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The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts Awards Over \$1 Million to Local Organizations

Activation Fund Grants Target Local Health Needs

WORCESTER, Mass. (July 30, 2026) – [The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts](#) today announced that it has awarded over \$1 million in grants to ten nonprofit organizations serving the region. The Activation Fund grants support a wide range of organizations as they build capacity and strengthen their effectiveness in addressing community-identified health issues.

The Activation Fund received a record number of applications this year, reflecting strong community demand for resources that address critical health needs. In 2026, the Activation Fund is supporting organizations working to improve behavioral health, expand food access, increase housing stability, advance youth opportunities, and address the social factors that shape people's health. Thirty percent (30%) of the 2026 grant recipients are receiving grant funding from The Health Foundation for the first time.

"We are proud to support these ten organizations during this crucial moment," said Dr. Amie Shei, president and CEO of The Health Foundation. "The Activation Fund grant is designed to help community organizations advance their work in bold and sustainable ways. This year's recipients have earned the trust of the communities they serve and are providing vital services across Central Massachusetts."

The grant awards, totaling \$1,018,398, are as follows:

Ascentria Care Alliance - \$85,036 to create a regional Memory Care Center of Excellence by training staff and up to three partnering community organizations as certified dementia care trainers and integrating evidence-based practices into its ongoing workforce development model.

Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance - \$118,411 to furnish and equip its new Resource Center in Worcester, providing people experiencing homelessness with access to showers, laundry, rest space, and supportive services.

Community Harvest Project - \$101,980 to build a second protected growing tunnel and upgrade irrigation at its North Grafton farm, enabling the organization to grow more fresh produce year-round for hunger relief partners across Central Massachusetts.

Community Health Connections - \$124,875 to renovate counseling and group spaces adjacent to its Children's Behavioral Health Clinic in downtown Fitchburg for an intensive youth behavioral health day treatment program serving ages 12-21 that aims to reduce strain on local hospital emergency departments.

Growing Places - \$113,096 to add a loading dock and ramp and convert unfinished classrooms into office space at its Gardner Regional Food Center, improving local food aggregation, production, distribution, and coordination.

Our Bright Future - \$125,000 to install a fire sprinkler system in its newly purchased Southbridge Innovation Hub, allowing the organization to open a centralized youth development and educational center serving up to 1,000 students each year through STEM education, workforce development, social-emotional learning, and community programming.

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts - \$114,000 to renovate the space and improve security at its Worcester health center, creating additional patient consultation rooms and expanding access to reproductive health services in a safe, secure environment.

Project Just Because - \$40,000 to upgrade loading docks and purchase new warehouse equipment. These improvements will reduce the physical workload on staff and volunteers while increasing safety, efficiency, and the organization's ability to distribute food and essential items to families in need.

South Middlesex Opportunity Council - \$75,000 to renovate its Chandler Street Women's Services Center in Worcester, expanding capacity for the women's emergency shelter by about 40% in response to rising community needs.

Wayside Youth & Family Support Network - \$121,000 to purchase furnishings and essential equipment for a new, expanded Charlton Community Services site that triples the organization's footprint in the community and supports the full implementation of its MassHealth Community Service Agency contract serving 27 South County communities.

About The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts is dedicated to improving the health of those who live or work in Central Massachusetts, with particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and unmet needs. Through its unique and impactful approach to grantmaking, The Health Foundation supports community-identified health issues, with health defined broadly to include social determinants of health and with a focus on promoting health equity. As a health conversion foundation launched in 1999 following the sale of the not-for-profit HMO Central Massachusetts Health Care Inc., The Health Foundation's grants have totaled over \$62 million to 250 unique organizations over its history. For more information, visit www.thfcm.org.

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