



'Shaking things up in Greater New Bedford'

Of five finalists in the running for United Way's Innovation Fund awards, three organizations received large checks for grants to be used over a three-year period: Below, from left, the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, awarded \$93,073, The Women's Center which was awarded \$99,000 and the Greater New Bedford Youth

Alliance got \$100,000.

The program allowed applicants to submit a proposed project dealing with health, education or financial stability for up to \$100,000 for up to three years. United Way of Greater New Bedford received 26 applications total.

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SPECIAL COUNSEL QUESTIONS SESSIONS

Attorney General Jeff Sessions was questioned for hours, as prosecutors moved closer to a possible interview with President Trump about whether he took steps to obstruct an FBI probe into contacts between Russia and his 2016 campaign

Gov. Baker committed to rail project

In the annual State of the State address, Gov. Charlie Baker said he was committed to making commuter rail service from Fall River and New Bedford to Boston a reality. Other major items addressed during his speech included opioids, housing, health care and environmental issues. SEE FULL STORY, A2

Opioids

Baker pushed lawmakers to approve a bill that would let police officers and medical professionals bring high-risk individuals to substance abuse treatment centers, even against their will, for up to 72 hours.

Housing

Baker discussed his plan to create 135,000 new housing units in Massachusetts by 2025 in part by approving more than \$10 million in incentives, grant funding and technical assistance each year.

Three organizations named Innovation Fund winners

By Aimee Chiavaroli
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NEW BEDFORD — In the New Bedford Whaling Museum Harbor View Gallery Tuesday evening, community members and those in the nonprofit sector awaited the announcement of United Way's Innovation Fund winners.

Of five finalists, three organizations received large checks for grants to be used over a three-year period: The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, awarded \$93,073, The Women's Center was awarded \$99,000 and the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance got \$100,000. All finalists were awarded a plaque, which include Global Learning Charter Public School and People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE).

The Innovation Fund which launched in September allowed applicants to submit a proposed project dealing with health, education or financial stability for up to \$100,000 for up to three years. United Way of Greater New Bedford received 26 applications and with the help of eight judges including a few board members, five finalists were named.

"This really is one of the most challenging things we've ever done," said President and CEO Michelle

Hantman after the winners were announced. The showcase allowed the projects to get exposure and allowed organizations to network and possibly get their projects funded another way.

"United Way's Innovation Fund is all about shaking things up in Greater New Bedford," and that's just what the organizations set out to do with the projects.

The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center was the first winner announced.

It aims to fully integrate opioid treatment into its primary care service model, proposing Medication Assisted Treatment which combines medication and counseling to treat opioid use disorder. The center is set to prescribe and monitor buprenorphine (the generic version of suboxone).

"It will help our patients who have an opioid use disorder to get all their care in one place," said CEO Cheryl Bartlett.

Thanks to United Way and a federal grant, the center plans to hire a full time social worker and a full time recovery coach. In addition, two nurse practitioners and three doctors, including an OBGYN will finish training and be certified to prescribe buprenorphine.

"This is something we've wanted to do for a long time," said Pamela MacLeod-Lima,



The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center poses with a check for \$93,073 from United Way's Innovation Fund. [AIMEE CHIAVAROLI / THE STANDARD-TIMES / SCMG]

executive director of The Women's Center, of its Homeport — Alternative to Shelter program.

"It's an opportunity to take a new look at how we can keep people safe and at the same time connect it to the community," she said.

The program will allow women and children to "shelter in place." A victim safety plan and perpetrator dangerousness assessment will help determine which families will be safe to include in the Homeport model, and otherwise be safe and secure in their own homes with current security technology.

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance, a collaboration of 21 youth-serving organizations, started about two and a half years ago with guidance from the Community Foundation of

Southeastern Massachusetts and funding from one of their foundations, according to Facilitator Warren Berube.

"This tool ... will allow us to have a way of letting people know what we're doing and what our impact is," Berube said.

The goal is to replicate and shape a system like "Cityspan — Youth Services" used by Providence After School Alliance (PASA) which is able to track enrollment, participation and retention across multiple organizations for more than 3,000 youth in Providence. This allows PASA to have an overview of all programs and quickly produce quantifiable results to funders and other stakeholders.

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