



Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation

860 Winter Street, Waltham, MA 02451-1411 www.mmsfoundation.org

(800) 322-2303, ext. 7044 / (781) 893-4610 / (781) 434-7455 fax

May 3, 2021

Fiscal Year 2021 Grants

The Foundation awarded a total of \$235,200 in grants to these 17 organizations.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

[Cooley Dickinson Health Care](#) — \$20,000

This pilot program at Cooley Dickinson's Oxbow Primary Care will provide free, on-site, short-term therapy for transgender patients who are otherwise unable to find a provider who affirms and understands their lived experiences.

[Interfaith Social Services](#) — \$10,000

The New Directions Counselling Center is a safety net for the uninsured and underinsured and addresses the mental health needs of impoverished people without health insurance or with inadequate coverage.

[Lynn Shelter Association](#) — \$15,000

This partnership between Eliot Community Human Services and the Lynn Shelter Association will address the unmet behavioral health needs of homeless families, including school-age youth with an on-site licensed clinician at each of the three family shelters each week to provide behavioral health assessments, recommendations for treatment, and one-on-one and group support to parents/caregivers and children.

[YMCA of Metro North](#) — \$15,000

This partnership with the Lynn Community Health Center will establish both an on-site youth behavioral health clinic and a therapeutic after-school program within the Lynn YMCA. These two long-standing Lynn institutions will share resources, collaborate on programs, and expand their collective capacity to serve the mental health needs of low-income families of color in Lynn.

HEALTH PROMOTION

[Boys & Girls Clubs of MetroWest](#) — \$10,000

The Emotional Wellness Training for at-risk youth focuses on building foundational social-emotional skills, with a focus on healthy mental health practices, self-management, and coping. Through check-in conversation starters, small-group discussions, and one-on-one conversations, youth will have dedicated time to discuss problems, concerns, successes, etc. with a respected mentor. The second component is the implementation of SMART Moves: Emotional Wellness, a research-based 10-week program to support youths in their mental health journey by teaching positive coping strategies.

[Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services](#) — \$700

Funding will allow for expansion from holding the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services (MLKFS) Food Justice Fair once to twice annually. The fair provides nutrition, health education, and social service resources to residents of the Springfield community who use the emergency food pantry at the MLKFS Community Center. Topics include heart health, diabetes screening and education, nutrition and cooking demonstration, case management and advocacy, CPR, Stop the Bleed, wellness and exercise, and smoking cessation. Over 60 volunteers from UMass Medical School and health professions schools in Western Massachusetts will plan and run the fairs in collaboration with faculty and providers from UMass and Baystate Health.

GreenRoots — \$25,000

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed harsh truths about health inequities faced by Chelsea residents. Responding to these inequities, GreenRoots established Health Equity Corps (HEC), a team of three community leaders (fluent in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Somali) to conduct intensive community engagement and outreach. HEC's goal is three-fold: conduct multilingual, culturally appropriate, trusted community education to stop the spread of COVID-19; connect vulnerable residents to critical resources; and understand and identify advocacy initiatives to address the health disparities.

Sociedad Latina — \$5,000

Sociedad Latina's youth leaders are young people in grades 9–12 in Boston Public Schools who have expressed an interest in addressing the health disparities, especially in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, that affect Boston's Latinx and immigrant communities. Through bilingual education materials, youth leaders will address the lack of COVID-19 testing and confidence in receiving the vaccine among Boston's Latinx and immigrant communities, an extension of the bilingual mask-up campaign that promoted the importance of wearing a mask and social-distancing to prevent the spread of the virus.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Family Health Center of Worcester — \$24,500

The Community Recovery Outreach Worker Program is an innovative and targeted approach to offer services such as navigation, peer support, and outreach to patients and community members experiencing homelessness or unstable housing to promote engagement in substance use disorder treatment.

Father Bill's & MainSpring — \$15,000

The <https://helpfbms.org/>Outreach Project provides direct services to homeless people living outdoors in Southern Massachusetts. The current health crisis has strained already limited capacity in shelters and other systems of care and reduced re-housing opportunities. To meet the demand, FBMS will increase outreach services in Brockton and expand to include Greater Quincy and their entire service region by hiring a second triage outreach worker. The Outreach Project provides impactful services that this population might not receive otherwise. Staff members meet participants where they are outdoors and provide for their basic needs, before bringing them into shelter. Once engaged, participants access non-emergency health services at on-site clinics.

ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Amherst Survival Center — \$20,000

Funding will support the expansion of the Free Grocery Delivery Program, which was launched in April 2020 to meet the food access needs of individuals who have transportation or health barriers that prevent them from coming to the center. The expansion will increase grocery allocations, providing two weeks of groceries each month instead of one, and lengthen delivery routes and widen service area, providing free grocery delivery to 1,300–1,500 area residents, increasing their food security.

Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc. — \$10,000

COVID-19 has impacted two of the organization's programs significantly. Funding supports the Dorn Davies Senior Center, which collaborates with dozens of area agencies and individuals to provide food to low-income seniors, and the organization's Helpline, which provides individuals and families in Plymouth County with direct basic needs assistance (rent assistance, utility assistance, food, and clothing) and information and referral to programs designed to address more systemic challenges (unemployment, substance abuse, mental and physical health, trauma, domestic violence, and adequate access to education).

Chelsea Collaborative/La Colaborativa — \$10,000

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Chelsea has not only been a hot spot of infection and death, but it is also suffering one of the most acute crises of hunger and evictions in the state. Funding will support the purchase and distribution of food to those most impacted and to support ongoing work to provide quality health information to Spanish speakers on how to protect oneself from COVID-19 and about vaccines.

Food Link, Inc. — \$15,000

Funding will support the expansion of fresh food distributions to the gateway cities of Chelsea, Lawrence, Lynn, Malden, and Peabody, which have been disproportionately impacted by economic disparity, which has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The populations of these communities are typically more racially and ethnically diverse; some of these communities have large immigrant populations. Many of the residents lack access to grocery stores; a third (34 percent) report that they struggle to provide food for their families or have received food from a food bank since the coronavirus crisis began, compared with 20 percent of residents elsewhere in the state.

Old Colony YMCA — \$15,000

Funding will support the implementation of the MyMarket system, which will allow pantry visitors to complete one intake and subsequently check-in to the pantry using a scan card, while humanizing the experience and eliminating the need to provide personal information every visit. The system will also track food inventory in real time, take requests for food delivery to homebound individuals, and accept referrals from health care partners for medically tailored food needs. A portion of funding will also support improvements to food to allow for increased capacity to store larger quantities of food and to be more effective in food provision and distribution.

The Open Door — \$10,000

Funding is for the Medically Tailored Grocery program, which will help food insecure people who have, or are at risk of developing, a chronic illness to better manage their health through the groceries and meals they consume. The program builds on the Food is Medicine movement, providing one-on-one nutrition counseling, nutrition coaching and education with our staff's registered dietary nutritionist, weekly workshops, and free, healthy food with accompanying meal plans, shopping lists, and recipes. The program will improve participating clients' health while decreasing the personal financial burden of making healthier food choices.

Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires — \$15,000

Funding supports the hiring of a part-time roving community health worker to assist in identifying and assessing the needs of new patients as well as meet the needs of existing patients and strengthen the work with other service agencies. Throughout the pandemic, Volunteers in Medicine never stopped operating. The goal was to keep patients with chronic conditions healthy, working (if they still had jobs), and, most importantly, away from hospital emergency rooms. Services and support to address social determinants of health continued and more than \$330,000 was raised and distributed to help more than 600 patients and their families pay for basics such as rent, food, utilities, childcare, car insurance, and gas.