



# HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP & GRANT PROGRAM

## OUR COMMITMENT TO HEALTH JUSTICE

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) has put our members at the center of health care for more than 80 years. As a community-focused, not-for-profit health plan, we are deeply committed to help all Massachusetts community members lead healthier lives.

Central to achieving this mission is ensuring a healthier, more equitable, and just community. This requires dismantling the physical, mental, and emotional barriers to wellness through partnerships with civic and community leaders. This approach is rooted in justice and understanding social factors — at the individual, family, neighborhood, city, state, and national levels — that influence health outcomes. Along with this understanding, we pledge to operate within a context of respect and trust-based philanthropy, a core set of values aimed at advancing equity, changing the power dynamic, and building mutually accountable corporate and community partnerships. To guide our efforts, we have identified three focus areas:



### FOOD JUSTICE

Ensure access to healthy, culturally relevant food and to build a sustainable food system.



### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Overcome the disproportionate impact of pollution and environmental degradation on under-resourced communities.



### RACIAL JUSTICE

Strive to eliminate systemic, institutional, and interpersonal racism that contributes to disparate health outcomes.

Our Health Justice strategy is part of the company's overall strengthened commitment to be a leader in health equity. We are committed to eliminating health inequities among our members and the community through an ambitious and comprehensive strategy aimed at developing solutions to the root causes of inequities:

- As part of our core operations, clinical and quality improvement teams are collecting critical member data and working with provider networks to address inequities in care.
- The Foundation is leveraging its research expertise, charitable grants, and advocacy programs to illuminate and address these issues across the Massachusetts health system.
- Through our corporate citizenship program, we are expanding the aperture to address specific social factors that influence health outcomes, including food, environmental, and racial justice.

## 2023: PRIORITIZING FOOD JUSTICE

Promoting access to healthy food has long been a pillar of our community support. Individuals and families across the Commonwealth, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color, struggle to access affordable, healthy food options. 1.8 million adults in Massachusetts, or 33% of the state's population,

reported chronic food insecurity with one in three individuals reporting running out of food or not having enough money to purchase food every month<sup>1</sup>.

**The 2023 Health Justice Partnership & Grant Program prioritizes food justice.** This partnership and grant support will help advance an equitable and sustainable food system – one that increases access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally relevant food for all, and addresses longstanding inequities in the food system. Successful partners will address issues at their root cause and have long-term, systemic and/or cultural impact.

## FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Through the 2023 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Health Justice Partnership and Grant Program, Blue Cross will collaborate directly with the program’s grantees to create multi-faceted, trust-based partnerships. Following conversations with each grantee, we will identify ways to leverage our corporate resources to advance the grantee’s overall mission and deliver on defined capacity-building projects through skills-based or pro bono volunteering, financial support, and/or thought leadership. In addition, we offer trainings, convenings, and networking opportunities on topics that align across the cohort.

The Health Justice Partnership & Grant Program is a **two-year commitment** providing the following to each selected partner:

YEAR 1	\$35,000 in general operating support	Up to \$110,000 in total support per organization
	Up to \$20,000 in pro bono support	
YEAR 2	\$35,000 in general operating support	
	Up to \$20,000 in pro bono support	

## ELIGIBILITY

The 2023 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Health Justice Partnership & Grant Program is open to organizations and programs that:

- Are community-based organizations registered as a 501(c)(3) or use a fiscal agent that is a 501(c)(3).
- Work to ensure universal access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for all, and/or support a sustainable and/or regional food system.
- Advance health justice in Massachusetts communities.

Ideal partner organizations will embrace Blue Cross’ shared values around trust-based philanthropy and health justice. We are looking for organizations that:

- Facilitate the involvement of historically excluded groups in the search for solutions and the development of partnerships that address food justice.
- Strive for a balance of leadership, governing structure and staff that are representative of the communities served.
- Commit to relevant, skills-based professional development opportunities provided by our pro-bono support.

Blue Cross 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. We will not support 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) not-for-profit organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Feeding America. (2020). *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020*. (Retrieved from: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research>)

## KEY DATES AND PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Applications must be completed and submitted electronically via our online portal by **September 1, 2023**. Only complete proposals, including all requested attachments, will be considered. We will not consider proposals submitted after the deadline, via email or means other than the online portal. If for any reason, you are not able to access the online portal, please contact us prior to the deadline to arrange for an alternate solution.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Opportunity to meet with members of the Blue Cross team for questions or feedback during virtual office hours. <b>Please fill out <a href="#">this form</a> for scheduling.</b>	Tue, August 15, 9:30-12:00PM Wed, August 16, 1:00-3:00PM Fri, August 18, 9:00AM-12:00PM
Proposals due	Fri, September 1, 2023
Application evaluation by Blue Cross	Tue, September 5 – Fri, September 22, 2023
Finalists contacted	Mon, September 25, 2023
Finalist conversations	Fri, October 20, 2023
Official partner announcement	November 2023

## HOW TO APPLY

- Click [here](#) to access the online application**
  - If this is your first time applying for support from Blue Cross, you must create an account and profile. If you are encountering any issues setting up your account, please contact [grantsconnect-support@yourcause.com](mailto:grantsconnect-support@yourcause.com).
- Complete the application**
  - Please provide the requested information as well as the additional required documentation listed below.
- Upload required documentation**
  - Save your answers to the Health Justice Partnership & Grant application questions (see next page) as a PDF and attach in the section labeled "Upload your answers to the Health Justice Partnership & Grant application questions"
    - Please limit application to four pages**
  - Share a link to your most recent 990



## HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP & GRANT PROGRAM

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please limit total application to no more than four pages and **submit as a PDF following the instructions above.**

#### Organizational Structure and Food Justice

1. Share your organization's mission, size, and overall budget\*.
2. How do you incorporate health equity into your work?
3. Provide a summary of your work, how it supports your mission, and examples of food justice initiatives.
4. Describe the communities and populations your organization serves.
5. How is your leadership, staff, and board connected to the community?

#### Equity and Diversity

1. How are you facilitating the involvement of historically excluded groups in the search for solutions?
2. How do you collaborate with the community to identify challenges and propose solutions?

**Optional:** Please add relevant, additional written content that was not addressed in the application questions within your 4-page limit.

\*If you are a program within a larger organization, please share the organizational budget as well as the programmatic budget.

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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