

## Healthy Living Accelerator Grant Program 2019 Guidelines

### Background and Content

America is facing a health crisis. Poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and decreasing engagement with the natural environment are contributing to record rates of obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. In Massachusetts, thousands of residents face barriers which prevent access to healthy lifestyles and environments. Fresh produce and nutritious food are often unaffordable or inaccessible, and as a result individuals turn to cheap, less healthy options that are readily available at local convenience stores and fast food restaurants. Busy schedules and lack of access to fitness facilities and outdoor green spaces also limit residents' physical activity. Despite being considered one of the healthiest states, more than 20% of adults and 23% of adolescents in Massachusetts reported that they do not participate in any regular physical activity.<sup>1</sup> These factors contribute to the high annual medical costs associated with obesity among adults, which are estimated at \$3.5 billion in Massachusetts<sup>2</sup> and \$190.2 billion nationally.<sup>3</sup>

Research shows that maintaining a balanced, healthy lifestyle positively impacts health outcomes. Regular physical activity, along with a nutritious diet, is proven to lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.<sup>4</sup> In addition to providing the mental benefits of being outside, easy access to the natural environment has been shown to produce a 48% increase in the frequency of physical activity among adults.<sup>5</sup> Despite these benefits, Americans on average spend only 7% of their time outdoors.<sup>6</sup>

Blue Cross' mission is to help Massachusetts residents maintain a healthy lifestyle by increasing access to positive environments and experiences that inspire healthy eating and exercise. This grant program is focused on three Healthy Living pillars:



**Healthy Eating**  
We support programs and initiatives that promote a balanced diet.



**Active Lifestyles**  
We're focused on helping Massachusetts residents stay physically active.



**Healthy Environments**  
We believe in protecting and championing positive natural and built environments.

### Review and Funding Overview

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts seeks to fund programs and initiatives that most closely align with our Healthy Living goal to influence behavior change and advance the health of Massachusetts residents by addressing the inter-connectedness of healthy eating, active lifestyles, and positive environments.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/fundedstates/pdf/massachusetts-state-profile.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/mass-in-motion/obesity-stats/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.healthycommunitieshealthyfuture.org/learn-the-facts/economic-costs-of-obesity/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm#ReduceCardiovascularDisease>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/pa-ajpm-evrev.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bluecrossma.com/visitor/annual-report/annual-report-2016/?section=in-the-community>

Through a competitive selection process, Blue Cross will award funding proposals that will bring an existing model to scale or jump start a new idea. Blue Cross will select up to 10 finalists to present their proposal and approach to an internal review committee comprised of leaders from diverse business areas at Blue Cross. Only those applications and proposals that have been invited to present will be considered for funding. Finalists will be narrowed down to 5 organizations that will receive one-time grants of up to \$100,000 each. We intend for this funding to be used by grantees to leverage additional funds to continue to develop and sustain their models beyond this 16-month grant cycle.

### Eligibility Requirements

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts will lend its support in ways that bring value to our members and associates by serving the community with no discrimination by age, race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability. In general, we will not fund individuals; religious organizations for sectarian or religious purposes (secular programs of faith-based organization that meet criteria will be considered); fraternal, political or lobbying organizations; school groups; and organizations based in or that serve communities outside of Massachusetts or entities that are not 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

The Healthy Living Accelerator Grant Program is open to organizations and programs that:

- Address a specific Healthy Living need as described in at least one of our pillars. Blue Cross will heavily favor applicants applying a holistic approach to health—addressing the interconnectedness of healthy eating, active lifestyles, and outdoor experiences.
- Are Massachusetts-based or serving the needs of the Massachusetts region.
- Are a registered 501(c)(3) or use a fiscal agent that is a 501(c)(3).
- *Blue Cross will not accept applications for general operating or general programmatic support. Proposals should seek to bring an existing model to scale or jump start a new idea.*

### Ongoing Learning and skills-building support

At Blue Cross, we recognize, organizations require more than financial support to successfully execute an initiative. To support grantees in their activities, Blue Cross will provide ongoing skill-building and pro-bono support through a *Healthy Living Network*. Grantees will convene through in-person sessions (dates and times to be determined). Experts will be brought in to provide skills-based training and professional development to grantees to help strengthen their ability to do their work. Grantees will be expected to share experiences and challenges in carrying out grant activities with their peers and bring their own expertise to share with others.

### Key Dates and Program Elements

All proposals must be completed and submitted electronically via the YourCause platform by **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 2, 2019**. Blue Cross will not consider proposals submitted after the deadline, via email or means other than YourCause, or without all required attachments.

Community Investment staff will be available by phone on June 11, 2019 and June 18, 2019 to answer any specific questions that potential applicants have before submission. While pre-conversation is not a prerequisite to applying, it is strongly encouraged. Please email Caeli (caeli.richter@bcbsma.com) to reserve a 30-minute appointment with the Community Investment team.

Date	Activity
<b>06.03.2019</b>	<b>Grant cycle begins</b>
<b>07.02.2019</b>	<b>Submission deadline</b> A proposal addressing the questions detailed in application and accompanying documents is due on a rolling basis until Tuesday, June 2, 2019 at 5:00 pm. Please submit all proposals via Blue Cross' online portal. Only complete proposals, including all requested attachments, will be considered for funding.
<b>Week of 07.15.2019</b>	<b>Finalists selected</b> Recipients will be notified the week of July 15, 2019 if they have been selected as a finalist and invited to present to the selection committee.
<b>Week of 08.12.2019</b>	<b>Finalist presentations</b> Date and time will be coordinated with the finalists.
<b>Week of 08.19.2019</b>	<b>Grant awards announced</b> Recipients will be notified the week of August 19, 2019 if they have been awarded a grant.

### Reporting Requirements

We understand goals and program metrics may shift or need to be realigned as the program evolves. As such, we will have predetermined connection points and informal check-ins throughout the 16-month period to help navigate the process and inform a final report detailing progress in the first year.

### Requirements for Proposal:

1. Complete online application.
  - Application link: <https://apply.yourcausegrants.com/apply/programs/1b41c3a5-56af-4408-9991-41d97b7a7c9b>
  - Application questions can be previewed below.
  - If you have not accessed our online portal after March 1, 2019, you will need to create an account and profile before you are able to log in. Once you've created an account, you may need to confirm your email address through the email sent to you or click on the application link again to access the form. If you are encountering any issues setting up your account, please contact [grantsconnect-support@yourcause.com](mailto:grantsconnect-support@yourcause.com).
2. Upload required documentation
  - Project Budget Worksheet (use template provided below)
  - 501c3 designation letter
  - W9 for your organization or fiscal agent

### Contact Information

- Yvonne Tang, Director, Corporate Citizenship and Business Integration  
[Yvonne.Tang@bcbsma.com](mailto:Yvonne.Tang@bcbsma.com) or 617-246-3332
- Caeli Richter, Manager, Corporate Citizenship  
[Caeli.Richter@bcbsma.com](mailto:Caeli.Richter@bcbsma.com) or 617-246-3385
- Meghan Driscoll, Manager, Corporate Citizenship  
[Meghan.Driscoll@bcbsma.com](mailto:Meghan.Driscoll@bcbsma.com) or 617-246-3822

## Healthy Living Accelerator Grant Program Application Questions

1. What is the challenge that your proposal attempts to solve? Please describe the extent of this challenge, the population(s) it most directly impacts, and the longer-term effects of this challenge.
2. In what geographic region do you propose to launch programmatic efforts to address this challenge over the next year?
3. Which of Blue Cross' three focus areas will your solution advance? (select all that apply)
  - Healthy Eating
  - Healthy Active Lifestyles
  - Healthy Environments
4. What is your proposed approach to solving this challenge? How will it work, does it address solutions at the population level, and what is the timeframe for seeing those results?
5. On what research or experience is this proposed solution based and who was involved in developing it? Please specify if and how you engaged the community in this process.
6. Is this proposal to bring an existing model to scale or jump start a new idea?
  - a. (If existing model) Does the existing model have a track record of achievement? What are the achieved outcomes?
  - b. (If new idea) What makes this proposed approach innovative or untested, and how might it be an improvement over other models that currently exist?
7. What are the best outcomes to indicate that this approach is working by the end of Year 1, understanding these may shift or need to be realigned as the program evolves?
8. What challenges do you foresee in achieving these outcomes over the course of the 16-month grant period and what actions might you take to overcome them? Please include any training or pro-bono support from Blue Cross that might be helpful.

## Healthy Living Accelerator Grant Program Budget Tracker

<b>Organization Name:</b>				
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Base Salary</b>	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Other Support</b>
Program Director/Manager				
Administrative Staff				
Other Staff:				
Fringe Benefits ( ___ %)				
Sub-Total				
<b>Other Direct Costs:</b>				
Project Operations				
Equipment				
Meeting Expenses				
Marketing/Communications/Outreach				
Travel				
Surveys				
Program Space				
Evaluation				
Other:				
Sub-Total				
<b>Purchased Services</b>				
Consultants				
Contracts				
Sub-Total				
<b>TOTAL</b>				