

# 140 local nonprofits awarded \$25 million from Cummings

By **Boston Real Estate Times** - June 3, 2021



WOBURN, MA – Woburn, MA-based Cummings Foundation has announced the 140 Massachusetts nonprofits to be awarded \$100,000 – \$500,000 each through the 2021 cycle of its annual **Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program**.

In keeping with the Foundation’s focus on local giving, these organizations are based in and serve Middlesex, Suffolk, and Essex counties. They largely represent causes related to social justice, human services, education, and healthcare.

Through its place-based charitable giving, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the areas where it owns commercial buildings, all of which are managed on a *pro bono* basis by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. Founded in 1970 by Bill Cummings, the commercial real estate firm leases and manages 10 million square feet of suburban space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

One hundred of the charitable organizations selected during the 2021 grant cycle were each awarded \$100,000, mostly payable over two to five years. The other 40 grantees, all of which have previously received a Cummings grant, are receiving 10 years of funding totaling \$200,000 – \$500,000 each.

"This grant will be transformative for us, and I hope that the Cummings stamp of approval will open many doors for funding, partnerships, and opportunities," said Mary Speta, chief impact officer of Amira, a Woburn-based nonprofit that will use its funding to provide case management and other support to women victimized by, or working to exit, commercial sexual exploitation.

Amirah and other grant winners have taken to social media, using #CummingsGrant and the now well-known Cummings-provided poster to spread the word about their achievement of this substantial funding.

One of the three largest private foundations in New England, Cummings Foundation increased the funding awarded through its annual formal grant program from \$20 million to \$25 million between 2020 and 2021. It has awarded more than \$300 million to greater Boston nonprofits to date.

"There is much need locally, and greater Boston is incredibly fortunate to have a robust nonprofit community that is dedicated to addressing societal problems," said Dennis Clarke, trustee of Cummings Foundation and chairman and CEO of Cummings Properties. "We are excited and honored to partner with these organizations as they work to strengthen the communities they serve."

The full list of new and past grant recipients can be found at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

### **A Democratic Approach to Philanthropy**

With one single paid administrative employee on staff, Cummings Foundation entrusts much of the grant-making process to its volunteers. A diverse corps of active and retired professionals narrowed 590 letters of inquiry to 325 applicants and ultimately selected the majority of the 140 grantee organizations.

"Our volunteers habitually characterize their experiences as intensely rewarding and enlightening," said Joel Swets, Cummings Foundation's executive director. "Many of them have ties to the communities these nonprofits serve, which makes them well qualified to determine where funding will do the most good."

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including its two New Horizons senior living communities, in Marlborough and Woburn. Its largest single commitment to date has been to Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

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