

# MGH Community Health Impact Funds

## Housing Funds Allocation/Letter of Intent (LOI) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Questions 13 through 41 added on 11/14/2023. Question 7 updated on 1/19/24.

### 1. Who is eligible to apply?






Massachusetts-based Community Development Corporations, other non-profit community-based organizations and municipalities **servicing** Suffolk County are eligible to apply.

Internal MGB affiliated community, clinical or research departments are **not** eligible for this funding.

### 2. What is the timeline for funding and how much is expected to be allocated to the three strategies?

Funding for strategies A and B will be made available in its totality (\$14 Million) to be released over 3 years. Proposals should reflect this intention.

Funding for strategy C is \$1 Million and will be made available through annual solicitation process for the next 4 years.

Strategies	Years			
	Year 1 2024	Year 2 2025	Year 3 2026	Year 4 2027
<b>A) Production, acquisition, and preservation of Affordable Housing</b> e.g.: Housing trust funds, community land trusts, no or low-cost capital (can be revolving) to purchase or build low-income housing.				
<b>B) Supportive activities for Affordable Housing</b> e.g.: Advocacy of public and private funding for production of affordable housing; support of fair housing and local zoning reform; support of transitional housing; support of management of affordable housing.				
<b>C) Eviction Prevention</b> e.g.: Policy advocacy for the prevention of eviction; Creation of resources for residents at risk of displacement				

### 3. What types of housing grants are available and how do they differ?

Housing strategies approved for this funding:

**A) Production, acquisition, and preservation of Affordable Housing**

e.g., Fund housing trust funds, community land trusts, provide no or low-cost capital (can be revolving).

**B) Supportive activities for Affordable Housing**

e.g., Advocacy of public and private funding for production of affordable housing; support of fair housing and local zoning reform; support of transitional housing; support of management of affordable housing.

**C) Eviction Prevention**

e.g., Policy advocacy for the prevention of eviction; Creation of resources for residents at risk of displacement.

Proposed projects may include one or a combination of strategies. Funding is intended to increase access to affordable housing by supporting its creation through the various mechanisms in practice. It also aims to increase access by updating or reforming local and state policy, laws, or regulations. The eviction prevention strategy aims to incentivize creative projects that will address any of the many challenges residents, at risk of losing housing, face and to enable them to stay in their homes.

### 4. What documentation (forms or proof of status) is required?

No documents outside of the LOI are required.

If invited to submit a full proposal, you will need to include all the components described and required by the Request for Proposals such as a W-9 form.

### 5. What are the priority neighborhoods?

- Any Boston neighborhood
- City of Chelsea
- City of Revere
- Town of Winthrop

### 6. Is there a limit to the amount of funds requested?

At this stage, there is no limit to the amount that can be requested if it stays within the amount available. Also, you should request an amount you have the capacity to manage. For strategies A and B, it should not exceed your annual operational budget. For the eviction prevention strategy C, the amount requested should not exceed 50% of your annual operational budget.



During this phase of the process, the allocation committee will gain an understanding of the need in our communities and the creative ways organizations and municipalities would like to invest this funding. Funding limitations may be established during the next phase, when an invitation for the final Request for Proposals (RFPs) is released.

**7. What are the deadlines and announcement dates?**

Event	Date
1. Letter of Intent (LOI) Opens	November 1, 2023
2. Informational Forum for LOI	November 8, 2023
3. Due Date for LOI	November 29, 2023
4. Selected applicants get notified	January 10, 2024
5. Release of Housing Request for Proposals (RFP)	January 26, 2024
6. Due date for all submissions	February 29, 2024
7. Decision Process	April 2024
8. Notification of Awards	Early May 2024

**8. Can one organization apply for more than one grant?**

Yes, organizations can submit more than one LOI if the organization has multiple projects that fit the criteria. However, please note that every LOI submitted is competing against all others submitted, even against those submitted by the same organization.

**9. What are the restrictions on the usage of these funds?**

Funds must address social determinants of health (SDoH) and health equity with an upstream (structural/policy) approach to improving community health in the target areas.

These funds must address Affordable Housing through the strategies identified by the Community Advisory Board (CAB) and overseen by the Housing Allocation Committee (HAC) outlined in question #3. Proposals must serve one or more of the listed regions (see question #5). As per the Department of Public Health, funds are **not** allowed to be awarded to the following projects or activities:

1. Medical treatments.
2. Clinical/community linkage programs for existing or future patients.
3. Capital and operating expenses for medical programs.
4. Costs of transportation to/from the hospital and services unless necessary to accomplish objectives of a specific community health improvement strategy.



5. Reimbursed services, costs associated with developing or expanding interpretive services.
6. Funding support for Community Health Improvement (CHIP) coordinating organizations, such as the Boston Collaborative, or North Suffolk Collaborative, etc.

## 10. Will there be an information session to learn more?

Yes! An information session was held on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. [View here](#).

## 11. Where can I find help to access and work on the LOI form?

You can find the guide to filling out the LOI [here](#). Also, you can visit the [information session](#) recording. During the last 5 minutes or so of the session, there is a tutorial on how to use SMAApply. For more specific questions, feel free to contact **Sylvia Chiang** at [srchiang@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:srchiang@mgh.harvard.edu).

## 12. What criteria will be considered in the evaluation of the LOI?

The Housing Allocation Committee will be looking for the following criteria in the LOI:

- The project addresses one or more of the housing strategies outlined.
- The project addresses the needs of priority neighborhoods and areas.
- The project impacts a policy, system, or environmental change.
- The project addresses equity in our communities by benefitting disenfranchised groups.
- The applicant reflects the capacity to manage and implement the project.
- The impact of the project aligns with the cost.
- The project outlines a strong community engagement process.

The review committee will ensure that proposals represent work from all areas of Suffolk County.

**NOTE: Questions 13 through were added to these FAQs on 11/12/2023:**

## 13. Can a group of stakeholders leading work that will eventually form and organize into a non-profit that will address housing issues apply for this funding?

Through this process, we are looking for new and creative ideas to address housing and respond to the unique needs of our communities. Yes, a non-profit in formation may apply, but you will need a fiscal sponsor.

We would advise you to fully communicate the readiness and capacity of your team/partners to carry out the plan. Please be realistic with your timeline and be clear about when and how much money you



will need during each phase. Also, describe in what stage the non-profit is, in terms of formation, and be sure to name your fiscal sponsor.

#### **14. Will affordable homeownership opportunities be prioritized? Funding restrictions? Reporting and monitoring expectations?**

MGH, our Community Advisory Board, and the Allocation Committee are interested in affordable homeownership. The goal is to increase the availability of affordable homes so that people have a place to live, do not have a large cost burden, and can build their future.

Grantees will be expected to participate in a Community Health Improvement (CHI) evaluation conducted by MGH. MGH will hire an outside evaluator to help grantees collect data and monitor their success.

#### **15. Can you use the grant for migrant housing?**

We are primarily interested in permanent affordable and transitional housing strategies. If there is a temporary issue (funding hotel space, etc.), this would be more of an emerging need and does not align with the intent for these dollars.

#### **16. Small capital projects (-100K) for existing SRO's? Supportive services like case management?**

Funds can support the production of this type of housing but not the supportive services unless the services are directly related to prevention of eviction.

#### **17. Please describe whether a collaborative or organizations outside of the service area are eligible to apply.**

Our service area was defined years ago taking into consideration where MGH hospital patients reside, where MGH health centers are located, and what other providers (hospitals) service the area. Our current service area of Suffolk County defined our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) process which was used to determine the priorities and strategies selected for this funding. Therefore, current Community Health Impact dollars are only open to organizations servicing Suffolk County. Read on for the possible exception.\*

\*Please note that all submitted applications will be reviewed, regardless of whether or not certain criteria is met. If an organization serving residents outside of Suffolk County has a project that matches one or more of the strategies outlined, the organization can apply and request to be viewed as **an exception**. If your organization opts to do this, please leave the region/geographic question blank and state why you feel an exception should be made in your project description. All applications will be scored on the merits of the application, including criteria for funding as this is a competitive process.



We will be reviewing our service area with our board and the Department of Public Health (DPH) at the next CHNA in 2025, and, if it changes, we will adjust our criteria and where funds are allocated at that time.

Organizations outside the eligible regions may also want to consider the statewide fund (which MGH has contributed to). Visit [Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds](#) for more information.

**18. Evaluation, data gathering, reporting requirements.**

This will be written into the phase 2 application process. We will hire an evaluator to work with all awardees.

**19. Can the funds be used for rental assistance to prevent eviction?**

Yes, this is a feasible use of funds. A strong application would include system changes addressing root issues and/or an advocacy component.

**20. How does new affordable housing production fit with the intended use of these funds?**

It fits squarely into the first two strategies (Strategies A & B).

**21. Can organizations apply to support eviction protection/tenant protection policy work at the state level?**

Yes, organizations may apply for work at the state level. A strong application would demonstrate the connection between our priority regions (Suffolk County) and this work, such as data or community engagement informing the project.

**22. Do crisis housing/homeless shelters fit within MGB goals?  
Does the organization need to be located in Boston or just serve its residents?**

Crisis housing/homeless shelters do not fit with the chosen housing strategies for these funds.

The organization does not need to be located in Boston but must serve its residents.

**23. Please clarify the application process for orgs applying for Strategy C, alone or in combination A/B.**



### **Eviction Prevention**

e.g.: Policy advocacy for the prevention of eviction; Creation of resources for residents at risk of displacement

The eviction prevention strategy aims to incentivize creative projects that will address any of the many challenges residents, at risk of losing housing, face and enable them to stay in their homes. We are looking for organizations that are providing interventions contributing to system changes, reducing evictions, and creating policy reform to address eviction inequities.

#### **24. For affordable housing creation, is there a per unit capital cap or preference? A minimum project size?**

There is no cap but be mindful of the total amount available and your capacity to manage the funds. For strategy A & B, we advise no more than 100% your annual operating budget. For strategy C, 50% of your annual operating budget. Also, keep in mind that the \$18 million dedicated for housing will be distributed over 3 to 4 years.

#### **25. Is Charlestown eligible for this?**

Yes!

#### **26. Are there limits related to % of the total operating budget?**

Yes, it is suggested that applicants request no more than 100% of their total operating budget for strategies A&B and no more than 50% for strategy C. This relates to capacity issues for managing the funds.

#### **27. Which strategy does MGH classify keeping naturally affordable housing sustainable through tenant organizing?**

This fits under strategy B: **Supportive activities for Affordable Housing** to Revitalize communities to make them healthy, vibrant, and thriving through grassroots efforts.  
e.g., Advocacy of public and private funding for production of affordable housing; support of fair housing and local zoning reform; support of transitional housing; support of management of affordable housing.

#### **28. If we want to put in two proposals - one for housing production and one for policy change work - do those two proposals compete with each other?**

Funds for strategies A&B and funds for strategy C will be viewed separately but in the context of the



overall goals and intent for these dollars. Given the demand of these dollars, an organization is less likely to receive funding for two separate projects, but it is hard to know at this time. Being able to show your capacity to work on housing issues across the spectrum should be touched upon in one or both of your applications so that reviewers are aware of your capacity to work in this space.

**29. Are partnerships encouraged?**

Yes! Very much so.

**30. Are statewide organizations eligible?**

Yes, but you must show your ability to address housing inequities specifically in Suffolk County.

**31. Can a proposal be partially awarded?**

Yes.

**32. We are just in the early planning stages on Eviction Prevention work. Can you explain your thinking about why Eviction Prevention is being procured each year? Can someone come in during Year 2 who didn't apply during Year 1? Is it appropriate to apply for planning funds in relation to Eviction Prevention?**

Eviction prevention is considered an emerging issue urgent in nature and very dynamic. Given the nature of the problem and the size of organizations handling the issue at the community level, it was thought appropriate to reassess annually.

Yes, folks can apply during any of the 4 application periods for this funding and can apply more than once. The dollars should be dedicated to work that addresses eviction inequities and not for planning on how to do this.

**33. Is strategy B limited to advocacy activities?**

No, it will cover any supportive upstream activity that increases access to affordable housing. We want to provide access to resources to implementing affordable home ownership and provide financing to attain housing and remedy the disparate treatment communities of color have received around home loans and financing. We are looking to support interventions and projects like Community Land Trusts, Housing Trust Funds, and programs that advocate for fair housing/local zoning reform.





**34. If we put in for housing productions and one for services (i.e., mental health, resident services) is that eligible?**

Combining an upstream element with a downstream, such as services, could be attractive if they are tied together and are shown to help prevent eviction inequities. For example, offering new residents of newly produced homes wrap-around services to help keep them in place. If projects are completely separate and independent of each other, then offering mental health or resident services would not be eligible.

**35. For large affordable housing developments, how early in the development process is too early to be considered? Is pre-development eligible?**

All stages of housing development are eligible, including predevelopment. Please be sure to clearly communicate your timeline, capacity, and plan to carry the project through construction, as well as other funding sources you will receive, to bring the project to completion.

**36. I think I am hearing that the LOI is not a neighborhood strategy, but rather a project-based effort? Otherwise, one could seek \$x for one project and \$x for another.**

That is correct. Be mindful that the Allocation Committee will want to distribute the wealth throughout the eligible regions in Suffolk County (all Boston neighborhoods as well as Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop).

**37. The mental behavioral health LOIs are due at the same time!**

Yes, there are concurrent funds available through our sister hospital, Brigham, and Women's Faulkner Hospital, with Mental and Behavioral Health as the priority. We are following the same timeline, but please be careful after registering in Survey Monkey Apply to select the right program to apply for funds.

Please note that MGH Community Impact funds will be allocated to four priority areas, including mental health. There will be monies available for mental health during early spring of 2024.

**38. If there is a nonprofit lead applicant for example, a CDC, can they partner with a for profit organization, i.e., a management company?**

Yes, as long as the funds sit within the non-profit organization.



**39. Can one project/LOI contain elements of more than one strategy, or would spanning strategies be considered/require separate projects/LOIs?**

Yes, combining strategies, especially combining strategies A&B is encouraged. Separate LOIs are required when the projects are completely independent of each other.

**40. Will the slides be made available to all those who registered?**

Yes, the recording was emailed to all attendees post-forum, and the slides are posted on the MGH Community Health Impact Funds website and can be found [here](#).

**41. How do we add a separate LOI for a different strategy?**

We have set up the platform to allow you to fill out more than one LOI form. We have also added a check box question so you can specify which strategy you are addressing in each of the LOIs.

**For further questions please submit your inquiry to [srchiang@mg.harvard.edu](mailto:srchiang@mg.harvard.edu). These FAQs will be updated regularly with answers posted to the MGH website.**

