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**Greater Lowell Health Alliance Announces – Request for Proposals to Support Communities**

**LOWELL, MA –** The Greater Lowell Health Alliance ([www.greaterlowellhealthalliance.org](http://www.greaterlowellhealthalliance.org) of the Community Health Network Area 10 is pleased to offer grants for the Fall of 2020 to support programs and services to improve the overall health of the Greater Lowell community.

A total of $155,000 will be allocated to address critical health issues, with grants of between $5,000 and $100,000. The grant application can be found online at <https://www.greaterlowellhealthalliance.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/>

Applications are due **July 23, 2020**. Grant recipients will be notified by **September 18, 2020,** and announced publicly at our Annual Meeting in October. A virtual training for interested applicants will take place on **June 17, 2020, 10am.** [RSVP@greaterlowellhealthalliance.org](mailto:RSVP@greaterlowellhealthalliance.org)

Grants will be awarded around the following **priority areas**: Behavioral Health, Alcohol and Substance Misuse, Wellness and Chronic Disease, Maternal and Infant/Child Health, Infectious Disease, Housing and Built Environment, and Safety & Violence. Grant awards cannot be used to fund capital or overhead expenses. Preference will be given to projects that serve low-income, vulnerable, and/or at-risk communities.

These funds are part of approximately $5 million being allocated to GLHA by Lowell General Hospital through the hospital’s Determination of Needs process for its 2012 campus expansion. This process through the Department of Public Health ensures that hospitals are providing a measurable community benefit to the communities they serve.

**Playing a critical role** “As an organization solely dedicated to improving the quality of health in the communities we serve, we are pleased to get critically needed funds into the hands of the front-line organizations that make such a difference in our community health,” said Kerrie D’Entremont, GLHA Executive Director.

The GLHA – comprised of healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, civic and community leaders – plays a critical role in helping individuals and organizations collaboratively improve the health of Greater Lowell region. By raising awareness and providing resources for community organizations, the Alliance empowers them to make decisions and take actions that will lead to an improvement in the region’s health. “Identifying these priority areas has been a community effort, involving input from over 500 people from over 60 different local agencies, as we worked to develop our Community Health Improvement Plan or CHIP 2020.” said D’Entremont.

The GLHA works closely with healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, and civic and community leaders, with a common goal to help the Greater Lowell community identify and address its health and wellness priorities. The GLHA is primarily funded by Lowell General Hospital.

Each year, the GLHA offers grants to support programs and services to improve the overall health of the Greater Lowell community. The CHIP process helped determine priority areas for grants, enabling the GLHA to distribute funds to the organizations on the front line of addressing our area’s unmet health needs.

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**More info:**

**Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)**

A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems in a community. The plan is based on the results of community health assessment activities, and is part of a community health improvement process, helping to set priorities, coordinate efforts, and target resources. It should define the vision for the health of the community through a collaborative process and should address the gamut of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the community to improve the health status of that community. *(Source: Public Health Accreditation Board)*

**A CHIP for Greater Lowell**

With a goal to create a long-term strategy to strengthen the area’s health systems, our CHIP will be used as road map for health improvement over a three-year period, guiding the investment of resources of organizations with a stake in improving health for the residents of Lowell and the surrounding communities. Our CHIP mission: to turn data into action and working initiatives to address our community’s top health priorities. While addressing specific health priorities, the overarching goal is always one of health equity, meeting the health needs not just for some, but for all.

**Who Is Involved**

A CHIP’s value and significance stems from the involvement of the community. Over this past year, the GLHA has engaged hundreds of people from more than sixty community organizations to develop our first Community Health Improvement Plan, with many more partner agencies joining every day.

**Assessing the Needs of our Communities**   
In partnership with the GLHA, Lowell General Hospital in 2019 commissioned researchers and students from the University of Massachusetts Lowell to conduct the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. Similar assessments were conducted in 2010, 2013, and 2016. As in previous years, this process involved primary data collection using focus groups-including 20 listening sessions with more than 200 participants-key informant interviews, and online and in-person surveys, as well as secondary data sources, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health MassCHIP database and the United States Census.

**Foundation for Action**

The community needs assessment provides a foundation for the GLHA and its partners to build ongoing consensus on the area’s priority health needs and develop future Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) to improve the health of the area’s residents. The 2019 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment was released to the public on October 25, 2019.

**A Plan for the Future**

The [Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)](https://www.greaterlowellhealthalliance.org/chip/), serves as a road map for the GLHA and our partners, steering us in the direction we need to take to improve health outcomes within the communities of the Greater Lowell region. The results of the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment will help generate the 2020 Community Health Improvement Plan, with a goal to address current and developing health issues that our communities are facing.