**Funding Opportunity for Grassroots Organizations: Advancing Health Equity through Housing in Massachusetts**

**Available Funding: $10-15,000 per organization; total of 6 to 9 awards**

**Eligible Applicants: Grassroots organizations and community groups in Massachusetts Eligible Activities: Community/resident-led housing policy and advocacy campaigns Deadline for Applications: April 3,­ 2020**

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**Application form available** [**here**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScT1DPIz_YqYctsQbU47yn81zwz94_ePPs5E3oBTFOslMrE-Q/viewform)**.** [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScT1DPIz\_YqYctsQbU47yn81zwz94\_ePPs5E3oBTFOslMrE-Q/viewformhttps://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScT1DPIz\_YqYctsQbU47yn81zwz94\_ePPs5E3oBTFOslMrE-Q/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScT1DPIz_YqYctsQbU47yn81zwz94_ePPs5E3oBTFOslMrE-Q/viewform)

In March 2020, the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) issued a request for proposals (RFP) from grassroots organizations and community groups working in and with low-income and immigrant communities and communities of color across the state to participate in advocacy on health equity and housing. This initiative is supported by a grant from the Kresge Foundation’s Advancing Health Equity Through Housing program, which is focused on advancing innovative, multi-sector solutions to housing instability, generated by community residents, that improve housing affordability and quality through policy and practice changes.

***Rather than delaying the release of funds, MSGA is making funds available for short-term campaigns to respond to emergent health equity and housing needs in the face of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic makes the need for safe and secure housing for all Massachusetts residents even more critical. Communities already facing marginalization are being hardest hit by the virus and its economic repercussions. Addressing the immediate risk to communities with housing insecurity through advocacy and organizing is paramount.***

# Initiative Goals

MSGA member organizations (including Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association, MA Public Health Association, Conservation Law Foundation, MA Association of CDCs, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and LISC Boston), have established the following goals for this initiative:

1. **Support emergent community-based and grassroots efforts to advance health equity and ensure access to safe and secure housing for all in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.**
2. Maximize the role and voice of community-based and/or grassroots organizations in low-income and immigrant communities and communities of color to advance health equity through housing.
3. Strengthen the connections between grassroots health, housing and environmental justice groups and statewide policy organizations.
4. Advance state and local housing policy that can promote health equity, including policy to:
	* Increase housing stability by strengthening our tenant protection laws and systems so we can reduce evictions and displacement;
	* Improve housing quality, especially in the Commonwealth’s aging housing stock in our Gateway Cities, to reduce negative health impacts caused by poor housing;
	* Increase investment in affordable housing that meets the needs of families, individuals and seniors with low or modest incomes;
	* Increase the supply of well-designed mixed income housing located in walkable, vibrant, resilient communities with good access to transit and other amenities.

# The Opportunity

In order to advance the goals listed above, MSGA has dedicated $90,000 of Kresge Foundation funds to provide flexible grants for grassroots organizations to participate in this initiative. These funds are intended to help advance locally defined policy priorities as well as increase communication and collaboration between grassroots organizations and statewide groups. Through this initiative, participating organizations will:

* Receive funding of $10,000 - $15,000 for a period of 12 months to support community/resident-led housing policy campaigns that advance health equity.
* Participate in optional periodic coordination calls with MSGA member organizations to identify shared policy priorities; opportunities for joint advocacy; and resource needs.

# Learning Collaborative

In addition to the activities listed above, partner organizations will be invited to contribute ideas and recommendations for opportunities to engage in shared learning and coordination of efforts over the 12-month period of the grant.

# Eligibility Criteria

* Community-led non-profit or unincorporated community group.
* Based in Massachusetts, including metro Boston and the broader region.
* Preference for organizations/groups working in and with communities of color and immigrant communities.
* Preference for smaller organizations with operating budgets of approximately $1MM or less.
* Already engaged in local and/or state advocacy on housing issues.
* Prior experience working to advance health equity through housing is desirable, but not required.
* Prior relationship with MSGA or members is *not* required.

**Application Process**

Organizations meeting the criteria above are invited to fill out a set of brief survey questions, gathering the following information:

* Community leadership of your organization (including staff, Board, membership, etc.);
* Prior experience working on housing issues;
* Brief summary of current or proposed policy campaigns and/or other activities you would like to conduct over the next 12 months (from June 2020 to May 2021), and how this will advance the overall goals of this initiative;
* Amount of funding you are requesting, and any additional supports that would maximize the impact of your proposed campaign/activity (e.g. legal, research, finance, planning, policy or communications);
* Primary contact person at your organization, including email and phone number.
* If the applicant is an unincorporated community group, the name and contact of your fiscal sponsor.

The selection process will be managed by the Conservation Law Foundation on behalf of MSGA. **Applications are can be submitted by filling out the brief survey application linked** [**here**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScT1DPIz_YqYctsQbU47yn81zwz94_ePPs5E3oBTFOslMrE-Q/viewform) **no later than April 3, 2020 at 5:00pm.**

**Selection Process**

We anticipate awarding funds to 6 to 9 organizations in total. The number of organizations selected will be based on the number of applications received and the total amount of funding requested. Our goal is to maximize participation while ensuring sufficient resources are available for the work proposed. An Advisory Group comprised of representatives from MSGA member organizations (including CLF, CHAPA, MPHA, MACDC, MAPC and LISC Boston) will review the applications. All applications from eligible organizations will be evaluated based on the following selection criteria:

1. Organization/group works directly with people impacted by housing instability.
2. Prior experience with organizing and/or advocacy on housing issues at the local or state level.
3. Potential to advance one or more of the goals for this initiative.
4. **Preference given to organizations engaged in rapid response mobilization to address health equity and housing arising out of or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The evaluation process will also consider geographic location, community type, and mix of local/state-level activity, with the goal of supporting a diverse mix of organizations and activities through this initiative.

# Award Notification

* Organizations selected to participate in the project will be notified by April 17, 2020.
* Awards will be made by May 1, 2020 and run through April 30 2021.