

FY27 Safety Net Grants

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility:

Is the Safety Net Grants Program open to all nonprofit organizations?

The FY27 Fall Safety Net Grants round is focused on organizations responding to urgent basic needs across Greater Boston, particularly in the areas of **food security, health and behavioral health, direct cash assistance, and housing stabilization**.

Priority will be given to trusted, community-rooted organizations serving residents who are most likely to experience significant harm as a result of public benefit losses, administrative barriers, high living costs, housing instability, discrimination, and other forms of material hardship.

Who are the priority populations for this round?

This round will prioritize organizations serving communities that may face heightened barriers to accessing basic needs and public systems, including:

- BIPOC residents
- Women, pregnant people, children, and caregivers
- LGBTQ+ people
- Immigrants
- People with disabilities
- Older adults
- People experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Residents who benefit from low-barrier approaches to accessing services

Applicants should clearly describe who they serve, the barriers those residents experience, and how the proposed work will reduce immediate harm. Additional consideration may be given to organizations serving people who are at the intersection of two or more priority populations.

What does it mean to serve people experiencing overlapping forms of marginalization and material hardship?

The Boston Foundation recognizes that residents often experience multiple challenges at the same time. For example, someone experiencing housing instability may also be navigating a loss of health coverage, food insecurity, disability-related barriers, immigration-related concerns, or difficulty accessing public benefits.

Rather than considering identity or need in isolation, this round seeks to support organizations that understand and respond to the interconnected challenges facing residents. Organizations serving people at the intersection of multiple priority populations or addressing more than one of the round's core needs may receive additional consideration.

What geographic areas are eligible?

Consistent with The Boston Foundation's general discretionary grantmaking geography, eligible organizations should primarily serve residents of:

- Essex County
- Middlesex County
- Norfolk County
- Plymouth County
- Suffolk County

Within this region, particular attention will be given to communities experiencing high concentrations of poverty, racial and economic inequity, housing instability, immigrant residents, and limited access to institutional philanthropy.

Priority communities may include Boston neighborhoods such as East Boston, Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury, as well as Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Lynn, Brockton, Lowell, and Lawrence.

Our organization is not physically located in TBF's catchment area, but our work serves residents within the area. Are we eligible?

Organizations should primarily serve residents within The Boston Foundation's geographic catchment area. If your organization has a broader statewide or regional reach, your application should clearly describe the work and residents served within the eligible Greater Boston communities.

Funding Priorities

What are the priority funding areas for the FY27 Fall round?

The FY27 Fall Safety Net Grants round centers four interconnected areas of need:

1. Food Security and Nutrition Access

Support may include efforts that help residents obtain consistent, culturally appropriate, and dignified access to food, particularly when public benefits are reduced, delayed, denied, stolen, or insufficient.

Examples may include:

- Emergency groceries and prepared meals
- Food delivery
- Community fridges
- Food pantries
- Culturally specific food distribution
- SNAP, WIC, SUN Bucks, and school meal enrollment
- Benefits recertification and navigation assistance

2. Health Care, Mental Health, and Behavioral Health Access

Support may include organizations working to prevent interruptions in health coverage or care and helping marginalized residents access essential health services.

Examples may include:

- Primary and preventive health care
- Reproductive and maternal health services
- Mental health and substance-use services
- MassHealth and Health Connector navigation
- Culturally and linguistically responsive mental health and trauma services

The Foundation is particularly interested in approaches that recognize connections between physical health, behavioral health, housing, food access, legal services, and public benefits navigation.

3. Housing Stabilization and Homelessness Prevention

Support may include organizations helping residents remain safely housed, avoid eviction, leave unsafe or overcrowded living conditions, or transition from emergency shelter into stable housing.

Examples may include:

- Eviction prevention
- Rental arrears assistance
- Utility assistance
- RAFT and HomeBASE navigation
- Emergency shelter assistance

4. Direct Cash Assistance

Direct cash assistance may be used as a flexible tool to help residents meet urgent basic needs such as food, housing, utilities, transportation, or medical expenses.

Examples may include:

- Direct payments to landlords or other vendors
- Grocery gift cards
- General-purpose gift cards
- Other forms of flexible financial assistance that allow residents to address immediate basic needs

Does our organization need to address all four funding priorities?

No. Organizations do not need to address every funding priority.

Applicants should demonstrate strong alignment with at least one of the round's core needs. However, additional consideration may be given to organizations whose work addresses two or more interconnected core needs, particularly when those services help prevent a temporary crisis from becoming a longer-term destabilizing event.

What kinds of activities can grant funding support?

The goal of this round is to provide flexible support to trusted, community-rooted organizations that can prevent temporary losses of benefits, income, housing, food, or health coverage from developing into prolonged crises.

The Foundation recognizes that effective support may include both direct assistance and the infrastructure necessary to help residents access that assistance. This may include administrative navigation, language access, transportation, documentation assistance, legal referrals, culturally responsive services, and flexible operating support needed to respond to increased demand.

Are smaller or culturally specific organizations encouraged to apply?

Yes. The Foundation recognizes that smaller and culturally specific organizations may be among the most trusted organizations within the communities they serve, while simultaneously having fewer fundraising and application resources.

Organizations will be considered based on their relationship to community, the needs of the residents they serve, and their ability to reduce immediate harm—not simply organizational size.

Why This Round Is Needed

Why is The Boston Foundation focusing on these needs now?

Massachusetts residents are entering a period of increased instability within public benefits and basic-needs systems. Beginning **October 1, 2026**, certain lawfully present immigrants including some refugees, asylees, humanitarian parolees, and survivors of abuse or trafficking may lose eligibility for comprehensive MassHealth coverage. Massachusetts estimates that as many as

7,300 members could be affected. Additional federal work and education requirements are expected in **January 2027**.

At the same time, Greater Boston continues to experience high housing costs, constrained emergency shelter capacity, food insecurity, and other pressures that can affect health, employment, education, family stability, and safety simultaneously.

The FY27 Fall Safety Net Grants round is intended to help community organizations provide immediate relief, support residents in retaining or replacing benefits, and prevent short-term disruptions from escalating into homelessness, untreated illness, hunger, family separation, or other destabilizing outcomes.

Applications

When does the FY27 Fall Safety Net Grants application open and close?

The FY27 Fall Safety Net Grants application will open on **September 15, 2026** and close on **October 30, 2026**.

What should applicants emphasize in their application?

Applicants should clearly explain:

- Who their organization serves
- The barriers those residents currently face
- Which of the FY27 funding priorities their work addresses
- How the proposed support will reduce immediate harm or prevent a short-term crisis from becoming a prolonged one
- How the organization is connected to and trusted by the communities it serves
- Whether the work addresses multiple interconnected needs or serves residents experiencing multiple forms of marginalization

The strongest applications will clearly connect the organization's proposed work to the immediate needs of the residents it serves.

Questions

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please email safetynetgrants@tbf.org, and a member of the Safety Net Grants team will be happy to assist you.