

Request for Information Moving Massachusetts Upstream (MassUP)

Description and Purpose of RFI

The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC), in collaboration with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and on behalf of several state agencies working in cooperation (see Background for additional detail), is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to obtain stakeholder input on “Moving Massachusetts Upstream” (MassUP), a coordinated state initiative to support partnerships between health care systems and community organizations to address the social determinants of health (SDoH). This RFI will inform the design of MassUP. Any organization or individual interested in the MassUP initiative (e.g., a community organization, health care provider, social service agency, local government body, etc.) is invited to submit a response to this RFI.

Background

The MassUP initiative is a partnership across Massachusetts state agencies including the HPC, DPH, the Office of the Attorney General, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. The vision of the MassUP initiative is better health, lower costs and reduced health inequities across communities and populations in Massachusetts through effective collaboration among government, health care systems, and communities. MassUP includes two distinct but complementary work streams: an investment program, and a state-level interagency policy alignment working group.

Through the MassUP investment program, the HPC and DPH intend to support partnerships that include health care provider organizations and community-based organizations working together to address upstream (i.e., social, environmental, and economic) challenges and enable sustainable improvements in community health and health equity. While many provider organizations are currently focusing on population health activities, often addressing health-related social needs (HRSNs) for their patients, the MassUP program is intended to create a community-focused, -informed, and -engaged partnership that addresses the underlying causes creating those HRSNs.

Through the Healthcare Payment Reform Fund (PRF) (M.G.L. c. 6D, §7) the HPC invests in promising models in health care payment and service delivery. Entities eligible to receive such investment funds are “health care entities,” defined as providers, provider organizations, and carriers. For the MassUP investment program, the HPC will consider proposals submitted by provider organizations, with preference given to proposals from health care provider organizations that are, participate in, or are corporately affiliated with HPC-certified ACOs. As the goal of the MassUP investment program is to support the work of partnerships, the proposals will be required to identify community based organization partners and describe a collaborative governance and decision-making structure

Additional details about the possible structure and requirements of the investment program are outlined in the HPC’s October 2, 2019, presentation to its Care Delivery Transformation Committee, posted [here](#) and recorded for viewing [here](#). Please review the slide presentation and/or the video to inform your response to this RFI.

The second work stream, focusing on interagency policy alignment, is an effort of the MassUP state agencies to proactively work toward alleviating policy barriers to addressing the SDoH in the Commonwealth. The state agencies have established a policy alignment working group to facilitate coordinated interagency action. Areas of focus for this working group may include:

- exploring potential mitigation strategies to address health-related regulatory or other legal barriers identified by the partnerships participating in the MassUP investment program in the course of their work (e.g., opportunities to use funds more flexibly);
- aligning guidance, where feasible, across various state programs that support activities to address the SDoH and health inequity (such as the DPH Community Health Initiative, the Community Benefits program administered by the Office of the Attorney General, and various state-level grant or investment programs); and
- engaging other state agencies as appropriate (e.g., the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Transportation) to support the goals of effective cross-sector action to address the SDoH and health inequity.

The policy alignment working group expects to develop a learning forum, which would convene hospitals, payers, health care provider organizations, community-based organizations, and state agencies to share best practices and learn from one another about approaches to addressing community health challenges. The objectives of the forum include:

- developing a common language and shared understanding of the relationships between SDoH, community health and health equity;
- providing learning opportunities, tools and guidance for integrating upstream approaches within the health care system to improve community health and advance health equity; and
- building capacity for effective partnerships between health care organizations and community stakeholders to address the SDoH.

The Learning Forum is expected to be held in spring 2020.

Questions

Please respond to the questions below to provide input on the design of the MassUP investment program and the policy alignment working group's activities.

1. Please provide a brief description of your organization, including name, type (e.g., health care provider, ACO, social service provider, community-based organization, etc.), and geographic area/populations served.
2. Considering the [Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative framework](#), how would you characterize the focus of your organization's current efforts: downstream, midstream or upstream?
3. How would a MassUP investment allow you to move your work further upstream from where you are today? How would you use MassUP to build new partnerships, deepen involvement of the community, and/or address policy barriers that you might encounter in implementing upstream interventions?
4. In making MassUP investment awards, should the HPC prioritize stimulating new partnerships (incubating), or enabling existing partnerships to increase scope, ambition, or pace (accelerating)? Why?
5. In addition to one or more health care provider organizations (including HPC-certified ACOs), are there certain types of organizations (e.g., human/social service agencies, community-based organizations, local government, etc.) that the HPC should require be included in the funded partnerships? How should the HPC evaluate whether a proposed partnership includes the most relevant organizations?

6. What types of governance structure requirements should the HPC establish for the partnerships to ensure shared leadership and decision-making, equitable representation, and authentic input from all participating parties, including residents of the communities served by the proposed investment?
7. What evaluation metrics should the HPC and DPH use to assess the strength of partnerships and the impact of the MassUP initiative?
8. What resources would your organization need in order to be an effective partner in the MassUP investment program? Please consider any needs your organization might have for internal capacity building; strategy alignment (such as Community Benefit funds, population health efforts, and Community Health Needs Assessments); and infrastructure-building (e.g., IT).
9. Please provide any additional feedback you may have on the proposed MassUP investment program and its goal to support alignment of SDoH-focused activities and effective partnerships between health care and community organizations.
10. Please provide general feedback on the MassUP interagency policy alignment work stream. What are current policy barriers to alignment of SDoH-focused activities and effective partnerships that the working group should address?
11. What topics should be addressed at the proposed learning forum? What state or national experts in health-related social needs, health equity, and/or the SDoH are you interested in hearing from?

Instructions for Submission

Responses to this RFI should be submitted via email to hpc-innovation@mass.gov. The deadline to submit a response is Friday, October 25, 2019, at 3pm.

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes; it does not constitute a Request for Proposals. This RFI does not commit the HPC to make investment program awards or take any other official action. The HPC is not obligated to summarize or publish a response to feedback received, or to respond to questions about the policy issues raised in this RFI. Responders are advised that HPC will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future investment program procurement, if conducted. It is the responsibility of the potential responders to monitor this RFI announcement on COMMBUYS (<https://www.commbuys.com>) and the HPC's website (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-health-policy-commission>) for additional information pertaining to this request.

All responses and information submitted in response to this RFI are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, § 10, and to c. 4, § 7(26). Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

If you have any questions or need assistance regarding this RFI, please contact Courtney Anderson at hpc-innovation@mass.gov.