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Kresge Foundation awards \$600,000 grant to the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts to combat climate change, improve health equity

The Kresge Foundation has awarded the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts a \$600,000 grant for the Live Well Springfield Coalition to advance policy solutions aimed at combating climate change and equitably reducing health risks in low-income communities. Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts is one of 14 community-based nonprofits nationwide receiving grant funding as part of The Kresge Foundation's [Climate Change, Health and Equity](#) initiative.

With this funding, PHIWM will work with Live Well Springfield coalition members including the Resident Advisory Board, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Way Finders, Arise for Social Justice, Neighbor to Neighbor, the City of Springfield and partners from other sectors to develop multi-year work plans that address community-defined health and climate priorities.

“Springfield has tremendous assets to overcome challenges created by societal issues. With this funding, residents in partnership with Live Well Springfield can advocate for policy changes as they have done before on different issues like community gardening and complete streets. Springfield is a model for this type of action,” said Jessica Collins, Executive Director.

“This grant would not have been possible without all the community partners and resident advocates who laid the foundation for climate justice work in Springfield. Over the last year, and despite the tensions of the pandemic, we worked closely with community partners and residents to learn what climate issues matter to them and their families. Residents are our true champions in this work,” noted Samantha Bilal, Live Well Springfield Manager.

The Live Well Springfield Climate Justice Initiative will advocate for the City of Springfield to adopt Community Choice Energy and a Race and Health Equity Impact Assessment Requirement to address the climate crisis, systemic racism and resulting impact on health for communities of color, particularly Black and Latinx.

“By working together, we can drive systemic change and improve the health and well-being of all communities – particularly Black, Indigenous and other communities of color whose health outcomes are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards and climate impacts,” said Monica Valdes Lupi, managing director of Kresge’s Health Program.

“We are proud to support organizations around the country like the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts that are doing crucial work to shift policies, systems and practices that

will have a lasting impact on climate, health and racial equity and will help to create a more just planet for everyone,” said Lois DeBacker managing director of Kresge’s Environment Program.

The cohort of 14 organizations will participate in a national learning community supported by the [Institute for Sustainable Communities](#), which serves as the national program office for Kresge’s Climate Change, Health & Equity initiative. ISC’s mission is to help communities around the world address environmental, economic and social challenges to build a better future shaped and shared by all.

For more information on the Climate Change, Health & Equity initiative, click [here](#).

For more information on the Live Well Springfield Climate Justice Initiative, click [here](#).

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts was formed a little over 20 years ago with the goal of building measurably healthier communities using data and its convening power to create collaborative partnerships. For more information, visit <https://www.publichealthwm.org/>