

PROMOTING CREATIVE RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY NEEDS: CFWM INNOVATION PROGRAM



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Using a new approach to grantmaking and capacity building, in 2016 CFWM launched an initiative to promote innovation and skill building in the nonprofit sector. We awarded \$300,000 in Innovation Planning grants to seven organizations selected from over 40 applicants. Their charge: to develop a bold, creative idea that will catalyze change.

“The way the CFWM has shown up for Just Roots and so many others in the Valley, has been truly extraordinary,” said Jessica Van Steensburg, executive director of Just Roots, a recipient of a CFWM Innovation Planning grant. “In the last six months, CFWM has offered me the opportunity to write my best work, to pitch my story, to network with donors and professionals, and to learn from my counterparts.”

Finalists participated in an intensive workshop on public speaking and persuasive presentation. That work culminated in a Community Meetup at which CFWM brought together 75 volunteers to hear the nonprofits’ “pitches” and provide feedback. Awardees also received two days of cohort training and a third day of one-on-one consultation.

“This project is something we have talked about, but without the vision of the Community Foundation and its innovative grantmaking, we couldn’t have designed a collaborative program to reduce hunger in which we have such confidence,” said Nancy Robinson, The Food Bank’s innovation coordinator.

In the fall of 2017 Planning Grant recipients have the opportunity to apply for multi-year funding to implement their idea.

AWARDEES AND THE TARGETED COUNTIES ARE:

- Clinical & Support Options Inc. (Franklin County)
- Five Colleges, Inc. (Hampden and Hampshire Counties)
- The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts Inc. (Hampden and Franklin Counties)
- Just Roots, Inc. (Franklin County)
- Nuestras Raices Inc. (Hampden County)
- Pioneer Valley Habitat For Humanity (Hampshire County)
- Wellspring Cooperative Corp. (Hampden County)



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