



PROJECT BUILD UP

Request for Proposal

At A Glance

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| Available Funding | Funding will be awarded to up to twenty (20) eligible organizations across Massachusetts to receive a grant of up to \$25,000 per year for two years, with a maximum amount of up to \$50,000 per organization. |
| Grant Start Date | September 1, 2025 |
| Eligible Applicants | <p>All Massachusetts based non-profit 501(c)3 organizations or groups with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply.</p> <p>Applicants must fit into one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing Problem Gambling Treatment Providers: Community-based organizations and service providers already offering problem gambling treatment to target populations, including MDPH Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) outpatient substance use treatment programs.• New Providers Committed to Treatment Services: Community-based organizations and service providers that serve target populations and plan to begin offering outpatient treatment services by the end of the grant period.• Referrals and Workforce Capacity-Building Partner: Community-based organizations that do not currently provide treatment services but have an established or will be establishing a partnership with a therapeutic or clinical treatment provider. |
| Eligible Activities | Activities that aim to increase the capacity for community-based organizations and service providers to promote and provide problem gambling treatment services in Massachusetts, detailed in the proposal. |
| Application Deadline | Monday, June 2, 2025, at 11:59 PM EST |
| Contact | projectbuildup@hria.org |
| Website | https://www.m-tac.org/pbu-grants/ |

Background

What is Project Build-Up 2.0?

As gambling opportunities continue to expand in Massachusetts, there's a growing need to help community-based organizations and service providers identify, screen, and treat problem gambling effectively. To strengthen these services, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Problem Gambling Services (MDPH/OPGS) has contracted with Health Resources in Action (HRiA) to implement **Project Build Up (PBU) 2.0, a capacity building program designed to work with organizations to enhance workforce development and improve access to treatment and treatment outcomes.**

Purpose of Funding Opportunity

This funding opportunity aims to increase the capacity for community-based organizations and service providers to promote and provide problem gambling treatment services in Massachusetts. This means applicants must demonstrate how they will build capacity within the problem gambling workforce to deliver outpatient treatment services to the target population/s. Funding will prioritize organizations serving populations at higher risk for problem gambling, with a particular interest in those integrating racial equity, lived experience, and culturally responsive strategies.

The following definitions provide additional context for this funding opportunity:

Outpatient Treatment Services: These are programs and activities designed to help people treat and recover from problems related to gambling. They may include peer support, counseling, support groups, therapy, intensive day treatment, and other types of therapeutic or billable clinical services.

Problem Gambling Workforce: This refers to people with a diversity of expertise who work to help people with problem gambling. This may include:

- Outreach Coordinators & Ambassadors: Engage communities, raise awareness, and connect individuals to services.
- Peer Support & Recovery Specialists: Have lived experience and provide mentorship, coaching, and guidance in recovery.
- Community Health Workers (CHWs): Assist with navigation of treatment resources and provide culturally responsive support.
- Licensed Counselors & Therapists: Trained in behavioral interventions and gambling treatment

Target Populations: These are individuals who are most at risk for developing gambling problems, including:

- Individuals with a history of substance use and/or mental health challenges
- Youth and young adults
- Boys and men
- Immigrants and communities of color
- Individuals with a family history of gambling problems and/or addiction
- Individuals excessively engaging in other high risk or addictive behaviors, like gaming, online shopping, sex, etc.
- Individuals living in communities with high rates of gambling
- Individuals experiencing financial vulnerability

Available Funding

Funding will be awarded to up to twenty (20) eligible organizations across Massachusetts to receive a grant of up to \$25,000 per year for two years, with a maximum amount of up to \$50,000 per organization. Applications will be selected based on funding availability.

About the Community Advisory Committee

The Project Build Up Community Advisory Committee (CAC) played a key role in shaping this funding opportunity. Comprised of individuals with professional and lived experience in problem gambling, behavioral health, and community-based work across Massachusetts, the CAC reflects a diverse range of identities and communities most impacted by problem gambling. Together with HRiA, CAC members co-designed the funding criteria and RFP, and helped to inform both the application and review process. Their contributions ensure that this opportunity is rooted in racial equity, lived experience, and the realities of community-based work.

About the Office of Problem Gambling

The Office of Problem Gambling Services (OPGS) was established to lead the public health response to the expansion of gambling in the Commonwealth. Since 2016, OPGS has ensured a comprehensive and integrated public health approach to problem gambling by using data to inform initiatives, engage communities, and ensure cultural intelligence and humility. Critical to the work of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Office of Problem Gambling Services is leading with data and community voice, the promotion of health and racial equity with a vision of eradicating health disparities. The collective effort in leading a public health response centered on our values is unprecedented in the field of problem gambling.

About Health Resources in Action

Health Resources in Action is a non-profit organization working to improve and reimagine public health. We connect, consult and collaborate to solve complex challenges of access and equity in our health and social systems. Together with our partners, clients and collaborators, we create actionable solutions so that all people can thrive. HRiA manages the PBU grant program through a contract with the OPGS, overseeing grant distribution, ongoing technical assistance to grantees, reporting, and evaluation.

Who is Eligible?

All Massachusetts based non-profit 501(c)3 organizations or groups with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply. Applicants must align with the purpose of this funding opportunity and demonstrate how they will provide outpatient treatment services, if awarded funding. Applicants must fit into one of the following categories:

- **Existing Problem Gambling Treatment Providers:** Community-based organizations and service providers already offering problem gambling treatment to target populations, including MDPH Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) outpatient substance use treatment programs. These applicants must successfully demonstrate how they will expand their capacity to strengthen workforce development and enhance treatment services within the grant period.
- **New Providers Committed to Treatment Services:** Community-based organizations and service providers that serve target populations and plan to begin offering outpatient treatment services. Eligible organizations should already be engaged in problem gambling prevention efforts, such as awareness campaigns and screening activities. These applicants must successfully outline a clear roadmap for building workforce capacity and establishing treatment services within the grant period.
- **Referrals and Workforce Capacity-Building Partner:** Community-based organizations that do not currently provide treatment services but have an established or will be establishing a partnership with a therapeutic or clinical treatment provider. Eligible organizations should already be engaged in prevention efforts, such as awareness campaigns and screening activities. These applicants must use grant funding to build organizational capacity and workforce of Outreach Coordinators & Ambassadors (or a similar position) to expand outreach and increase referrals to their treatment partner. A completed partnership letter from the treatment provider must be submitted as part of the application to ensure a coordinated, joint approach under a single applicant.

Priority will be given to the MDPH BSAS outpatient substance use and gambling treatment agencies because these agencies often deal with co-occurring issues of problem gambling, substance use, and mental health.

The following entities are **ineligible** for funding:

- Individuals
- For-profit businesses
- Local and state governments, including municipalities such as health departments
- Quasi-governmental agencies
- Colleges and universities

What activities will Project Build Up support?

PBU funding is designed to build overall organizational capacity to address problem gambling treatment in the Commonwealth. Below is a list of workforce development and other activities eligible for funding. Implementation of additional workforce development activities or innovative strategies for treatment can be proposed as part of your application but would require approval from the PBU and OPGS teams.

For Existing Problem Gambling Treatment Providers:

- Certifications, training, and continued learning opportunities related to problem gambling treatment, specifically BSAS and/or OPGS-sponsored trainings
- Cost of the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Specialist (MA PGS) application
- Salary support for clinicians who are providing problem gambling treatment services
- Stipends for staff, consultants, and individuals with lived experience to build knowledge and skills, support outreach, and deliver services for problem gambling
- Material development, website enhancements, or other outreach efforts to promote your organization's gambling services
- Translation and interpretation services to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and services
- Collaboration with local small businesses to identify job opportunities and connect individuals to employment.
- Developing and implementing evaluation tools to assess the impact of problem gambling treatment programs
- Reimbursement for:
 - any days of work missed by fee-for-service providers to attend gambling training/s
 - clinical supervision, coaching, and/or mentoring relating to gambling treatment
 - costs associated with implementing new recruitment and retention strategies for certified gambling treatment providers

For New Providers Committed to Treatment Services:

- Hosting listening sessions, focus groups, or community events to better understand community needs and tailor services accordingly.
- Developing policies, protocols, and workflows to integrate problem gambling treatment into existing services.
- Establishing referral networks with other providers, such as mental health, substance use, and primary care organizations, to ensure a continuum of care.
- Partnering with experienced providers for guidance and support in implementing effective problem gambling treatment programs.

- All workforce development and other activities listed under Existing Problem Gambling Treatment Providers.

For Referral and Capacity-Building Partners:

- Strengthen internal systems to identify, screen, and refer individuals to treatment.
- Host outreach and education events to raise awareness about problem gambling and promote treatment services offered by partner organization.
- Collaborate with treatment partners to co-design referral processes, coordinate care, and share data.
- Hold regular check-ins with partners to track referrals, address challenges, and improve coordination.
- All workforce development and other activities listed under Existing Problem Gambling Treatment Providers.

What we will not fund

Capital expenditure and research projects are among the projects that this grant opportunity will not fund.

Application Process

The application will include a narrative, budget, partnership form and workplan. Narratives can be submitted as written, presentation slides, or videos, and the budget and workplan must use the attached template. All applications must be submitted online via Blackbaud by Monday, June 2, 2025, at 11:59 PM EST. No late submissions, mail, emailed, or faxed applications will be accepted.

How to apply

- To start your application, create an account in [Blackbaud](#).
- View application questions [here](#).
- Funding decisions and notifications will be sent by **August 1, 2025**.

Before starting the application, we suggest that you review the application questions. We highly recommend that you first draft responses in a document, then copy and paste your answers into the online form.

You **DO NOT** need to complete your application in one sitting. Just be sure to click the green “Save Draft” button in the bottom left before exiting. You can return to your application anytime using the link emailed to you.

Required Materials

The following items will be required with your submission:

1. Narrative (written, presentation slides, or video)
2. Workplan using provided [template](#)
3. Budget using provided [template](#)
4. Partnership letter using provided [template](#) (if applicable)
5. Proof of tax-exempt status

Funding Notifications

All funding decisions and notifications will be sent by **August 1, 2025**.

Applicant Supports

HRiA will provide technical assistance throughout the application period, including the following:

- **Kickoff & Informational Webinar:** Overview of the RFP, eligibility, and selection criteria.
- **Application Tips Webinar:** Guidance on submitting a strong application, including aligning project goals with grant priorities for each eligibility category.
- **Portal Walkthrough Recording:** Step-by-step guide on using the Blackbaud application system.
- **Budget Development Recording:** Explanation of the budget form, expectations, and reimbursement timelines.
- **Office Hours:** Two, 1-hour sessions for Q&A and applicant support.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):** Regularly updated responses to common questions on the website.

Please visit the [website](#) for key dates, webinar links, and access to all recorded webinars and presentation materials.

Review Process

All completed submissions will be reviewed by a diverse committee, including individuals with lived experience of problem gambling, community members, and subject matter experts. The review committee will make recommendations to OPGS, who will make the final funding decisions.

Applications will be assessed based on their experience, thoughtfulness, and clarity of submitted proposals using the following criteria:

- **Lived Experience and Community-Centered Approach:** A proven track record of leading and working directly with individuals affected by problem gambling. Strong proposals will incorporate lived experience into program design, service delivery, and outreach efforts to ensure a community-centered approach.
- **Racial Equity and Cultural Competency:** Racial equity is a core value, and applicants should actively work to reduce inequities in problem gambling treatment by implementing culturally responsive practices. This includes providing multilingual support, representative staffing, and demonstrating an understanding of how systemic inequities contribute to problem gambling. Successful proposals should illustrate how they create inclusive spaces that foster trust and accessibility for diverse populations.
- **Commitment and Impact:** A proven track record of providing problem gambling services (i.e. outreach, awareness, and treatment) to target populations. Successful applicants should illustrate how they remove barriers to care, ensure accessibility, and integrate problem gambling services into their existing programs.
- **Target Populations:** Demonstrate a deep connection to the communities they serve, particularly those most at risk for problem gambling. Strong proposals should outline specific strategies for engagement, ensure accessibility, and address the unique challenges these groups face in seeking problem gambling support.
- **Openness to Innovation:** Willingness to explore new and creative approaches to problem gambling treatment and prevention. Applicants should demonstrate the ability to adapt, test new strategies, and integrate lessons learned to enhance their impact. Strong proposals will highlight innovative service delivery models, cross-sector partnerships, or harm reduction strategies tailored to diverse communities.

- **Feasibility:** A clear, achievable plan for implementing their proposed program. Strong proposals will include a well-structured work plan and budget that align with the goals of this funding opportunity, demonstrating the organization's capacity to effectively manage funds and deliver services. For those partnering with a therapeutic and/or clinical treatment program, proposals must demonstrate how your organizations will collaborate to meet the goals of this funding opportunity.

Awardee Expectations

If your organization is selected to receive a grant, HRiA staff will work with you and your team to finalize:

- Budget
- Workplan
- Subcontract

Reporting Requirements: Grantees will remain in communication with HRiA throughout the award period to provide the following quarterly updates:

- Budget spending
- Progress on workplan
- Success and challenges

Applicants should be committed to transparency in operations and budgeting, ensuring accountability and efficient use of resources.

Annual Reporting: At the end of each grant year, grantees will submit detailed financial expenditures and outcomes. Awarded grantees will complete a baseline survey at the start of the grant and follow-up surveys at the end of each year to measure changes in workforce and capacity related to problem gambling. In addition to regular feedback opportunities through quarterly check-ins, grantees will also participate in a final “close-out” meeting to share overall feedback on their grant experience.

Additional technical assistance and capacity building support will be provided throughout the grant funding period including:

- Check-ins between grantee organization lead/program staff and PBU grant management team
- Opportunities to connect with M-TAC's clinical consultant team;
- Information sharing with grantee organizations about M-TAC's training opportunities, MAPGS certification tracks, and relevant learning opportunities such as the yearly OPGS Conference.

Contact Information

Website: <https://www.m-tac.org/pbu-grants/>

Questions: projectbuildup@hria.org

For technical support with the Blackbaud portal, email grants@hria.org and use “Project Build Up 2.0” as the subject line.