



MASSACHUSETTS



2021 CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP REPORT

Making a Difference Together

Dear friends,

Over the past two years, our company's commitment to helping our members and all Massachusetts residents lead healthier lives has been put to the test like never before. I'm proud to present an overview of how we have met the challenge with the support of our community partners.

As our CEO, Andrew Dreyfus, points out in our [annual report](#), two enduring lessons from the pandemic have been the importance of our close collaboration with community leaders who've played such an invaluable role in our state's response to COVID-19 – especially for our most under-resourced communities – and the urgent need to confront inequity in health care.

These insights have helped shape the evolution of our company's approach to corporate citizenship. As the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing fight for racial justice laid bare the deep disparities that exist in health care, we reexamined our Healthy Living strategy and sought guidance from civic and community partners on what we could do to eliminate inequities and create healthier communities.

Guided by those closest to community needs, in 2021, we invested \$41.7 million dollars in financial, volunteer, and in-kind support to Massachusetts-based not-for-profits, including \$25 million to champion physician practices and hospitals in their equity improvement efforts and \$1.3 million to support community-based COVID-19 vaccine efforts.

Longer-term, we have greatly expanded our support for initiatives that address the social determinants of health with our evolved Health Justice strategy.

To create sustainable, community-driven change, our company will provide funding, volunteer support and technical expertise as well as serve as a community convener to accelerate our work with three interconnected priorities:

- **Food justice:** Ensure access to healthy and culturally relevant food and building 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, interpersonal, and institutional racism that contributes to disparate health outcomes.

As we sharpened our focus on advancing environmental justice in the communities we serve, we've also taken a fresh look at how we can reduce our own company's impact on the environment. While the move to remote work has reduced our greenhouse gas emissions, we still have ambitious corporate goals to meet and a firm commitment to helping our employees, members, accounts and business partners reduce their environmental impact as well.

You'll find more detail on our insights, goals and strategies in the report that follows. We're very grateful to our community partners for their ongoing guidance and collaboration. Together we can help all Massachusetts residents lead healthy lives and create more equitable and just communities across our state.



Jeff Bellows
Vice President
Corporate Citizenship & Public Affairs



OUR MISSION

At Blue Cross, our corporate citizenship mission is to help all Massachusetts residents lead healthy lives and to create more equitable and just communities across the state.

We are committed to promoting health justice by working with our not-for-profit partners to eliminate the physical and social barriers that lead to health inequities.

Our Health Justice strategy is part of the company's strengthened commitment [announced earlier this year](#) to be a leader in health equity and is an evolution from our community strategy focused on healthy living.

CHAMPIONING HEALTH JUSTICE

The tragic effects of COVID-19 have been especially acute in communities where longstanding, systemic racial and ethnic inequities have widened health disparities. While our company's healthy living strategy was designed to reduce disparities by improving access to healthy eating, physical activity, and healthy environments, we knew we had to do more.

Through discussion, collaboration and strategic planning that engaged internal and external stakeholders, experts, and leaders, we determined that our focus should be on health justice – prioritizing changes that improve opportunities and health outcomes for everyone but with special attention and commitment to communities most affected by health inequities.

To focus our efforts, we have identified three priority areas: Food Justice, Environmental Justice, and Racial Justice.



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, interpersonal, and institutional racism that contributes to disparate health outcomes

OUR STRATEGY

We seek to advance health justice across Massachusetts through a three-pronged strategy:

- Create strategic partnerships to fast-track innovative programs
- Support programs that align with our Food Justice, Environmental Justice, and Racial Justice pillars through our financial investments and volunteer contributions
- Use our network to convene leaders to share ideas that drive change

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Accelerating advances in health justice through a dual track program. All participants in the Accelerator receive funding, training + facilitation, pro bono support + networking opportunities.

Track 1: The Collaborative

- Multi-year funding, training, facilitation and pro bono support
- Multiple (typically up to 5) organizations are invited to convene around a promising idea or model in a specific community

Track 2: The Network + Grants

- One year funding, training, and pro bono support
- Individual organizations apply for support to jump-start a new idea or scale an existing model



INVESTMENTS, ENGAGEMENT + ACTIVISM

Leveraging our financial investments and volunteer resources to support organizations that are focused on health justice.

- Volunteer support from our employees including Service Day, Skills-Based Volunteering and BlueCrew projects
- Investments to not-for-profits to support health justice programming
- Strategic collaborations in towns across the state focused on addressing unique community health challenges
- Internal sustainability and wellness efforts

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Driving change by convening stake-holders and sharing insights and promising practices around health justice innovation

- Convenings in communities across MA on important health topics
- Advocacy work supporting health advancements

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMMING

Civic
Engagement

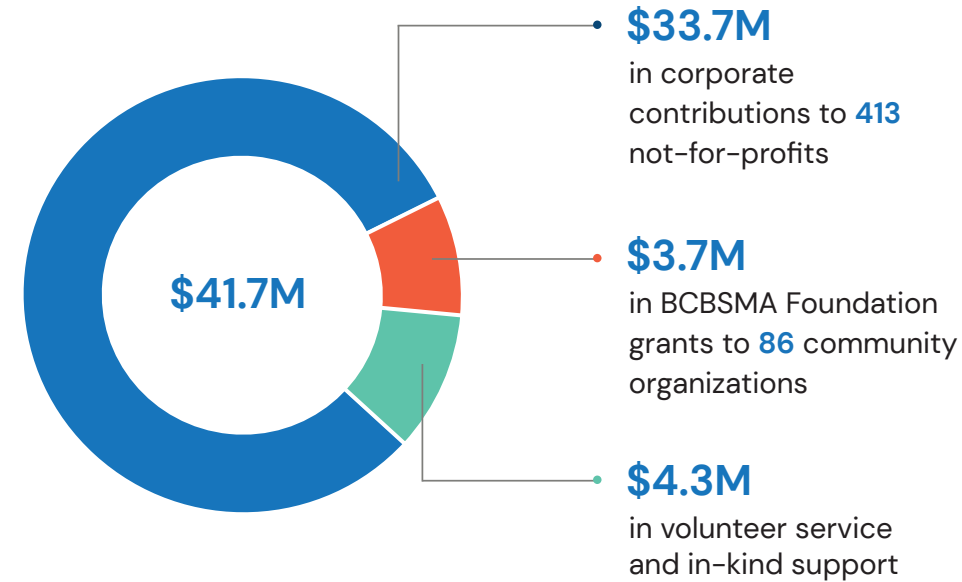
Community
Investments

Public
Affairs

Sustainability

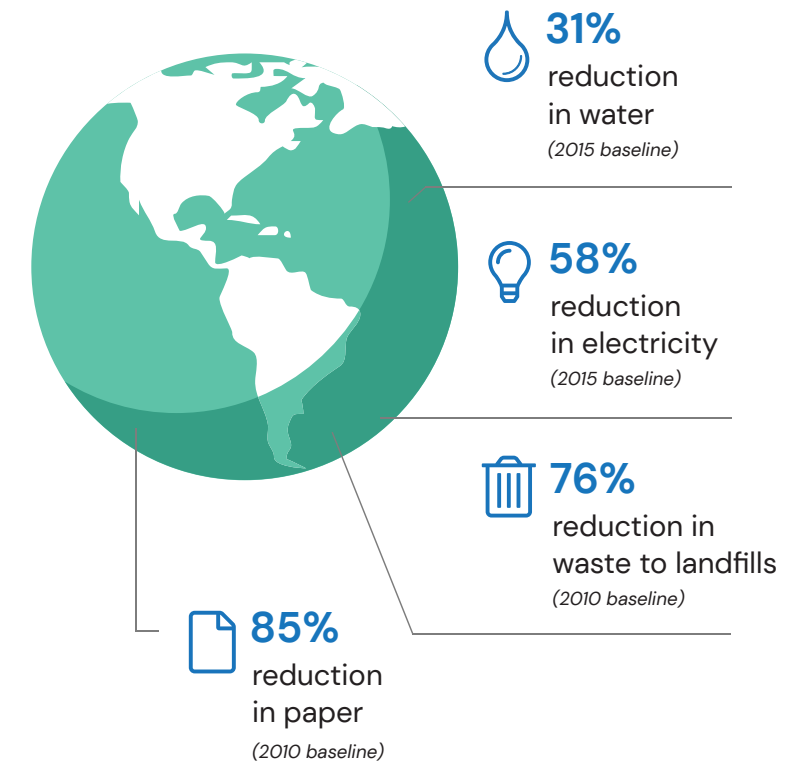
2021 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Community Investments

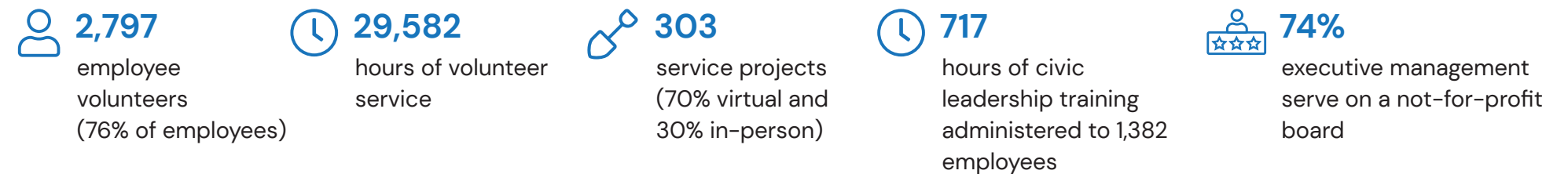


\$27.9M out of the \$33.7M in corporate contributions championed health equity in the community

Sustainability



Civic Engagement





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, we are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, affordable health care. We are proud to support the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and align our business operations and community partnerships to improve public health and sustainable development.

Achieving good health and well-being is integral to all 17 of the goals, however as a Massachusetts-based health insurance company our work is most closely aligned with Goals 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, and 13.



Blue Cross is committed to addressing food insecurity across the state and ensuring families have equitable access to nutritious food.

In 2021, we convened hunger relief partners to share best practices and leveraged our cafeteria staff to provide nearly 150,000 meals to our employees and local food assistance providers. We also supported the launch of the new South Shore Food Bank and partnered with innovative not-for-profits working to improve the food system such as Eastie Farm, Food for Free, and About Fresh.



Throughout the pandemic, our company supported a historic public health mobilization aimed at ensuring access to life-saving vaccines and treatment. We accelerated our work to create a more affordable health care system, and we introduced innovative programs, products and partnerships that will enhance the quality of care our members receive. We also took meaningful action to make health care more equitable for all.

When lifesaving vaccines became available, we invested more than \$1.3 million in community-based COVID-19 vaccine efforts focused on education and promoting access. We also partnered with not-for-profits to increase equitable access to green space and physical activity.



We are committed to addressing inequities in care and advancing racial and social justice. In 2021, we contributed \$25M in funding to support physician practices and hospitals in their equity improvement efforts.

Our Blue Cross Racial Equity and Justice Program partnered with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) led not-for-profit organizations to address racial injustice in Massachusetts communities.



We invest our resources and thought leadership to build sustainable communities throughout Massachusetts. Our title sponsorship of BlueBikes provides 10 municipalities in Greater Boston a safe, affordable, green, and sustainable transportation option. We promote equitable access to green space through our not-for-profit partnerships, such as The Trustees, GreenRoots, and provide thought leadership and advocacy through our CEO's participation in the One Waterfront CEO Roundtable and Green Ribbon Commission. We also launched a new disaster response strategy that included grants to four disaster relief organizations – Team Rubicon, AmeriCares, Center for Disaster Philanthropy, and Global Empowerment Mission.



With the shift to remote work, our environmental footprint continues to decrease, building on our earlier progress which reduced our electricity, waste, and use of natural resources.



In 2021, we took substantial steps to expand the scope of our sustainability work to address health resilience in the face of the climate crisis.



Established in 2001 with an initial endowment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the mission of the Foundation is to ensure equitable access to health care for all those in the Commonwealth who are economically, racially, culturally or socially marginalized.

The Foundation, led by President and CEO, Audrey Shelto and separately governed by its own board of directors, supports the expansion of healthcare access through research, policy work, convenings and grants to community organizations. Since 2001, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation has invested more than \$77 million in grants to the community. Its publications serve as vital resources for policymakers and health care organizations across the state and country, and it regularly convenes leaders for information dissemination and impartial and thoughtful public discussion. Through these strategies, the Foundation focuses its efforts on coverage and care, behavioral health, and structural racism and racial inequities in health.

For more information about the Foundation, visit:

bluecrossmafoundation.org.

COVID-19 RESPONSE



COVID-19 RESPONSE

SUPPORT FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has required extraordinary collaboration and coordination. We drew upon our longstanding partnerships with the medical community, public agencies, and not-for-profit leadership to share information and discover where there was the greatest need.

Guided by these partnerships, in 2021 we invested more than \$1.3 million in community-based COVID-19 vaccine efforts focused on improving accessibility and overcoming vaccine hesitancy in the hardest hit communities and supporting community health centers across the state, working to provide holistic care for their clients.

SUPPORT FOR OUR COLLEAGUES

COVID-19 has upended life in ways no one could have anticipated. In addition to supporting the needs of our community, we knew that our own employees are not immune from the financial and emotional stress of the pandemic. In 2020, Blue Cross established our own Associate Assistance Fund that awards grants to eligible employees experiencing financial burden from an unexpected or unavoidable circumstance and an Associate Meal Program that provides a free meal kit each week for a family dinner of four. In 2021, the company awarded \$136,000 in financial relief grants to employees and distributed 79,000 meals.

VACCINE ACCESS

When life-saving vaccines became available, we mobilized to make sure vaccination was accessible to communities most affected by the pandemic.

IMPROVING ACCESS BY ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

To promote equitable access to vaccines, we launched a transportation support program in partnership with the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers to provide free rides for community health center patients to access vaccination appointments. The initiative included distribution of Lyft passes, or digital credits directly to patients, as well as a dedicated Blue Cross call center staffed by employee volunteers. As part of the partnership, we provided \$2,500-\$7,500 grants to 46 Community Health Centers across the state to support transportation programs currently underway or in development along with other solutions designed by health center staff to promote vaccine confidence.

“Transportation is a challenge in many of the communities that have been hardest hit by the pandemic. This program helped to bridge that gap with safe, free options for getting to and from vaccine appointments.”

– Michael Curry, president, and CEO of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers

FREE BIKE RIDES TO VACCINE CLINICS

As the lead sponsor of Bluebikes, Greater Boston’s public bikeshare program, we were proud to offer free rides to vaccines in ten participating municipalities. From April to June 2021, more than 1,700 rides were redeemed. Throughout the pandemic, Bluebikes has provided community members with a safe and sustainable public transportation option.





BRINGING VACCINES TO COMMUNITIES HARDEST HIT

For many families, traveling to vaccine appointments often presents another barrier. In addition to overcoming transportation challenges, we partnered with CIC Health and Field First, two organizations skilled in running large scale vaccination efforts for the state, to host vaccine clinics in communities with low vaccination rates. Through our \$360,000 investment, the groups collaborated with local municipalities and not-for-profits to administer 72 vaccine clinics in easily accessible public spaces in 14 communities across Massachusetts.

All Aboard the Vax Express

In June and July, we partnered with the Baker-Polito administration, MBTA and CIC Health to launch a train-based vaccination site, known as the Vax Express. The retrofitted commuter rail made stops in Worcester, Mattapan, Boston, Lowell, Lawrence, and Fitchburg providing free walk-up vaccines to more than 350 individuals going about their daily commutes.

Let's Get Vaccinated New Bedford

In July, we partnered with CIC Health and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to launch "Let's Get Vaccinated, New Bedford!" a mobile vaccination program that provided the vaccine to more than 630 residents in New Bedford neighborhoods with the greatest need.

In collaboration with 15 partners and community organizations, the program set up mobile sites at designated locations determined by the latest data, including the CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index, COVID-19 outbreak data, and vaccination data. The teams knocked on doors to alert residents and, when needed, arranged for individuals to receive the vaccine at their homes.

The success of the program led to expansion in Fall River and other communities, bringing vaccines door-to-door.



VACCINE CONFIDENCE

Recognizing that vaccine hesitancy is rooted in both the historical and current contexts of systemic racism and marginalization, we partnered with organizations that have longstanding and reciprocal relationships with communities of color to overcome barriers to vaccination.

INVESTING IN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Throughout the summer and fall we partnered with Equity Now & Beyond, a collaborative of five immigrant-led organizations, to host vaccine clinics and provide educational outreach in immigrant communities across Massachusetts. Data showed significant gaps in vaccination rates among Black and Latino residents compared to White and Asian residents as well as disparities in neighborhoods with large immigrant populations. Blue Cross' \$168,000 investment enabled Equity Now & Beyond to scale its COVID-19 vaccine education programs by increasing staff and launching new communication tools.

"Our goal is to provide education on the COVID-19 vaccine and create an accessible environment where Boston's African, Haitian and other Caribbean Black immigrant communities feel safe and don't fear retribution because of their immigrant or socioeconomic status."

– Kevin Whalen, Co-Director of Center to Support Immigrant Organizing and Coordinator of Equity Now & Beyond

SCALING MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES

Guided by feedback from community partners that there was a need for more translated COVID-19 resources, we provided a \$150,000 challenge grant to Health Care for All to support the growth and sustainability of its multilingual Help Line. Blue Cross' funding made it possible to provide vital assistance to non-English speakers statewide, particularly for those communities that have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

BOOSTING YOUTH VACCINATIONS

When the vaccine became available to five to 18 year-olds, we focused our efforts on boosting youth vaccination rates. We collaborated with Girls Inc. of Worcester, Worcester Youth Center, YMCA of Central Massachusetts, and Boys and Girls Club of Worcester to host a Youth Vax Fall Series. Led by youth ambassadors, the four-clinic series provided educational materials to 1,600 youth, engaged more than 450 residents, and administered 41 vaccinations.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL LEADERS TO SHARE TRUSTED, TIMELY INFORMATION

In a crisis, truth is a vital tool. Our company developed new communications tools like our online [Coronavirus Resource Center](#) to ensure our members, employer accounts and the public received the credible information they needed amid the volatile developments of the pandemic.

To boost vaccination rates, we collaborated with clinicians at The Dimock Center and Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center and prominent local faith leaders, Reverend Dr. Gloria White-Hammond and Reverend Liz Walker, to create videos and news articles to boost vaccine confidence in neighborhoods of color and faith-based communities.



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

During the pandemic, community health centers were pushed to the limit, managing a record surge in demand. We're proud to have supported health centers across the state navigate this historic public health crisis.

CREATING PLAYBOOKS TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES

We provided a \$180,000 grant to the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and Day Health Strategies to create a playbook focused on community health center COVID-19 best practices. The playbook, which was continually updated to reflect emerging trends, provided recommendations based on research and interviews with several community health centers at various stages of their vaccine rollout on the seven S's – strategy, start-up resources and operations, space, staffing, systems, supply, and spreading the word. Day Health and the Mass League have presented the Playbook nationally and worked with community health centers across Massachusetts to implement its recommendations.





CONNECTING EAST BOSTON RESIDENTS WITH LOCAL RESOURCES

As the pandemic affected East Boston residents at alarming rates, the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center's Community Resource and Wellness Center (CRWC) experienced a significant increase in requests for services such as rental assistance and food access. Continuing our multi-year commitment to the CRWC through our Health Justice Collaborative, we provided funding and over 140 hours of pro bono consulting to help the CRWC develop new programs and strategies to meet these growing community need and address staffing challenges.

In partnership with Union Capital Boston, Blue Cross helped the CRWC design and launch a new, linguistically, and culturally relevant Community Connector program. Inspired by our first Health Justice Collaborative with Codman Square Health Center and five Dorchester not-for-profits, the Community Connector Program hires local community members to help "connect" individuals and families with resources at East Boston agencies that can meet their unique physical, mental, and financial needs. This program helped the CRWC provide interim support to community members on the waiting list for other services, alleviating the stress on both CRWC frontline staff and the community members in need of services.

By the end of 2021, four trained Community Connectors provided over 300 hours of support to the CRWC staff, assisting with food distribution and providing direct peer-to-peer support through their knowledge of the broad network of resources available in East Boston.

Parallel to the rollout of this new program, Blue Cross pro bono volunteers also provided the CRWC leadership team with a comprehensive suite of recommendations to mitigate compassion fatigue and burnout at the leadership, managerial, and frontline worker level.

"Addressing inequity in our communities and creating sustainable change starts with building trust and social capital. EBNHC Community Connectors build a bridge for residents to understand that caring for our collective health is more than just about direct physical care, but it is also about housing resources, food access to make ends meet, advice for educational supports, and much much more." – Eric Leslie, Founder/Lead Organizer, Union Capital Boston

HEALTH JUSTICE



FOOD JUSTICE

Promoting access to healthy food has long been a pillar of our community support. However, after seeing the devastating impact the pandemic had on food insecurity levels, we knew we had to find new ways to ensure residents across Massachusetts were receiving proper nutrition.

CONVENING HUNGER RELIEF PARTNERS TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES

Guided by the needs of our partners, Blue Cross facilitated a six-week series from April 14 – May 21 for not-for-profits in the food justice and anti-hunger space, titled Community Conversations: Sharing Challenges, Seeking Solutions. Topics included program pivots and innovations, building organizational culture in times of crisis, and continuity beyond the crisis. In addition to sharing their own challenges, strategies, and solutions, not-for-profits were able to receive pro-bono support from our employees around organizational needs related to each topic.

LEVERAGING OUR CAFETERIAS TO FILL AN UNMET NEED

Throughout 2021, we continued to operate our Community Meals Program. With 95% of our employees still working from home, we partnered with our food service vendor, Flik, to enlist our chefs and cafeteria staff to make nearly 60,000 healthy meals to donate to the Weymouth Food Pantry and Interfaith Social Services.

“In our 30-year history, we have never seen this level of need. The meals donated by Blue Cross provided families with the convenience of a healthy lunch that can be enjoyed on the go, which is helpful for many families who are managing additional pressures as a result of COVID.”

–Pam Denholm, director of the Weymouth Food Pantry

HELPING LAUNCH THE SOUTH SHORE FOOD BANK

In November, we celebrated the opening of the new South Shore Food Bank, a collaboration between the Weymouth Food Pantry and The Greater Boston Food Bank, that will improve access to nutritious food for 18 communities in the South Shore. The new South Shore Food Bank, which Blue Cross supported with a \$70,000 grant, will serve as a distribution center for clients south of Boston, enabling these organizations to pick up fresh nutritious food on a regular basis and put it in the hands of community members who need it.





ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

We know that our health is directly linked to our environment. We also know that some communities unjustly carry the environmental burden of our region's industrial and transportation hubs, and residents as a result suffer from health disparities. Through our Environmental Justice work, we are committed to supporting not-for-profits that ensure equitable access to green space and improve environmental conditions and environmental infrastructure in communities most affected.

OVERCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL BURDENS WITH GREENROOTS

We partnered with GreenRoots, a resident-led, grassroots, community-based organization in Chelsea and East Boston focused on achieving environmental justice and greater quality of life through collective action, unity, education, and youth leadership. Chelsea and East Boston are classified as environmental justice populations. These communities are home to 100% of Logan Airport's jet fuel, 80% of New England's heating fuel, road salt for 350+ cities, airport related parking lots, freight forwarding companies, and more noxious uses. Our support helped fund their work to advance food justice through urban agriculture, address indoor air quality while sharing data on outdoor air quality in easily accessible, multilingual formats, and implement climate justice through the creation of new green spaces.

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH LOCALLY GROWN FOOD

Eastie Farm is dedicated to pursuing climate justice, improving food access, and fostering community resilience through the development of interactive urban agricultural spaces and environmental education programs. Residents of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to learn and take part in the production of healthy, locally-grown, and culturally relevant foods. In 2021, Eastie Farm was a lead partner in our community conversation focused on food justice, and we also provided funding support for their community composting, Junior Farmers, and Climate NATURE programs that foster environmental stewardship and resiliency by providing East Boston students with hands-on experiential learning opportunities.

"Eastie Farm and Blue Cross both value individual, community, and planetary health. It is driven by these values that we work to increase access to good, fresh, healthy, local food." – Kannan Thiruvengadam, President, Eastie Farm





PROMOTING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE

Access to green space has long been a part of our healthy living strategy. In 2021, we applied a health justice lens to our work and partnered with organizations focused on providing free fitness programming in easily accessible public spaces for all to enjoy.

Envisioning the Future of Boston's Waterfront with The Trustees

Our CEO, Andrew Dreyfus, participated in The Trustees' One Waterfront CEO Roundtable, to help shape the vision for the City's vulnerable waterfront. Our support of The Trustees' One Waterfront initiative aims to advance bold, innovative, and iconic open spaces on Boston's waterfront that support the needs and accessibility of a diverse community and provide solutions to Boston's climate resiliency goals.

Bringing free world class fitness to local public spaces

In November, we announced our partnership with the National Fitness Campaign (NFC) to expand free, equitable access to outdoor exercise in communities across Massachusetts. Through this partnership, Blue Cross and NFC will work with local towns, institutions, and organizations to construct 15 new Fitness Courts in easily accessed public spaces with the goal of making free, world-class fitness accessible to all.

Park Fitness in Boston and Lowell

In Boston, we partnered with the Department of Parks and Recreation to offer free, in-person classes in local parks across the city and virtual workouts for every age and fitness ability. Workouts included in-person classes such as family fitness in East Boston and HIIT classes in Franklin Park and live virtual events like chair yoga and line dancing. We also partnered with the City of Lowell to launch its Sheehy Park Fitness Walk, featuring stationary exercise equipment to ensure residents could stay active during the pandemic while enjoying the fresh air and staying socially distant.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Through our Racial Justice work we emphasize the community and social context in which we live, work, and play and drive toward dismantling the historical and present-day injustices that contribute to disparate health outcomes in our communities. We are proud to support not-for-profits working to build sustainable policies and innovations that increase social cohesion, community support, and restorative justice and build civic participation and social capital.

BLUE CROSS RACIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE GRANTS

In 2020, we launched our Racial Equity and Justice Grant program, investing \$350,000 to support BIPOC-led not-for-profit organizations focused on addressing racial injustice in Massachusetts communities with a two-year grant. In 2021, we continued to support the work of our grantees through our pro-bono support.

- Building Audacity
- Berkshire Resources for Integration of Diverse Groups through Education (BRIDGE)
- Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network (CPLAN)
- Inversant
- Legendary Legacies
- Resilient Sisterhood Project
- Fathers' UpLift





NEW COMMONWEALTH RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND

In 2020, we made a four-year \$1 million commitment to The New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund founded by a coalition of 19 prominent Massachusetts Black and Brown business executives including Stephanie Lovell, our former executive vice president, Medicare, and chief legal officer and board members, Corey Thomas and Quincy Miller. The Fund supports communities of color on issues of policing and criminal justice reform, health care equity, economic empowerment, and youth education and civic engagement. To dismantle systemic racism, the fund uses a three pronged philanthropic approach of trust-based grantmaking, culturally relevant capacity building, and fostering an ecosystem to support robust racial equity and social justice outcomes.

COMMUNITY COALITION FOR EQUITY IN RESEARCH

We contributed \$85,000 to support the development of a Community Coalition for Equity in Research. As seen with COVID-19 vaccine development, clinical trials typically emphasize speed, and are designed and implemented by researchers with limited experience in community-engaged research and limited understanding of the issues in under-resourced communities. The new Coalition, comprised of community members who are trained in the basic principles of clinical research, will provide guidance to researchers on ways to design clinical trials that will increase equity, community interest in participation and address barriers to participation.

BUILDING PRIDE IN PLACE

Through our partnerships with cities and towns across Massachusetts, we supported community-driven and informed health and wellness programs in communities of color.

Promoting swim safety

During the summer of 2021, Greater Boston saw a heart-breaking rise in drownings. To increase access to swimming lessons, especially for those who have faced historic and economic barriers, we invested \$45,000 to launch Swim Safely Boston in collaboration with the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools and YMCA of Greater Boston.

The initiative increased swim safety by offering free swim lessons for children and adults, expanding the lifeguard workforce through free training, and implementing a pilot program that offers free swimming lessons for Boston Public Schools students at some schools as part of the curriculum. The program also emphasizes cultural competency, including community conversations led by the Boston Harbor Women of Color Coalition and the provision of Soul Caps, specially designed swim caps for natural hair, to program participants.

Bringing fun and fitness to Worcester Parks

In partnership with Worcester's Office of Health and Human Services and the YWCA, we sponsored a 15-week Summer Park Fitness series to promote health and well-being programs in communities of color. Staff surveyed community members to create community-informed, culturally relevant classes including Afro/Latino Dance, Fit Families, and Tai Chi hosted in traditionally underutilized parks. With support from students at UMass Chan Medical School, program managers were able to measure the impact of the program and provide recommendations on how to continue to make the program more inclusive and representative of Worcester's diverse communities.



ENGAGING OUR EMPLOYEES



ENGAGING OUR EMPLOYEES

Our employees are our greatest asset. We're proud to offer a wide range of volunteer, giving, and sustainability programs that inspire our talented Blue Cross employees to apply their skills, resources, and passions to give back to our communities.

This year, as 95% of our workforce continued to work from home, we recognized more than ever the value of our mission driven programs. Not only were employees able to support the critical missions of our not-for-profit partners, but they were able to connect with their peers outside of work and have a valuable opportunity to recharge and connect with a greater purpose. Despite the challenges this year brought, we're grateful to have engaged 76% of our employees in our volunteer, giving, and sustainability programs.



[Click here to play Service Day 2021 video](#)

VOLUNTEERING

BLUECREW PROJECTS

In 2021, we worked with our not-for-profit partners to engage nearly 2,800 Blue Cross volunteers in 303 service projects – 70% of which were virtual projects that our colleagues could participate in from home. In addition to our long-time partners, we cultivated new volunteer opportunities with not-for-profits focused on overcoming social determinants of health and pursuing racial equity, including Art for Social Equality, Backyard Growers, Bikes not Bombs, Community Farms Outreach, Hope and Comfort, Food for Free, Mill City Grows, Our Neighbors Table, and Sharing the Harvest.

SERVICE DAY

For our 11th annual company-wide Service Day, we balanced the need to support the critical work of our community partners with efforts to offer a safe experience for employees and not-for-profit staff. After receiving a record number of applications, we were proud to support more than 100 unique service projects that engaged 2,700 Blue Cross employees in a combination of smaller in-person service events and virtual projects that they could participate in from home. Since Service Day's inception in 2011, Blue Cross has contributed close to \$10 million to the community through this annual volunteer day.

SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Through our partnership with Common Impact, we are proud to provide skills-based volunteer opportunities that match the unique skills and talents of our Blue Cross employees to address a not-for-profit's business challenge. In 2021, 36 volunteers engaged in the following projects to support our Racial Equity and Justice Grantees and select health justice partners.

- Developed a survey to capture the impact of a new community wellness program and benchmarked product offerings for the **Collaborative Parent Action Network**
- Supported the launch of a new program at **Fathers' Uplift** by assessing product offerings, pricing, and marketing at three peer organizations
- Analyzed the marketing, user experience and incentive strategies to inform new product creation at **Inversant**
- Developed key performance indicators related to recidivism, criminal thinking, and healthy habits to demonstrate impact across the organization for **Legendary Legacies**
- Created a playbook on how to engage stakeholders beyond single webinar offerings to build a more robust funding pipeline at **Resilient Sisterhood Project**
- Developed a suite of recommendations to mitigate compassion fatigue and burnout at the leadership, managerial, and frontline worker level for **East Boston Neighborhood Center's Community Resource and Wellness Center**
- Created content, messaging, and design elements for **Fathers' Uplift's** peer-to-peer "Movember" fundraising campaign
- Provided content recommendations for **Weymouth Food Pantry's** employee handbook and guidelines on how to incorporate it into their hiring and onboarding process.
- Developed a framework to help **BRIDGE** assess program value and best practices for how to determine when to grow, restructure, or sunset programs.



EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

Each year, we recognize Blue Cross employees who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to service and embody our core values of inclusion, compassion, sustainability, and leadership. In 2021, we awarded Keishalee Shaw, a business information architect in our enterprise technology group and vice president of our Black Professionals Network, with our pinnacle Excellence in Service Award for her commitment to creating opportunities for the next generation.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT BOARD PROGRAM

We are committed to connecting our business leaders to support local not-for-profits. Through our board leadership program, we educate employees about the role of not-for-profit boards and highlight pathways to board leadership. In 2021, 74% of company leaders served on community board. Collectively, our employees provided guidance, raised visibility, and strengthened 92 not-for-profits through board governance, an estimated value of more than \$730,000.



[Click here to play 2021 Excellence In Service video](#)



GIVING

DONATION DRIVES

Despite the challenge of not being together in our offices, we were able to support the needs of our community partners by leveraging technology to host our most successful donation drives yet. In partnership with our Veterans Employee Resource Group, employees donated 5,000 emergency items for Afghan evacuees. Nearly 900 employees also participated in our holiday drives that collected food donations, warm winter clothing, and holiday gifts for local families in need.

EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN

Each year, Blue Cross employees have the chance to double their impact through our company match offered during our YouGiveBlue employee giving campaign. Together our colleagues raised more than \$725,000 for Massachusetts not-for-profits and \$57,000 for our own Associate Assistance Fund. Giving exceeded the previous year's results for the fifth year in a row. With the company match, our total community contribution reached nearly \$1.4 million.

SUSTAINABILITY

GREEN@BLUE

Our employee-led Green Teams continued to inform colleagues and drive behavior change in a virtual work environment through our annual Earth Week activities and new quarterly newsletter. During Earth Week, the Green Teams led a service project with the Boston Nature Center and discussion of the BBC Documentary, *Magical Forest – Secrets of Our Living Planet*. In recognition of America's Recycle Day, they also hosted an e-waste drive that provided employees with a safe way to dispose of old, unwanted electronic drive electronics.

COMPANY GARDEN PROGRAM

Thanks to the innovation and hard work of our dedicated employee gardeners, our company gardens continued to thrive throughout the harvest season. Despite 95% of our employees working remotely, producing more than 3,000 lbs. of local, organic produce. While our gardens have always had a community focus, this season, our gardeners rallied together in response to the rising rate of food insecurity and donated their harvest to the food pantry at Interfaith Social Services and to families in need receiving nutritious meals through our company's Community and Associate Meals Programs.



SUSTAINABILITY



SUSTAINABILITY AT HOME

Since the adoption of remote work in March of 2020, our environmental impact has decreased dramatically. We have few employees in the buildings which has reduced our electricity usage, our waste streams, and transportation emissions.

We are now examining how to take the robust environmental sustainability practices we have put in place in our buildings and transfer those best practices into our employees' remote work locations. We are developing educational materials for best practices in home energy, waste reduction, and chemical exposure reduction so that are employees are empowered to work in low carbon, healthier environments whether they are in our offices or in their homes.

EXPANDED FOCUS ON CLIMATE AND HEALTH RESILIENCE

Recognizing the threat that climate change poses to the communities we serve and the health of our members, we are expanding the scope of corporate sustainability practices to include climate and health resilience. We have added an environmental epidemiologist with expertise in the health impacts of climate change to our team to lead this important work.

We believe that as a healthcare leader we must continuously work to reduce our own role in environmental degradation. We are undergoing enhanced carbon emissions accounting to make sure we are doing all we can to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions. We are working with our environmental justice partners to catalyze climate justice in the communities we serve. Lastly, we are lending our voices as healthcare experts to help people understand climate change and the interconnectedness between our environments and our health.





MASSACHUSETTS

For more information about our work and how to contact us, visit:

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