

## BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS ANNOUNCES NEW GRANTS AS PART OF ONGOING WORK TO ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUITIES

*Five Massachusetts-based not-for-profits focused on racial justice will each receive up to \$140,000 in funding and pro-bono support*

BOSTON, Nov. 20, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Building on its commitment to addressing health inequities, [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts](#) (Blue Cross) today announced the distribution of new grants to five not-for-profit organizations as part of our Health Justice Partnership and Grant Program.



# MASSACHUSETTS

This program is part of Blue Cross' broader focus on health equity, and it cycles annually to address issues that can impact overall health, including environmental, food and racial inequities. For 2025, Blue Cross will award two-year grants to not-for-profits focused on racial justice – the equal and fair treatment of everyone regardless of ethnicity or race.

The Massachusetts-based organizations include parent and caregiver groups, maternal health and behavioral health experts, and restorative justice leaders. Each partner will receive up to \$140,000 in funding and pro-bono professional support in total over 2025 and 2026.

"Like Blue Cross, each of these not-for-profits is committed to improving equity and advancing racial justice across our state," said Jeff Bellows, Blue Cross' vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs.

Since 2021, the program has provided more than \$2 million in direct financial contributions and \$1 million in pro bono volunteering to not-for-profits working to advance health justice.

"Our commitment to racial justice reflects our dedication to building healthier, more inclusive communities across the state and supporting organizations working to create lasting change," said Michele Courton Brown, Blue Cross' chief talent equity officer.

### The 2025 racial justice partners are:

- [Asian Community Fund](#) (serving Greater Boston and western Massachusetts) works to reduce stigma and access to mental health services for the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. It is the first and only philanthropic fund dedicated to advancing AAPI economic mobility by partnering with the community, businesses and not-for-profits.
- [Birth Equity and Justice Massachusetts](#) (serving communities statewide) advocates for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) birthing people and their families who experience poor maternal and prenatal health outcomes due to systemic inequities and racism. The organization supports reproductive justice efforts through public health advocacy, academic research, community leadership and health care.
- [Children Services of Roxbury](#) (serving communities statewide) offers holistic family services in low-income, multiracial communities, including kindergarten readiness programs, support for young adults experiencing homelessness, mental health care and more. It is one of the largest Black-led not-for-profits in the state and the only MassHealth Black-specialized provider of children's behavioral health services.
- [First Teacher](#) (serving Boston) empowers parents and caregivers by building community to advocate for their children through collaborative workshops, peers support groups and organizing. The organization was built and is led by Black and

brown families in Roxbury and Dorchester.

- [Legendary Legacies](#) (serving Worcester) provides mentorship, coaching, education and skill development for young Black and Latino men experiencing the trauma of gang violence or incarceration. Peer leaders help individuals and their families overcome systemic barriers through restorative justice practices and trust-based care.

### **Blue Cross' leadership**

Blue Cross is a recognized national leader in addressing inequities in health care, and we continue to support our providers, members and community partners to close gaps in care. Highlights include:

- In 2021, we launched our first-ever racial equity and social justice [grants](#), which served as a pilot for our current health justice strategy and focus areas.
- In 2022, we [funded](#) \$25 million in Institute for Healthcare Improvement grants to support physician practices and hospitals in our value-based network in their efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in care and to share learnings across institutions.
- We were the [first health plan](#) in Massachusetts — and among the nation's first — to introduce a [pay-for-equity financial payment model](#) with a goal of eliminating racial and ethnic inequities in health care. We also became the first health plan to collect data on racial inequities in healthcare, and the data is updated and [published](#) every year.

### **About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts**

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ([bluecrossma.org](https://bluecrossma.org)) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are committed to showing up for everyone like they're the only one and guiding our members to the exceptional health care they deserve — affordably, equitably and seamlessly. In keeping with our commitment, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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