

Nearly \$900K in grants to community health organizations

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The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts has announced its 2024 Activation Fund grant recipients

African Community Education (ACE) in Worcester was among the organizations that received grant money (photo via ACE website) WORCESTER—The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts has announced the awarding of eight grants, totaling \$890,455, through its Activation Fund program. These grants support a diverse array of organizations serving the region.

The Activation Fund is designed to help organizations build sustainable capacity to address community-identified health issues. Notably, more than 85 percent of the 2024 grantees are first-time recipients of funding from The Health Foundation.

“We received a record number of applications this year, and our application process was refined and streamlined to be more responsive to the needs of community organizations seeking our support,” said Dr. Amie Shei, president and CEO of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, in a statement. “We are excited to partner with seven organizations receiving grants for the first time as well as one returning grantee in support of their varied projects aimed to help them move to the next level of capacity or effectiveness in improving health in the region.”

The grant awards are as follows:

African Community Education – \$125,000 to renovate and better equip the kitchen at its Worcester facility, expanding the organization’s capacity to serve culturally appropriate meals for youth, offer nutrition classes, and provide space for newly arriving Haitian families to prepare meals.

Center of Hope Foundation – \$125,000 to modernize bathrooms and plumbing systems in a Southbridge facility housing its day habilitation

program, which serves nearly 120 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Children's Advocacy Center of Franklin County and North Quabbin – \$86,900 for construction costs associated with establishing an outpatient clinic in Orange, thereby expanding its capacity to provide specialized mental health services for child victims of sexual abuse and their families in the North Quabbin region.

Choices Inc. – \$80,250 to purchase a 15-passenger van, equipment and supplies for the organization's Early Diversion Worcester program, a comprehensive system of care that diverts, intervenes and disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline in collaboration with community partners.

Gardner Community Action Committee – \$115,000 to renovate and relocate to a 5,800-square-foot facility made available rent-free by the City of Gardner, significantly enhancing the organization's capacity to provide food distribution, emergency assistance and other services for those in need throughout the Greater Gardner community.

Growing Places – \$109,041 for development of a customized IT solution integrating disparate platforms and new software for inventory management to enhance efficiency, expand service capacity and better support local food consumers, institutional buyers and small farmers in North Central Massachusetts.

Quinsigamond Community College – \$124,254 to replace six outdated dental chairs and equipment stations at its Worcester-based dental clinic, which trains an average of 40 dental hygiene students and 20 dental assistant students annually and provides free or deeply discounted oral health care to vulnerable Worcester County populations.

Worcester RISE for Health – \$125,000 to build out and equip clinical space and implement an electronic medical record system for the organization to provide maternal child health care services for newly arriving refugees and immigrants in Worcester.