

Innovators for Purpose Awarded \$600,000 Cummings Grant

Cambridge, MA nonprofit receives 10 years of funding from Cummings Foundation

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Innovators for Purpose (iFp) has been selected as one of 150 nonprofits to receive funding through Cummings Foundation's annual grant program, which awarded \$35 million this year. Chosen through a competitive review process that drew a record 959 applicants, the Cambridge-based organization will receive \$600,000 over ten years.

Innovators for Purpose (iFp) is a BIPOC-led nonprofit design and innovation studio based in Cambridge, MA that empowers young people, especially those from underrecognized communities, to shape their futures and communities through art + design and STEM. Through hands-on, real-world learning experiences, iFp helps students build skills, confidence, and pathways from curiosity to college and career.

"This investment is transformational for our organization and the young people we serve," said Michael K. Dawson, Co-Founder and CEO of Innovators for Purpose. "Long-term, unrestricted funding gives us the ability to think beyond year-to-year sustainability and continue building pathways that help young people discover their brilliance and shape what's next in their lives and communities. We are deeply grateful to the Cummings Foundation for believing in our vision and the power of community-centered innovation."

This year, the Woburn-based Cummings Foundation increased its annual grant program from \$30 million to \$35 million and shifted to fully unrestricted funding, allowing recipients to direct grant dollars where they are needed most.



The Innovators for Purpose (iFp) team after presenting to the Cummings Foundation as part of its 2026 grant selection process.

Foundation executive director and trustee Joyce Vyriotes noted that the changes reflect growing concerns among Greater Boston nonprofits about rising costs, increased demand for services, and sustained uncertainty around public funding.

“Nonprofit professionals are closest to the challenges facing their communities, making them best positioned to determine where and how new funds will drive the greatest impact,” said Vyriotes. “By providing increased, flexible funding, we hope to strengthen organizations’ long-term stability and help them respond to evolving community needs.”

This year’s grant recipients represent a wide range of causes, including housing and food insecurity, education, workforce development, healthcare, mental health services, social justice, immigrant support, and youth programming.

The annual grant program supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and primarily serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties, as well as Brookline, Dedham, Milton, Needham, Quincy, and Wellesley.

Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation reinvests in the areas where it owns commercial real estate. Its buildings are all managed at no cost to the Foundation by its affiliate, Cummings Properties, a Woburn-based commercial developer that leases and manages 11 million square feet of debt-free space. All rental profits support the Foundation.

Since its founding, Cummings Foundation has awarded more than \$650 million to Greater Boston nonprofits. The complete list of this year’s grant recipients, along with additional information about the Foundation and its grant programs, is available at CummingsFoundation.org.

About Innovators for Purpose

Innovators for Purpose (iFp) is a BIPOC-led nonprofit design and innovation studio based in Cambridge, MA that empowers young people, especially those from underrecognized communities, to tackle critical societal challenges through art + design and STEM. Through project-based learning, mentorship, and real-world experiences, iFp helps students build skills, confidence, and agency as they move through the iFp Pathway from curiosity to college and career as socially conscious innovators. Learn more at innovatorsforpurpose.org.

About Cummings Foundation

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings of Winchester, Mass., and has grown to become one of the largest private foundations in New England. In addition to its annual grant program, the Foundation directly operates two not-for-profit retirement communities: New Horizons at Marlborough and New Horizons at Choate, in Woburn. Additional information is available at CummingsFoundation.org.

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