

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MetroWest Mediation Services awarded \$350,000 Cummings grant**

*Natick nonprofit receives 10 years of funding from Cummings Foundation*

Natick, May 26, 2023 – MetroWest Mediation Services is one of 150 local nonprofits that will share in \$30 million through Cummings Foundation’s major annual grants program. The Natick-based organization was selected from a total of 630 applicants during a competitive review process. It will receive \$350,000 over 10 years.

MetroWest Mediation Services is a non-profit conflict resolution and training center. The organization facilitates peaceful resolution of disputes within all communities served, and through the courts, by supporting people to work together to resolve conflict. Every year, our mediators help resolve conflict in around 1,000 cases, providing community members with a constructive way to settle their disputes.

“We are so grateful to the Cummings Foundation for supporting our Housing Mediation Program, which helps landlords and tenants avoid eviction through mediating agreements,” said MetroWest Mediation Services Executive Director Seth Izen. “Our staff and mediators do a remarkable job of keeping people housed. These services are critically needed given the high level of housing insecurity in the MetroWest.”

MetroWest Mediation works with landlords and tenants to connect them with rental assistance programs, negotiate realistic payment plans, and prevent eviction by maintaining the tenancy or finding other suitable housing opportunities if no agreement can be reached. As the only program serving landlords and tenants in MetroWest District Courts, this program plays a critical role in giving tenants and landlords a final opportunity to reach an agreement prior to eviction.

The Cummings \$30 Million Grant Program primarily supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties.

Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the areas where it owns commercial property. Its buildings are all managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. This Woburn-based commercial real estate firm leases and manages 11 million square feet of debt-free space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

“The way the local nonprofit sector perseveres, steps up, and pivots to meet the shifting needs of the community is most impressive,” said Cummings Foundation executive director Joyce Vyriotes. “We are incredibly grateful for these tireless efforts to support people in the community and to increase equity and access to opportunities.”

The majority of the grant decisions were made by about 90 volunteers. They worked across a variety of committees to review and discuss the proposals and then, together, determine which requests would be funded. Among these community volunteers were business and nonprofit leaders, mayors, college presidents, and experts in areas such as finance and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion).

“It would not be possible for the Foundation to hire the diversity and depth of expertise and insights that our volunteers bring to the process,” said Vyriotes. “We so appreciate the substantial time and

thought they dedicated toward ensuring that our democratized version of philanthropy results in equitable outcomes that will really move the needle on important issues in local communities.”

The Foundation and volunteers first identified 150 organizations to receive three-year grants of up to \$225,000 each. The winners included first-time recipients as well as nonprofits that had previously received Cummings grants. Twenty-five of this latter group of repeat recipients were then selected by a volunteer panel to have their grants elevated to 10-year awards ranging from \$300,000 to \$1 million each.

This year’s grant recipients represent a wide variety of causes, including housing and food insecurity, workforce development, immigrant services, social justice, education, and mental health services. The nonprofits are spread across 46 different cities and towns.

Cummings Foundation has now awarded \$480 million to greater Boston nonprofits. The complete list of this year’s 150 grant winners, plus nearly 1,500 previous recipients, is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

### **About MetroWest Mediation Services**

Metro West Mediation Services, founded in 1979, is a non-profit conflict resolution and training center. We are committed to increasing awareness, utilization and accessibility to dispute resolution alternatives. We facilitate peaceful resolution of disputes within all communities we serve, and through the courts, by supporting people to work together to resolve conflict.

### **About Cummings Foundation**

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings of Winchester, MA and has grown to be one of the largest private foundations in New England. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities, in Marlborough and Woburn, and Cummings Health Sciences, LLC. Additional information is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

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PHOTO:



Executive Director Seth Izen (L) and  
Director of Court Services & Housing Mediation Coordinator Li Morrison (R)