

The MetroWest Health Foundation is committed to the advancement of health equity with the goal of enabling all MetroWest residents to live and thrive in healthy, resilient and equitable communities. Non-profit and municipal organizations have a role to play in this work. Core principles that the foundation believes are important for equitable organizations are:

- Individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives are engaged throughout the organization.
- Programming is developed and evaluated with participation from staff at all levels as well as in partnership with those using services.
- Engaging and serving those most affected by the issue the organization is addressing is a priority.
- Building trust with staff, volunteers and those using services is a priority.

The foundation is committed to the advancement of health equity with the goal to support broad community resident representation and participation in health-related initiatives that lead to increase diversity and equity of health and social services in the region. This will be achieved by:

- 1) Foundation staff actively listening to grantees and community members about how foundation assistance can be most valuable in creating healthy communities.
- 2) Supporting transformation in MetroWest organizations working towards becoming anti-racist.
- 3) Training the region's health and social service workforce to meet diversity, equity and inclusion needs.
- 4) Supporting community organizing work that builds trust with and capacity in communities.
- 5) Increasing the diversity pipeline of future leaders in the health and social sectors.

Specific actions to promote this plan will include the following:

GRANTMAKING

The foundation will apply a health equity lens to its review of all grant proposals submitted to the foundation to better understand how area organizations are addressing issues of health equity and how grant funding may further impact this work.

In addition, the foundation, through its semiannual request for proposals, may solicits grant applications from area organizations to address specific needs such as:

- 1) Strategies for the recruitment and retention of diverse staff.
- 2) Internal training for staff and volunteers, as well as community training with the goal of advancing equity.
- 3) Addressing systemic issues that are the root causes for health disparities.
- 4) Capacity building and innovation grants that support community organizing work designed to create capacity within neighborhoods to build healthier communities.

CONVENING

The foundation will continue its backbone support of the MetroWest Racial & Ethnic Disparities Workgroup, which has become a community of practice where representatives of area health and human service organizations can openly discuss the opportunities and challenges in making the region more open to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The foundation will use the Workgroup as an advisory group to shape its health equity programming and co-sponsorship of workshops and trainings focused on health equity.

The foundation will seek out and partner with other organizations and coalitions that share our interest in the advancement of health equity in the MetroWest region. The foundation will also seek to engage other area funders in helping to support and address equity in their efforts to support local health and human services.

TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The foundation is committed to providing training and technical assistance to area health and human services staff and board members on issues of health equity. The foundation will underwrite and sponsor workshops on topics identified by community partners.

The foundation will also engage the Wayside Equity Training Center to offer a series of workshops on building and sustaining an equity-focused organizational culture, as well as promoting equity in the community. These sessions are open to all MetroWest nonprofit and municipal agencies.

The foundation's Health Leadership Program engages ten leaders from nonprofit and municipal agencies in the region each year. They participate in a 6-month leadership development program that includes one full-day of training on equity, as well as infuses equity as a foundational concept throughout the program.

Foundation staff and representatives from the Board of Directors and Grant Distribution Committees participated in a two-day training led by the Groundwater Institute last year. It covered the root causes of health inequity. Follow-up dialogue and potential training with those who participated will continue with the goal of ensuring equity principles are embedded in all the foundation's work.

In addition to training, the foundation will continue to update its guidebook for advancing health equity in the region ([Building Inclusive Communities](#)), which includes tools and resources that agencies can use for addressing health equity.

POLICY & ADVOCACY

The foundation will use its position in the community to advocate on issues related to health equity. The foundation will continue to publish a health equity blog (*Equity Matters*) multiple times per year. The blog will highlight equity issues as well as the work being done in the region to address such issues. The foundation will also develop appropriate online and printed materials that reinforce the importance of focusing on health equity and the foundation's work in this area.

DATA ANALYSIS

To better understand where health inequities exist, the foundation will report on metrics and trends that may disproportionately impact populations by income, geography, or race and ethnicity. The foundation will collect, analyze, and publish data segmented by different population groups, where available. This data will be used by the foundation to inform funding and policy decisions and assist local organizations in their own planning and programming.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The foundation will use its resources to encourage a diverse health and human services workforce in the region. Diversity will be sought in candidates that apply for and are granted scholarships under the foundation's Health Professions Scholarship Program. Diversity will be considered in the recruitment of participants in the foundation's Health Leadership Program. The foundation will also partner with area colleges and universities to provide graduate level internships to students interested in fields relevant to the work of the foundation. This will include a grant program to pay stipends to graduate-level clinical and public health interns at nonprofit and municipal agencies with the goal of increasing the diverse pool of interns seeking opportunities in the region.

OPERATIONS

The foundation is committed to internal organizational equity through continuous learning, striving to recruit and retain staff and volunteers with diverse backgrounds and experiences and ongoing engagement with community partners. To that end:

- 1) Foundation staff and volunteers will be encouraged to attend training and engage in ongoing dialogue to better understand root causes of health inequities in the region and equity in philanthropy.
- 2) The foundation's Nominating Committee will seek candidates that bring diversity and varying points of view and life experiences for membership on the board of trustees, committees, and grants panels.

- 3) The foundation will strive to hire staff that reflect the broad makeup and diversity of the MetroWest community.
- 4) The foundation will strive to retain a diverse group of vendors to work with the foundation and will strive to select product and service vendors that are committed to promoting a diverse workplace.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The foundation will commit to a process of annually reviewing its progress in meeting the objectives of this plan. This review will be used to update and revise the plan as necessary to ensure that it remains current in addressing the health equity issues and needs of the region.