



Update on Wave Four of the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

June 16, 2020

To our donors,

We hope this update finds you and your families well and that you are perhaps even getting a few days respite in better weather.

The Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund Advisory Committee has just completed its review and approval of grants for Wave 4 with \$3.85M granted to 89 nonprofit organizations through 9 community foundations across the state, bringing the total dollars granted to date to \$17.8M to 392 nonprofit organizations.

Food insecurity continues to be a critical need and your donations have allowed the food banks and last mile distribution sites to service this demand. Providing daily living supports to the generally vulnerable populations including those who are housing insecure or already homeless are the other most requested grants for the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund (“Fund”). New grants to this wave of funding have been providing emergency relief funds to community college foundations which run food pantries and homelessness services for their students and grants to mental health providers to support essential workers experiencing the effects of trauma.

Last week we achieved the fundraising goal of \$30mm with the Fund totaling \$30.3mm raised to date. This will allow the MA COVID-19 Relief Fund to continue with two more waves of funding this summer. Thank you for your generous contributions.

Grantees have begun providing reports to the Fund including how the funds were spent against their original request. Reporting data has confirmed grant dollars were expended as intended providing food, shelter, and vital services to vulnerable populations across Massachusetts.

This week’s update will highlight three of our Community Foundation partners.

Impact Spotlight: Wave 3

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation:

Berkshire County is an area of 946 square miles stretching from Williamstown in the north to Great Barrington/Sheffield in the south. This region has a population of 125,000 residents with over 11% of those residents living in poverty.

The COVID-19 relief efforts of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and Berkshire United Way are focused on enabling trusted nonprofits with deep roots in Berkshire County to serve vulnerable populations, including low income and homeless families, seniors, communities of color and immigrants. With funds from MA COVID-19 Relief Fund, the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation has supported nonprofit organizations in the region with 14 grants, including:



Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) provides access to free, comprehensive health care for those in poverty and/or those who are under-insured in the Berkshires region. With funds from the MA COVID-19 Relief Fund, VIM provided emergency financial assistance to patients supporting immediate basic needs such as rent, utilities, and food. Grant funding is also being used to cover increased demand for medical, dental, and social work services from newly unemployed patients.

Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity is providing stable housing and financial support to avert future homelessness caused by the pandemic. Grant funds are being used to assist vulnerable homeowners who have lost jobs to keep up with mortgage payments. Within 24 hours of announcing their ability to provide emergency assistance to those impacted by COVID, 97 individuals applied for help.

Learn more about the work of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation [here](#).

Greater Worcester Community Foundation:

Worcester County covers 1,579 square miles stretching from Winchendon in the north to Southbridge in the southern part of the county. Worcester County has a population of 830,000, of whom 9% live in poverty and 19% speak a non-English language at home.

Greater Worcester Community Foundation (GWCF) has partnered with the United Way of Central Massachusetts to create the Worcester Together: Central Mass COVID-19 Fund. This partnership has fostered a fully coordinated, efficient relief effort in this region. Worcester Together is focused on food insecurity, immigrant individuals, at-risk populations, health care and behavioral health, and housing assistance in Worcester County.

With funds from MA COVID-19 Relief Fund, GWCF has provided 59 grants to nonprofit organizations in Worcester County, including:

YMCA of Central Massachusetts' Amidst COVID-19, YMCA of Central MA has been providing emergency childcare for essential workers. The MA COVID-19 Relief Fund grant allowed the YMCA to increase service in Worcester and Southbridge. To create a safe, sanitary environment for children of essential workers, [YMCA of Central MA has had to increase their staff to child ratio nearly 40%](#).

Genesis Club House is focused on providing resources to developmentally disabled adults in the Worcester area. With their facilities closed due to COVID-19, Genesis Club House has been continuing to support their members remotely. They have provided digital literacy training for members to be able to access telehealth and virtual services, in addition to assistance with food and rent. Since the beginning of their virtual services, they engage with [nearly 300 members per day](#).

Learn more about the work of Greater Worcester Community Foundation [here](#).



The Boston Foundation:

The Boston Foundation is working with the MA COVID-19 Relief Fund to support vulnerable populations in the highest-need communities outside Boston in the Greater Boston area, including Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Quincy, Randolph, Winthrop and Revere. This catchment area covers 482,000 residents with over 13% living in poverty and 45% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. In the highest need communities, poverty is more pronounced with poverty rates ranging up to 19%. The Boston Foundation is supporting organizations serving the food insecure, immigrants, persons with disabilities, and those seeking housing assistance.

The Boston Foundation has made 35 grants to nonprofits in the Greater Boston area with financial support from the MA COVID-19 Relief Fund, including:

Chelsea Collaborative provides support to the largely immigrant population of Chelsea, a city deeply affected by the pandemic. [80% of Chelsea residents are considered essential employees and have been exposed to COVID-19 at disproportionately high rates](#). The organization is using dollars from the MA COVID-19 Relief Fund to offer housing and employment resources as well as access to food for families in need. Funding is also helping the organization distribute cleaning kits and multilingual educational materials on appropriate sanitation. Watch Chelsea Collaborative featured on NBC [here](#).

Father Bills & Mainspring, Inc. strives to help those in the Brockton area who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless achieve self-sufficiency. Grant funding is helping to support the organization's [operating costs, which have increased by \\$125k+ per month](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the need to provide new temporary shelter and quarantine sites and ensure adequate cleanliness.

Learn more about the work of The Boston Foundation [here](#).

To view a current list of nonprofit organizations supported by the grantees of the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund click [here](#).

With four waves of funding completed, we are certain of only one thing: The needs continue to be real and prevalent across our state. Though the impact of COVID-19 has spared few, the Fund has remained focused on providing relief to those most impacted. We are all too aware that we currently have just \$12.5M left to grant and are planning alongside the Community Foundation partners to ensure these dollars are well purposed.



Thank you again for your partnership and generosity. Be well and may all our neighbors soon experience better times.

With Gratitude,

Lauren Baker, First Lady of Massachusetts, Advisory Committee

Joanna Jacobson, One8 Foundation Trustee & President, Advisory Committee

Jonathan Raymond, Executive Director, MA COVID-19 Relief Fund