

Newton-Wellesley Hospital
Housing Security Community-Based Health Initiative
Request for Proposals
Release date: June 28, 2021
Grant Applications Due: August 6, 2021 before 5:00 pm

INTRODUCTION

Background

Mass General Brigham Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) is seeking proposals from community-based organizations to implement interventions addressing housing insecurity issues facing residents of the six communities comprising NWH's primary service area. These communities include Natick, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley, and Weston. The focus on housing insecurity was identified through a comprehensive review of critical needs undertaken by NWH in collaboration with an Advisory Committee comprised of key stakeholders based in NWH's primary service area.

This grant-making initiative is made possible by the approval of a Determination of Need (DoN) – Community-Based Health Initiative (CHI) process: Mass General Brigham Newton-Wellesley DoN (PHS-19092711-HE).

Over the next four years, beginning in October 2021, NWH will invest \$1.9 million in programming designed to address housing insecurity at both an individual level and a policy or systems level. Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), NWH anticipates awarding one grant to a community-based organization or collaborative of organizations. Funding will be disbursed over four years as follows:

- In Year 1, funding in the amount of \$486,674.05 will be available.
- In Years 2 through 4, annual disbursements will be \$475,000 per year.

Housing Insecurity Overview

There is a well-documented relationship between safe, secure, and affordable housing and health. As detailed in *Housing and Health: An Overview of the Literature*,¹ individuals facing housing insecurity are more likely to experience poor health than those in stable and secure housing. Furthermore, being housing insecure is associated with disproportionate health issues among youth such as

¹ <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20180313.396577/full/>

“increased risks of teen pregnancy, early drug use, and depression.” An extensive review of studies examining the relationship between housing foreclosure and health found that the “stress of personally experiencing foreclosure was associated with worsened mental health and adverse health behaviors, which were in turn linked to poorer health status.”² Similarly, studies have documented the relationship between eviction and adverse health and mental health outcomes. As noted in *Eviction And Health: A Vicious Cycle Exacerbated By A Pandemic*,³ “In the past several years, evidence of the detrimental effect of eviction on health has grown, with analyses demonstrating negative impacts on a variety of health metrics ranging from birth outcomes to mental health hospitalizations to all-cause mortality.” Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed an even greater proportion of renters at risk for eviction, reversing gains made in addressing racial inequities and exacerbating the negative consequences of housing insecurity on physical and mental health.⁴

Housing insecurity refers to a variety of situations, including paying more than 30% (or 50% in extreme cases) of household income on housing costs, living in overcrowded or substandard housing, living with multiple families to share costs, moving frequently for economic reasons or safety concerns, or being homeless. Housing insecurity is not an issue typically linked to the relatively affluent communities served by NWH. The median household income in each of the six communities is higher than Massachusetts overall. In fact, two communities (Wellesley and Weston) are among the top five median household incomes in the state.⁵ However, the relatively high earnings in these communities mask the economic inequities disproportionately facing people of color. According to data from the Impact Metrowest Community Indicators Project,⁶ median household income varies widely within these communities by race, with black/African American households and Latinx households earning significantly lower household incomes. People of color in these communities are disproportionately affected by poverty, significantly more likely to be single parent households, and less likely to have post-secondary education. Furthermore, in Waltham, 28% of the population is foreign born, nearly 35% are people of color, 23% speak a language other than English at home, and over 30% of Latinx high schools students do not graduate.⁷ Both people of color and recent immigrants are far more likely than white and higher income residents to experience housing insecurity.

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25849962/>

³ <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20210315.747908/full/>

⁴ <https://nlihc.org/resource/pandemic-widens-housing-security-disparities>

⁵ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/12/11/full-list-massachusetts-median-household-incomes-town/eZpgJkpB1uF2FVmpM4O8XO/story.html>

⁶ <https://www.impactmw.org/>

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/walthamcitymassachusetts/PST045219>

Purpose

NWH is seeking proposals for a CHI utilizing a multi-faceted approach to addressing housing insecurity. This CHI seeks to support housing stabilization efforts related to an immediate crisis and support a broader strategy that recognizes and addresses the range of factors that contribute to and result from housing insecurity.

The **goal** of this CHI is to:

Reduce inequities in housing security among residents of Natick, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley, and Weston.

Applicants are expected to propose a **multi-faceted approach to addressing housing insecurity**, with the following required components:

- Housing-focused case management with emergency financial assistance to address immediate issues of housing insecurity.
- Evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches to reduce the impact of housing insecurity and its root causes on mental health.
- Evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches designed to increase economic independence using a self-sufficiency coaching or mentoring model.

The **target population** for this CHI is:

Individuals or families facing issues of housing insecurity, with a focus on communities of color and immigrant communities in the six NWH communities of Natick, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley and Weston.

Acknowledging that significant policy and structural changes are needed to address the root causes of inequities in housing security, **applicants must also propose a policy or system change component to its initiative.** Examples of feasible policy and systems change efforts that would complement this CHI might include a focus on living wages for essential workers, eviction policies and practices established to manage the expiration of the CDC's eviction moratorium, or issues of legal representation in housing court. Policy and systems change efforts that advance ongoing community-level advocacy efforts or compliment advocacy already taking place are acceptable as long as the policy or systems change work directly impacts housing insecurity.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Upstream Approach to Addressing Inequities

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines for CHIs require a **focus on health inequities and addressing “root causes” of inequity by:**

- *eliminating the racial and health inequities that threaten the lives of communities of color*
- *implementing “downstream” strategies guided by a thorough understanding of the “upstream” issues that create barriers and lack of opportunity for healthy living*

A “downstream” approach refers to interventions addressing inequities and trying to mitigate them, without addressing the cause. “Upstream” refers to addressing the social, economic, political, environmental problems that cause the inequities.

In order to comply with DPH guidelines, the proposed CHI will provide downstream interventions to individuals and families in crisis while simultaneously ensuring a portion of CHI funds are dedicated to addressing upstream causes of housing insecurity rooted in systemic and structural racism. This CHI is intended to build on increased awareness of inequities highlighted by disproportionate impact of COVID-19 and leverage this attention to support policy-level change affecting housing insecurity. As such, successful initiatives must include a policy or system change component that is rooted in the applicant’s understanding of needs through community engagement.

Geographic Focus

Funds may only be used to support residents of the six communities in NWH’s primary service area facing issues of housing insecurity. These communities include Natick, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Wellesley, and Weston. Organizations eligible to apply for funding do not need to be located within one of the six communities. Ideally, applicants will design a CHI that is available to any resident in the six communities facing housing insecurity issues. However, applicants may choose to focus the CHI on a particular geographic area within the six communities. Applicants choosing to narrow their geographic focus, must justify the decision to do so.

Eligible Organizations

Organizations that have a 501(c)(3) designation or those with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.

Single Organization or Collaborative Approach

Applicants with the necessary experience and capacity to implement all components of this CHI may apply as a single organization. Applicants lacking the capacity to provide all required components may propose a collaborative approach with one lead agency. If applying as a collaborative, the proposal must identify all organizations in the collaborative, the specific roles of each organization, and the amount of grant funds allocated to each organization. MOUs between the lead agency and each

organization in the collaborative must be submitted with the proposal and should include a summary of roles and responsibilities and the amount of grant funds allocated to support the work.

Organizational Capabilities

Applicants (single or lead agency of a collaborative) must demonstrate:

1. Expertise in housing-focused case management.
2. Experience managing and distributing emergency financial assistance to individuals and families facing issues of housing insecurity.
3. All components of their approach are evidence-based or evidence-informed.
4. Organizational commitment to and feasible strategy for addressing root causes of housing insecurity through a policy or systems change effort.

Service Delivery

NWH anticipates that this grant will commence on October 1, 2021. Recognizing that the selected grantee or collaborative may need time to develop the CHI, applicants may propose a planning period of up to four months. Individual-level service provision must begin no later than February 1, 2022. If proposing a planning period, the applicant must clearly identify the specific tasks to be accomplished during the planning period in the Year 1 timeline.

Participation in Evaluation

NWH has contracted with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) to provide assistance with evaluating this CHI. Evaluation of this effort will be designed to:

- Inform future practice and innovation by monitoring and documenting the process of grant implementation
- Assess impact on inequities and outcomes at key points in the grant process

The applicant must commit to working with UMDI to develop an evaluation plan, collect process and outcome data, submit data, and participate in regular evaluation meetings to review progress.

FUNDING

NWH will fund one grant for four years contingent upon successful project progress.

The maximum amount of available funding in Year 1 is \$486,674.05. In Years 2 through 4, the maximum amount of available finding is \$475,000 per year.

Applicants may propose a CHI for five years as long as the total budget does not exceed \$1,911,674.05 and the annual budget amounts do not exceed the amounts specified above. The length of the proposed CHI (four or five years) will not be considered during the selection process. In other words, there is no preference for four or five years.

Eligible budget items

NWH **can** fund:

- Stipends for community residents with an active role in the proposed project
- Emergency funds to assist individuals or families facing a housing crisis
- Staffing costs, where the staff time reflected in the proposed project budget is exclusively dedicated to the project proposed

NWH **will not** fund:

- The costs of existing programs already fully financially supported by the organization or another funder
- Interstate or international travel
- Indirect costs that exceed 25%

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

All applicants must submit the following:

- Cover Page
- Proposal Narrative
- Attachment A: Budget Template and Budget Narrative
- Attachment B: Resumes of key staff
- Attachment C: Most recent financial statement.
- Attachment D: If applying as a collaborative, MOUs between the lead agency and each organization involved. Single-organization applicants **do not** submit an Attachment D.

Cover Page: Not included in 20 page limit

The Cover Page must include:

- Contact information for the Single Applicant or Lead Agency for a collaborative application, including:
 - Agency Name
 - Address
 - Contact Person Name and Title
 - Phone number
 - Email
- If submitting a collaborative application, a list of all organizations participating in the CHI.
- Brief description of the proposed CHI, proposed approach, and anticipated outcomes.

Narrative: Maximum 20 pages, single-spaced, 12 pt font. The Narrative must include the following:

1. Organizational Overview (20 points)

- a. Provide a brief description of the organization, including mission and core services.
- b. Describe how your organizational mission aligns with the overall goal of reducing inequities in housing security and addressing the root causes of housing inequities.
- c. Describe the extent to which your organization reflects the lived experience of individuals using your services.
- d. Describe your organization's experience providing housing-focused case management and experience providing emergency financial assistance to individuals facing a housing crisis.
- e. Describe your organization's experience with policy and systems change efforts related to housing insecurity.
- f. Provide evidence of ability to provide services across NWH's primary service area.
- g. If a collaborative applicant, provide descriptions of each organization involved in the CHI and identify the capabilities each brings in relation to the meeting the overall goal.

2. CHI Objectives (15 points)

- a. Identify the measurable objectives you will achieve.
- b. For each objective, provide estimates of the number of individuals or families you will serve.
- c. Describe the population you will serve in terms of both socio-economic characteristics and geographical area. If limiting geographic focus, provide a rationale for doing so.
- d. Identify the policy or systems change issue you will address and what you intend to accomplish.

3. Proposed Approach (25 points)

- a. Describe your approach to addressing housing insecurity through the three required components, including how you will identify, recruit, engage, and retain individuals or families in need of services.
- b. Indicate if this is a new program or if it builds upon an existing program. If building upon an existing program, describe what is new or different from the existing program.
- c. Describe your case management approach and the processes you will implement to manage and disburse emergency funds. Identify the amount of funding you will set aside for emergency financial assistance and provide a rationale for how you arrived at the amount. NOTE: Be sure that the amount set aside for emergency financial assistance leaves sufficient funds to implement the complete multi-faceted approach and policy and systems change efforts described in the purpose section of this RFP.
- d. Identify the evidence-based or evidence-informed approach you will utilize to reduce the impact of housing insecurity and its root causes on mental health and justify your selection of this approach for the target population.

- e. Identify the evidence-based or evidence-informed approach you will utilize to increase economic independence using a self-sufficiency coaching or mentoring model and justify your selection of this approach for the target population.
 - f. Describe how the three required components intersect to reduce housing insecurity.
 - g. Describe the length of time you anticipate working with individuals or families to achieve your objectives, and include a description of how you will continue to support individuals and families in your program when grant funding ends.
 - h. If a collaborative applicant, describe which organization will be responsible for each activity and how the lead agency will manage the collaborative.
- 4. Policy and Systems Change (10 points)**
- a. Identify the issue you will address through your policy or systems change effort.
 - b. Identify the key stakeholders involved in this effort.
 - c. Describe your plan for soliciting input from those in the community most affected by housing insecurity and how you envision engaging community members in these efforts.
- 5. Timeline (10 points)**
- a. Include a detailed monthly timeline for the first year of grant funding.
 - b. Specify the amount of time for planning, activities to occur during that time, and indicate when services will commence.
- 6. Evaluation (10 points)**
- a. Describe how you plan to assess grant progress and impact of proposed approach.
 - b. Provide information about the specific data you will gather to demonstrate progress and impact.
 - c. Describe who will be responsible for data gathering and reporting.
 - d. State your commitment to work with UMDI to finalize an evaluation plan, collect and submit data, and participate in evaluation meetings.
- 7. Key staff (10 points)**
- a. Identify key staff, state their role on the CHI, and describe their qualifications to fill their role.
 - b. If a collaborative applicant, identify key staff from each of the collaborative organizations, state their role on the CHI, and describe their qualifications to fill their role.

Attachments: Attachments are not included in the 20-page Narrative limit.

- Attachment A: Budget Template and Budget Narrative
 - a. The budget narrative must include a justification for each line item, including the amount of money set aside for emergency funds. The narrative should be specific enough for reviewers to assess the extent to which applicants are dedicating sufficient funds to implement each component of the CHI, including case management and emergency financial assistance, approaches to reduce the impact of housing insecurity and its root causes on mental health, approaches to increase economic independence, and policy and systems change efforts.
 - b. Annual budget amounts may not exceed the total available per year.
 - c. Indirect rates may not exceed 25%.
 - d. If applying as a collaborative, all organizations involved must have grant funds allocated to support their work. Each organization must submit a budget template and budget narrative. The combined budgets of the organizations must not exceed the total available per year.

In Year 1, funding in the amount of \$486,674.05 will be available.

In Years 2 through 4, annual disbursements will be \$475,000 per year.

- Attachment B: Resumes (please limit to 2 pages per person) for each of the key staff listed in the narrative.
- Attachment C: Most recent financial statement. If applying as a collaborative, the most recent financial statement for each organization in the collaborative.
- Attachment D: If applying as a collaborative, MOUs between the lead agency and each organization in the collaborative. Single-organization applicants will not submit Attachment D.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Applications Due on Friday, August 6, 2021 before 5:00 pm.

All grant applications must include a cover page, narrative, and all attachments. Applications submitted after the due date or missing any of the required sections will not be considered.

The cover page and narrative must be submitted as one document. Attachments may be submitted as separate documents.

Applications must be sent as email attachments to NWHgrants@partners.org by the deadline with the subject line: *Housing Security CHI Proposal*. Please request a return receipt when submitting your application by email.

The proposal narrative must not exceed 20 single-spaced pages, with a minimum 12 pt font. All sections of the narrative must be completed. Please organize the narrative using the seven headings outlined above.

Proposals that do not meet these specifications above or are not received by the due date will not be considered.

Questions: If you have questions about this grant opportunity, please submit them in writing to NWHgrants@partners.org by July 16, 2021. Questions received and answers provided will be posted to the Newton-Wellesley Hospital website www.nwh.org/grants.

Housing Security CHI Timeline

June 28, 2021	RFP Released
July 14, 2021	Bidder’s Conference A <i>Virtual Bidder’s Conference</i> will be held on: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 from 11:00 – 12:30 pm Registration is required at: www.nwh.org/grants .
July 16, 2021	Deadline for Questions All questions must be submitted to NWHgrants@partners.org by 5:00 pm on Friday, July 16, 2021. Questions and answers will be posted on the website - www.nwh.org/grants .
August 6, 2021	Proposals Due Proposals due to NWH before 5:00 pm on August 6, 2021. Proposals must be submitted by email attachment to NWHgrants@partners.org . Please request a return receipt on your email and state <i>Housing Security CHI Proposal</i> in the subject line.
Mid-August to Mid-September	Proposal Review The DoN Allocations Committee may request follow up with applicants.
Late September	Successful Applicant Notified
October 1, 2021	Grant Commences

NOTE: Dates above are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.