



Commonwealth Giving Fund Community Needs & Grantmaking Report

Q2 2026

Our Continuing Mission

The Commonwealth Giving Fund identifies community needs across Massachusetts and regrants funds to proven nonprofit organizations serving those needs. Our purpose is to ensure that donor contributions translate directly into meaningful, local impact. In many cases, donors have charitable inclinations but are unsure how best to make donations that will affect the most change in their local community. Our role is to provide a structured, research-driven approach to identifying and funding the organizations where charitable contributions can do the most good.

Community Needs Across the Commonwealth

Behavioral Health & Youth Mental Health

Behavioral health, particularly among children and adolescents, has emerged as a critical and growing area of need across Massachusetts. Schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations report increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges among youth, alongside continued shortages of accessible and timely care.

Data from state and regional sources indicate that demand for mental health services continues to exceed provider capacity, resulting in long wait times for outpatient care and limited availability of specialized services. School systems, in particular, are experiencing heightened pressure as they work to address both academic and social-emotional needs with constrained resources.

Community-based nonprofits play a vital role in expanding access to behavioral health support through counseling services, school-based interventions, crisis response programs, and family support initiatives. These organizations often serve as the first point of access for individuals who may otherwise face barriers to care.

Targeted philanthropic support in this area can help expand program capacity, reduce wait times, and improve early intervention efforts. Investments in youth mental health services are particularly impactful, as they address needs at a formative stage and contribute to improved long-term outcomes for individuals and communities alike.

Migrant & Refugee Support

Massachusetts continues to experience significant increases in newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant families, placing heightened demands on community-based organizations that provide housing assistance, case management, legal aid, and basic necessities. According to the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) and recent updates from the Governor’s Office, the Commonwealth has seen substantial growth in refugee and migrant arrivals over the past two years, driven by geopolitical instability, humanitarian crises, and federal resettlement allocations. This influx has strained both the state’s shelter system and local nonprofits that serve immigrant and refugee populations, many of which report overwhelming demand for basic support—including temporary housing, English language instruction, transportation assistance, school enrollment support for children, and access to community health services.

Nonprofits working in this space face significant operational challenges, including resource shortages, staff capacity limitations, and rapidly evolving client needs. Charitable support directed to organizations specializing in refugee resettlement, immigrant assistance, and transitional support can provide essential relief during a period when need is high and state systems are overextended. Private philanthropy plays a vital role in filling service gaps, ensuring that newly arrived individuals and families receive the stability and support necessary to safely integrate into Massachusetts communities.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity remains one of the most persistent and widespread community challenges in Massachusetts. According to The Greater Boston Food Bank’s annual “Hunger in Massachusetts” report and analysis from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MassBudget), more than 1 in 5 households with children experience food insecurity, and overall demand for food assistance has remained significantly elevated since the COVID-era surge. Rising food costs, increased housing expenses, and stagnant wage growth have contributed to sustained pressure on food pantries, community kitchens, and meal distribution programs across the Commonwealth. Many organizations report serving record numbers of households and continue to face shortages in both food supply and volunteer capacity.

As food insecurity cuts across regions, age groups, and socioeconomic categories, charitable contributions directed toward established food-assistance nonprofits yield immediate results. These organizations are uniquely positioned to translate funding into direct community impact through the distribution of fresh produce, shelf-stable groceries, and prepared meals. Given the volume of need reported statewide, addressing food insecurity remains a priority funding area for the first quarter of 2026.

Grantee Selection Update

As the Commonwealth Giving Fund is newly established, our initial grantmaking decisions remain under review while we work to accumulate sufficient charitable funds for meaningful distribution. During this inception period, we are focusing on building a strong foundation for responsible grantmaking by refining our evaluation criteria, monitoring emerging community needs, and identifying Massachusetts nonprofit organizations whose missions align with our areas of focus. Once adequate funds have been received, we will initiate our first grant cycle and announce selected grantees in the following quarterly report.

Our Methodology

Each quarter, the Commonwealth Giving Fund conducts a structured review of publicly available information to identify areas of greatest need across Massachusetts and determine where charitable funds can have the most meaningful impact. Our approach emphasizes transparency, research, and alignment with established community indicators. Specifically, we analyze:

State and Regional Public Data

We review key data published by Massachusetts agencies and research institutions, including:

- **Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)** reports on community health trends, behavioral health needs, and disparities.
- **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)** data on student outcomes, district-level funding challenges, and achievement gaps.
- **Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)** reports on housing insecurity, homelessness trends, and emergency shelter usage.
- **The Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MassBudget)** analyses of child welfare, economic inequality, food insecurity, and state-level social service needs.
- **UMass Donahue Institute** demographic and economic research relevant to community well-being.

These sources help us identify statewide and regional issues that merit targeted charitable support.

Nonprofit and Sector Reports

To ensure funds support organizations with proven effectiveness, we monitor:

- **Candid/GuideStar profiles**, which offer transparency metrics and organizational evaluations.

- **Sector-wide reports** from organizations such as the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN), which highlight trends, challenges, and capacity gaps within the nonprofit sector.

These resources allow us to assess which organizations are demonstrating measurable outcomes, strong leadership, and responsible stewardship of donor dollars.

Emerging Community Issues

We also track ongoing developments through:

- Local news and investigative reporting on community needs throughout the Commonwealth.
- Updates from school districts, community health centers, senior service agencies, and regional service providers.
- Public comments, statements, and advisories issued by statewide coalitions addressing issues such as food security, mental health, and youth services.

This helps us stay responsive to emerging or urgent needs, especially those arising unexpectedly.

Funding Prioritization

After completing our quarterly review, we assess which needs are most urgent, which organizations demonstrate strong accountability and impact, and where timely grants can meaningfully expand or stabilize community services.

Invitation to Continue to Support

We invite you to support our mission and help expand our impact across the Commonwealth. Donations may be made by check payable to **Commonwealth Giving Fund, Inc.** or securely online at www.commonwealthgivingfund.org/donate. Every contribution, large or small, directly supports the charitable work of trusted Massachusetts nonprofits.

Commonwealth Giving Fund, Inc.

With appreciation,

The Board of Directors

www.commonwealthgivingfund.org