

MVP Action Grants – Additional Funds Coming for Climate Change, the Healthcare Sector, and Public Health

The [MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs](#) will announce, likely in March 2020, the addition of new funding into the [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant Program](#). This new funding will focus on climate change, the healthcare sector, and public health. Municipalities will be able to apply for Action Grant funding to engage in an additional planning process or implementation focused on community health to supplement their MVP plan. Data from recent community health needs assessments should form the foundation of this planning process.

Public health officials, cross-departmental representatives from local healthcare facilities (including clinicians as well as facilities managers), home healthcare workers, mental health professionals, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders should be the main participants in this process. However, only municipalities are able to apply. This means public health and healthcare sector partners will need to approach their host community to determine how to become part of their MVP process. For more information, contact your regional planning authority as listed below.

- Berkshire County: Caroline Massa, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 413-442-1521 x26, cmassa@berkshireplanning.org
- Franklin County: Kimberly Noake MacPhee, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, 413-774-3167 x130, KMacPhee@frcog.org
- Hampshire and Hampden counties: Emily Slotnick, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 413-781-6045, eslotnick@pvpc.org

Projects addressing the impacts of climate change hazards on the following are MVP eligible. Healthcare facilities, including but not limited to hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, outpatient surgical centers, clinics, medical offices, urgent care facilities, dialysis centers, etc. These projects may focus on incorporating nature-based solutions to address climate impacts on the facility, and/or building energy resilience. Strong private-public partnerships must serve as the foundation for these projects to ensure maximum public benefit. To that end, any nature-based infrastructure project must be publicly accessible and/or include public-facing interpretive signage that fosters community climate change education. Any energy resilience project must supply co-benefits to the grid and/or critical municipal energy needs.

Also eligible are projects involving private and public sector healthcare workers, including those affiliated with a healthcare facility as well as independent healthcare workers (such as home healthcare workers). Projects should include collaborations between those in healthcare sector (healthcare facility managers, emergency managers, providers and other support staff, home healthcare workers, etc.) and municipal staff (DPW, facilities, emergency management, emergency personnel, etc.) as much as possible. Projects may involve providing relevant training for any of the above staff, improving resilience of transportation networks around healthcare facilities to help employees get to work in difficult conditions, or other efforts that strengthen relationships between healthcare workers and the municipality that build resilience.

Infrastructure that, if damaged, would severely threaten public health, are eligible. These include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plants, sewer systems, drinking water supplies, transportation networks surrounding hospitals, medical supply chain, and food distribution networks. Projects should foster partnerships between healthcare facilities, municipalities and utility companies when possible. The MVP Program prioritizes nature-based solutions.

Projects may include infrastructure that, if installed, preserved, or expanded upon, would significantly improve public health, including but not limited to open space of all sizes (including the creation of pocket parks), trees, infrastructure that encourages water flow (and thus reduces standing water and areas for mosquito breeding), heating or cooling features in low-income housing, retrofitting food banks/pantries with resilient features, and other nature-based solutions to climate change impacts.

Projects improving the physical and mental health of residents, which may include illnesses related to extreme heat, prolonged exposure to floodwaters and residual mold/dampness, pollen and other environmental allergies exacerbated by climate change, vector-borne diseases, and an increase in stress are eligible.

Projects may focus on community outreach and education initiatives related to emergency preparedness (as long as there is an emphasis on long-term planning), and awareness/prevention of other illnesses related to climate impacts as described above.

And, lastly, projects may also focus on fostering social networks that would improve health. These socially oriented projects could be done in partnership with healthcare providers to further build community trust.