

Strengthening the Voice for Access

Program Goal

Strengthening the Voice for Access will provide core operating support to Massachusetts organizations whose mission and activities focus significantly on promoting the health care interests of uninsured and low-income residents of the Commonwealth. The goal is to strengthen community-based policy activities, increase citizen participation in public policy development, and promote collaboration among statewide policy and advocacy organizations on health access issues for uninsured and low-income people.

Context

The enactment of health reforms included in Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006 has renewed Massachusetts' national leadership in health access. Chapter 58 included many novel provisions designed to expand health coverage, such as Medicaid expansions, the creation of the Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority, health insurance participation requirements for individuals and employers, premium assistance for low-income populations, the merging of the small group and individual insurance markets, and the creation of the Disparities Council. This latest chapter in health reform builds upon previous public policy accomplishments such as the creation and preservation of the Uncompensated Care Pool, the expansion of MassHealth and development of the Children's Medical Security Plan, the enactment of medical interpreter legislation, community benefits reporting, implementation of a community health planning process (CHNAs), and state funding for community health centers.

Effective advocacy, including coalition-building and collaborative problem solving by Massachusetts' strong array of health care advocacy organizations, has been an important driver of all these accomplishments. The involvement of health advocacy organizations continues to be instrumental in keeping the plight of the uninsured and underserved high on the public policy agenda, especially as new reforms are debated and implemented and cost savings and other changes are put in place. In addition, effective advocacy and problem-solving continues to be important in addressing health access problems such as those affecting specific populations and communities, those related to shortages for particular types of health care services or those faced by residents unable to obtain health coverage in the new reform environment.

Key Funding Eligibility Elements

These grants will provide core operating support for statewide organizations and initiatives focused on expanding access for the uninsured. The BCBSMA Foundation seeks to enable statewide advocacy organizations to maintain and expand activities focused on:

- Policy analysis and education
- Development of access initiatives

- ❑ Consumer education and organizing with the goal of increased participation by consumers, outreach workers and other practitioners in the public policy process
- ❑ Collaboration with other interest groups and policymakers.

Funding requests are invited from Massachusetts organizations:

- ❑ With a statewide focus
- ❑ With experience developing and promoting strategies to improve and sustain health care access for the uninsured and low-income across Massachusetts
- ❑ That bring innovative thinking and new partnerships to the work of expanding access
- ❑ That agree to participate in meetings organized by the Foundation to promote the sharing of resources and innovative solutions among grantees and health care leaders
- ❑ Whose funding will be used to help bridge the gap between needs for specific programs and support for daily administrative and infrastructure costs.

Funding

The maximum grant amount for core operating support for eligible applicants is \$50,000 per year with the possibility of renewal. The Foundation maintains the right of non-renewal or to renew funding for a differing amount from the prior award.

The Foundation defines core operating support as funding for regular, ongoing expenses that are central to the organization’s mission to promote access to health care for the uninsured. These funds can be used for organizational infrastructure expenses such as: salaries for key program or administrative staff; supporting planning, staff training or board development; general operating expenses; or for a specific health care access-related program.

Deadlines and Submission Requirements

September 1 Letter of Inquiry

Only for organizations not currently funded in this program area: An original and six copies of a two-page pre-proposal Letter of Inquiry (LOI) briefly describing the project to determine suitability for funding are due by 5:00 p.m. **Please use the required LOI Cover Summary Form**, which is available to download at www.bluecrossfoundation.org. LOIs should be submitted by mail.

Please do not submit attachments and support materials with the LOI.

*The Foundation will acknowledge receipt of the LOI within three business days. Please contact the Foundation **only** if you have not received confirmation after three business days of submission.*

September 17 October 16 Proposal

Organizations being invited to submit a full proposal will be contacted.

Only for current grantees seeking renewal and organizations whose LOIs have been accepted and are invited to apply: Seven collated stapled sets of the core materials and one set of attachments as listed below must be **received via mail by 5:00 p.m.**

The Foundation will acknowledge receipt of the proposal packet within three business days. Only a complete proposal packet, including all letters of support, will be considered for funding. Unsolicited proposals will not be considered, and will be returned without being evaluated.

December 21 Grant awards announced following Board votes.

Proposal Requirements

New applicants: *Submit seven collated stapled copies of the core materials and one set of attachments, as listed below.*

Core Materials:

- **Proposal Cover Summary Form:** available for download from www.bluecrossfoundation.org
- **Narrative:** (must not exceed 10 pages, 11-12 pt. type on plain paper)
- a) Operating Support Request:**
 - Describe the organization's history and mission.
 - Describe the goals, objectives, and strategy to promote change.
 - Describe the target population, including the number, profile and geographic area(s) for the persons served.
 - Describe how this request addresses the Key Funding Eligibility Elements outlined above.
 - Describe why your organization and staff is best qualified to manage the efforts for which funding is being sought (please do not include staff resumes).
 - Describe your organization's history of operating in a culturally competent manner, and engaging in collaborative problem solving, community outreach and consumer involvement in program development and implementation.
 - Explain how your organization's work supports community-wide strategies for change and improvement in health care.
- b) Evaluation and Sustainability:** Define your criteria for success and how it will be measured. Describe the tools and strategies for measuring progress towards outcomes and effectiveness. If your program has developed a Logic Model, please feel free to include this in the proposal packet. Describe how the organization intends to sustain these efforts when this funding ends.
- **Project Budget Worksheet:** Utilizing the form available for download from the web site, include an annual budget for the funding being requested.
- **Organization Budget:** Board or department-approved budget for the year in which funding is being requested.
- **Letters of Support:** A minimum of three letters of support and confirmation of any collaboration that illustrates your organization's capacity for making a measurable impact on the issue to be addressed by receiving this grant.

Renewal Applicants: *Submit seven collated stapled copies of the core materials and one set of attachments, as listed below.*

Core Materials:

- **Proposal Cover Summary Form:** available for download from www.bluecrossfoundation.org
- **Narrative:** (must not exceed seven pages, 11-12 pt. type on plain paper)
- a) Operating Support Request:**
 - Briefly describe your organization's core mission and any specific efforts focused on promoting access for the uninsured; highlight any differences from previous years, particularly in light of changes to the health access environment.
 - Brief review of accomplishments to date.
 - Describe the target population, including the number of people served to date and anticipated in this grant period, if applicable.
 - Describe any significant staff or organizational changes that affect implementation of your work specifically focused on the uninsured (please do not include staff resumes).
- b) Evaluation and Sustainability:** Define your criteria for success and how it will be measured. Describe the tools and strategies for measuring progress towards outcomes and effectiveness. If your program has developed a Logic Model, please feel free to include this in the proposal packet. Describe how the organization intends to sustain these efforts when this funding ends.
- **Project Budget Worksheet:** Utilizing the form available for download from the web site, include an annual budget for the funding being requested.
- **Organization Budget:** Board or department-approved budget for the year in which funding is being requested.
- **Letters of Support (Optional):** Please submit letters from individuals or organizations that represent new partnerships and can illustrate your organization's capacity for making a measurable impact on the issue(s) to be addressed by this funding.

Attachments:

- **Current IRS letter confirming tax exempt status: 501(c)(3), 509 (a).**
- **Most recent independent financial audits or accounts review.**

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The Foundation staff is willing to assist applicants submitting proposals by answering questions prior to submission of your complete packet. Please contact us at 617-246-5238 to schedule a technical assistance call prior to the proposal submission deadline. In addition, the Foundation will notify all applicants of the funding decisions before December 21, 2009.

Mailing or courier location:

BCBSMA Foundation
401 Park Drive, 4th floor East
Boston, MA 02215

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation; 401 Park Drive, Landmark Center, Boston, MA 02215; 617-246-3744; 617-246-3992 (fax); www.bluecrossfoundation.org.