



## Design phase & evaluation overview

**Purpose.** The design phase is intended to support teams in their efforts to better understand and incorporate the core elements of the Working Cities Challenge in their initiatives: collaborative leadership, community engagement, evidence-based decision-making, and systems change (those elements are defined in the [CORE ELEMENTS OF THE WORKING CITIES CHALLENGE](#)). The Boston Fed expects that teams will emerge from the design phase with:

- Heightened levels of understanding about how and why to integrate the core areas of the Challenge in their initiatives
- Team structure that includes new partners and/or reflects a deeper level of collaboration across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors
- Work plans that reflect a clear and thoughtful connection between strategies, short-term outcomes, and long-term goals
- Initiatives that are implementation-ready for teams that win the Challenge
- Initiatives that are viable and competitive for other funding sources, for teams that don't win the Challenge

**Structure.** The design phase will last six months, from November through April 2016. Teams will participate in up to four day-long sessions organized by the Boston Fed. Some of the questions that will be addressed in these sessions include:

- What is a long-term goal your team can realistically accomplish and track progress toward, and what additional partners need to be at the table to help your team succeed?
- How do institutional practices and cultural norms influence your day-to-day work, and how might these practices and norms be changed to help your team achieve its goal?
- What are the strategies and activities your team will need to undertake to accomplish this goal, and how will you know you're making progress?
- Why is community engagement important to accomplishing your goal, and how can you build your team's capacity to do this meaningfully throughout the process?
- What systems—including policies, practices, resource flows, and decision-making processes—affect your team's ability to succeed, and how can you intervene to create lasting change?

**Expectations.** At a minimum, all individuals listed as core team members are expected to attend all working sessions. In order to get the most out of these events, teams may be asked to undertake some pre-work beforehand and some homework afterward, all of which will be directly connected to the implementation application.

Teams are also expected to work independently throughout this process to develop their initiatives and complete their applications. Teams' \$15,000 grants are unlikely to cover the full cost of undertaking this work, and teams may need to contribute time and energy beyond what may be captured in your 20% in-kind match. Implementation grant applications will be due in May 2016; application questions will be made available upon the announcement of design grant winners so that teams may begin their work immediately.

**Evaluation.** The design grant phase is a new element of the Working Cities Challenge. This was developed in response to what we learned from an independent evaluation about how to support and respond to the needs of teams during the first round. In order to ensure that this phase is effective at building the capacity of teams and helping them develop high-quality initiatives, the Boston Fed will again work with an independent evaluator to



understand the influence of this process on your team members and your work. By submitting an application for a design grant, each team agrees to participate fully in the evaluation, even if the team does not receive a grant. Participation may include completing a survey before and after the design phase and responding to additional questions from our evaluator. Information shared with the evaluator will be confidential. To ensure that responses to surveys will have no way of influencing the outcome of the jury's decision to award implementation grants, the evaluator will not provide team-specific information to the Boston Fed during the course of the competition.