Organization CEO/Municipal Manager Contact Information:** Complete requested fields (name, title, organization, mailing address, phone, email) for contact information for organization's CEO, or equivalent or the municipality's top official.
- **Organization to Lead Proposed Project:** If different from the Lead non-profit or municipality.
- **Contact for the IOI:** Complete requested fields for (name, title, organization, mailing address, phone, email) contact information for person responsible for this idea submission.
- **Title of IOI:** List the title of the IOI.
- **SDoH Areas of Impact:** Select the SDoH area(s) that your idea primarily focuses on. Select all that apply.
- **Health Outcome Areas of Impact:** Select the health outcome area(s) that your idea primarily focuses on. Select all that apply.
- **Can we share your idea with others interested in this work for the potential of future collaboration or coordination of activities? One of the objectives of the Community Health Fund is to connect people and organizations with similar interests and missions.**  
 Yes, I would like to share my idea with others.  
 No, I want to keep this idea confidential.

#### **PART B: Inquiry of Idea**

To describe your idea in more detail, you will need to upload an attachment that addresses the content below. This attachment may be any one of the following:

- **Narrative Document** (.doc or .pdf) up to 5 pages, 12 pt font, single-spaced, half-inch margins

- **Video** (.mov or .wmv) up to 15 minutes
- **Presentation** (.ppt) up to 20 slides

***The attachment must contain responses to all of the following items:***

- ***Background***

1. Briefly describe your agency, organization, or collaborative.
2. Describe the issue you want to address and its root cause.
3. Describe the population harmed by this issue.
4. List the data/information sources you use to understand the health inequities that exist your community.

- ***Approach***

5. Describe your idea for a policy, systems, or environmental change approach that addresses the root cause.
6. Briefly explain how this idea will address the SDoH area(s) and improve health outcome(s).
7. Define the community that will be impacted/benefit from this idea/approach and how they will, at a minimum, be engaged in the proposed work. Priority will be given to ideas that come from and are led by populations with lived experience related to the issue being addressed.
8. Identify key partners you currently have for implementing your activities and the additional partners you will need to engage to make this process a success.

- ***Resources***

9. List the approximate size of the financial investment you are seeking from the Community Health Fund to support this work on an annual basis and the number of years for which you are seeking support.
10. List any other resources you need to implement your idea, such as training, technical assistance, data/other information. One of the main goals of the Community Health Fund is to support applicants with capacity building training and resources. Training topics may include, racial equity, assessment, use of data, policy, systems and environmental change approaches, institutional/structural racism, proposal writing, and budget development.

**What happens after I submit an idea?**

Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission by Friday, November 22, 2019. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, your organization will be expected to engage in a series of capacity building activities aimed at supporting the proposal development process. Full proposals will be due by Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY HEALTH FUND AND GRANTMAKING AND CAPACITY BUILDING RESOURCES, CONTACT KEVIN MYERS AT [KMYERS@HRIA.ORG](mailto:KMYERS@HRIA.ORG)**

**OR NINEEQUA BLANDING AT [NBLANDING@HRIA.ORG](mailto:NBLANDING@HRIA.ORG)**

**[www.mass.gov/MAHealthFunds](http://www.mass.gov/MAHealthFunds)**