

THE GARDNER NEWS

LOCAL

Activation Fund grants open for Central Massachusetts health projects

Staff reports The Gardner News

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The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts has opened applications for its 2026 Activation Fund grants, offering organizations a chance to secure crucial funding to address health needs in Central Massachusetts.

The grants, which typically range from \$50,000 to \$125,000, aim to support one-year projects that help organizations enhance their capacity and effectiveness, according to a foundation announcement.

The deadline for submitting a concept paper to express interest is March 1. Organizations invited to submit full applications will be notified in late March, with final funding decisions expected in mid-June, allowing projects to launch in July.

“Over the years, we have seen how strategic one-time investments can transform the capacity of organizations and achieve sustained health impacts,” said Dr. Amie Shei, president and CEO of the foundation. “The Activation Fund allows us to support innovations and improvements beyond organizations’ regular activities to activate greater change and improve health in Central Massachusetts.”

Since its inception 26 years ago, the foundation has awarded nearly \$13 million in Activation Fund grants. Previous grants have funded building or renovation projects, equipment purchases to expand service delivery and professional development activities to upskill staff. A list of Activation Fund grant recipients from 2020-2025, along with brief project descriptions, is available [on the foundation’s website](#).

Those interested in applying for an Activation Fund grant should visit the foundation's website to access application guidelines and register for a virtual information session to learn more about the grant opportunity.

This year also marks the launch of the foundation's new 2026-2030 strategic framework, which outlines priorities for strengthening community-based organizations, empowering local communities, promoting effective and equitable policies and systems and stewarding assets. These strategies will guide the foundation's grantmaking and broader work in Central Massachusetts in the years to come.

To apply for the Activation Fund, here are the steps:

Submit a brief concept paper by March 1.

If invited, submit a full application in late March.

Final funding decisions will be made in mid-June, with projects launching in July.

The Foundation's new strategic framework focuses on:

Strengthening community-based organizations.

Empowering local communities.

Promoting effective and equitable policies and systems.

Stewarding assets to ensure long-term impact.

With nearly \$13 million awarded in Activation Fund grants over the past 26 years, the foundation continues to play a vital role in supporting health initiatives in Central Massachusetts. The Activation Fund is a key part of its broader strategy to enhance the region's health and well-being.

This story was created by Kimberly Green, KGreen@usatodayco.com, with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Journalists were involved in every step of the information gathering, review, editing and publishing process. [Learn more.](#)