Massachusetts Round 2
Implementation grant application – Detailed instructions + FAQ
Originally issued on March 7, 2016; updated on April 5, 2016

Round 2 Working Cities Challenge implementation grants will be awarded to a subset of the ten design grantee teams for the purpose of launching the initiatives teams have developed during the design phase. Implementation grants will be awarded in the amount of $475,000 per team, to be paid in three equal installments across three years (2016-2019). Applications are due on Thursday, May 5. An independent jury that includes no Boston Fed staff will select the winners, which will be announced in June 2016.

In addition to reviewing the written applications, the jury will conduct in-person interviews of applicant teams during the week of May 23. We expect those interviews to be scheduled between Monday and Wednesday of that week at the Boston Fed; please hold those dates accordingly.

Application instructions

Teams will submit typewritten application packages in PDF format, using a Microsoft Word template to be provided by the Boston Fed. A complete application package must include the following as individual PDFs:

- ☐ Cover page with signatures
- ☐ Implementation grant budget
- ☐ Design grant budget
- ☐ Financial documents (in a single PDF)
- ☐ Implementation application narrative
- ☐ Design grant report
- ☐ Initiative Director job description
- ☐ Local match commitment letter(s)
- ☐ Optional attachments, if electing to include (in a single PDF, prefaced by a table of contents)

When saving, add an underscore and your city's name to the file name provided (e.g. "Cover page_City"). Page limits will be enforced. We ask that you do not alter the margins, font style, or font size currently provided in the templates (Calibri 11). Please leave a single space between your response and the following question. Note that in the interest of page limits, the fillable versions of the application do not contain section descriptions. See 'for reference only' version for those instructions.

The page limits are as follows:

> ***Implementation application narrative (parts 1-4)*** – 12 pages (Part 1 may not exceed 2 pages); while we ask that you keep section headings intact, you need not start each section on a new page
>
> ***Design grant report narrative*** – 2 pages

Cover page – No page limit, but note that some responses are character-limited
Implementation budget – No limit
Design budget – No limit

Applications must be emailed to Colleen Dawicki (colleen.dawicki@bos.frb.org) by 5:00 P.M. on Thursday, 5/5 in order to be considered by the jury. A confirmation email will be sent upon receipt of your team's application package.

Supporting materials

a. Financial documents – Please submit the most recent three years of audited financial statements for the organizational lead. For nonprofits, each year of audited financial statements must be accompanied by that year's IRS form 990. For municipalities, instead submit the most recent HUD CAPER plus three years of financial or performance audits for the department or agency responsible with overseeing and administering the grant.

b. Budgets – Use the format provided, adding rows as needed. Note that if your design grant budget requires a change of more than 10% from the version approved by the Boston Fed, you must submit a revised budget for approval before the close of the design phase.

c. Commitment letter(s) documenting local match – please provide a separate commitment letter for each local group that is providing matching funds or in-kind resources for your initiative. The letter should be signed by the chief executive and should state the amount and source of the match funding, whether it is cash or in-kind, and any restrictions on the use of the funds. Municipalities committing local match funds may meet this requirement by providing a letter from the chief elected official pledging to seek an appropriation of funds in the next fiscal year budget. In all cases, Challenge funds, including both implementation awards and seed awards, will not be released until the local match has been secured. Local funds or in-kind contributions must be spent during the period of the implementation grant award (e.g. no earlier than June 2016) in order to count towards the 20% match.

d. Initiative director job description – there is no prescribed format for this document, but at a minimum, it should include a description of the position's responsibilities as well as the desired level of qualifications and experience.

e. Conflict of interest statement – this is included in the cover page document and must include the original signatures of each team member organization or entity's chief executive.

FAQs – Updated as of April 8, 2016

Cover page

a. What is the role of the organizational lead/backbone?

The organizational lead serves as the initiative's backbone agency. This entity's role includes serving as the initiative's fiscal agent in charge of receiving and disbursing grant dollars, meeting all reporting obligations (teams report on their progress, budget, and work plan at six-month intervals), participating in monthly check-ins with the Boston Fed team to discuss progress and challenges, and ensuring that all team members meet their obligations to participate in the Learning Community and in the independent evaluation of the second round.

Many teams engaged in collective impact see backbone entities as the organizations responsible for stewardship of the team's vision and shared result, coordinating the team's strategy and activities, and marshaling resources to support and sustain the work.

In the case of WCC Round 1 winners, backbones—and particularly those organizations' chief executives—also do things like house and oversee the team's Initiative Director, develop and maintain the initiative's website, and represent the initiative at speaking engagements, meetings, and events.

To learn more about this topic, we recommend reading, "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact."

b. Must the organizational lead be the same as the lead applicant for the design grant?
No; teams may wish to revisit the question of which organization is best suited to serve as the lead during implementation based on their experience with the design phase, the demands of the organizational lead, and the time an entity's chief executive has to meet the obligations of this role on behalf of that entity. Because serving as the backbone for implementation requires more and different demands on time and fiscal processes, and because the jury will be weighing the organizational lead's capacity to serve in that role, now is a good time for teams to think critically about who is best suited for this role.

c. Can my team have co-leads like it did for the design grant?
No. While many team members will continue to assume formal and informal leadership roles, each team must now designate a single organizational lead that is ultimately responsible for financial management and reporting requirements.

Attachments

d. What is the role of the Initiative Director, and what qualities/experience should teams look for?
The experience of our Round 1 winners reveals how critical the initiative director is to the success of the initiative. The sooner teams were able to bring on this person, the more effective they were at catalyzing the team to secure early wins. At the same time, hiring misfires can set the team back in terms of both the implementation of their work plans as well as their efforts to build trusting relationships among team members.

Initiative Directors may look different for each team. However, as the field of collective impact grows, there's a growing understanding of what it this role—and the person who fills it—should look like. In addition to covering this topic during the design session on 3/9, we're putting together our own blog post about this (stay tuned!). Meanwhile, we recommend reading these articles by Bridgespan (see 'Dedicated capacity'), Olive Grove, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation (see 'What it takes') to learn how others are thinking about this essential role.

d1. Are letters of support required?

No. The only required letters are those attesting to the commitment of matching funds (cash and/or in-kind). Teams are welcome to submit attachments at their discretion, though it is not guaranteed that all attachments will be reviewed by the jury.

Design grant report & budget

e. Must the entire design grant be spent by May 5?

The design grant period concludes with the submission of your implementation application on May 5. Therefore, the design grant report must reflect a full spend-down of the $15,000 design grant award. Not-yet-disbursed funds will be considered "spent" if those funds are contractually committed by May 5 (for example, through a contract with a consultant or an MOU with a team member organization).

Implementation narrative & budget

f. How detailed should teams' budgets and narratives be around the year 1 work plan? For those actions, do teams need to provide information around what the action entails and how funds will be used?

Teams' year 1 budgets and work plans should be aligned with one another and together provide enough detail to let the jury know what action steps you're taking, how resources will be spent to support them, and which entities will carry out the work. Implementation grantees will need to get their budgets and work plans approved by the Boston Fed team upon receiving awards, so this does represent an opportunity to make modifications after the grant is awarded. And because we recognize that this work is less than straightforward (to say the least!), budgets and work plans for grantees are revisited every six months to ensure that they meet the needs and reflect the learning of teams.

f1. Can you clarify the matching requirement?

The total grant award is $475,000 across three years, and the total match requirement is 20 percent (or $95,000). The cash portion of the match must represent at least half of that amount, or $47,500. The remaining match can come in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Therefore, your budget across the three-year grant period should reflect spending of *at* least $570,000. There is no annual match requirement; instead, the entirety of the match must be documented up front in your implementation budget (and verified through your commitment letters).

f2. How does the Boston Fed distinguish between cash and in-kind when determining if our team has met the match requirement?

A cash match is funding provided in the form of a direct dollar investment in the team's initiative that will become part of the pool of dollars your team can draw upon to carry out the work detailed in the work plan that is directly connected to your initiative. Your cash match is likely to take the form of locally sourced grant funds (from your municipality or a local foundation). State, Federal, municipal, and private grant funds, as well as individual and corporate donations, awarded to local partners may be used as your team's cash match as long as they are deployed in service of your initiative directly, are eligible for use at the team's discretion, and are spent during the implementation grant period.

An in-kind match takes the form of personnel, goods, equipment, space, and services that are contributed by team members or others in support of your initiative. While in-kind contributions have a cash value, the value of in-kind contributions cannot count toward your cash match.

Please contact Colleen if you need further clarification around a scenario specific to your team.

f3. Do we need to complete and submit the results framework diagram?

Teams need not populate/submit the results framework diagram; instead, the questions posed by each part of the diagram are asked in Part 2 of the implementation application so you can provide a narrative response. You are welcome to submit diagrams, including exercises you have completed as part of the design session, as attachments to your application, but these are not required.

f4. Must each individual question be answered consecutively, or can we write a response that addresses multiple questions at once?

All question and section headings must be kept intact and questions must be answered in the order they appear, *with the exception of* 'Part 2 – results framework.' We recognize that each condition will come with its own distinct set of strategies, actions, and metrics; therefore, teams may wish to present these and other responses together rather than as distinct responses to questions.

f5. Our team is working to refine our shared result. How do we strike a balance between something that is sufficiently ambitious while still being achievable?

While we have asked teams to establish a result that is SMART—specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound—we are also looking for you to set a target that is ambitious enough that its achievement will have a significant impact on low-income people in your city. Sometimes this is referred to as a BHAG: a big, hairy, audacious goal. Therefore, we ask you to ensure that your result is audacious enough that:

- No single partner can reasonably achieve it alone; instead, achievement depends on long-term collaboration
- Programmatic interventions won't be sufficient to achieve it; instead, systems must be changed to reach the desired scale
- A critical mass of low-income residents in your city will benefit when it is achieved

- It truly will take 10+ years to realize—but it is nevertheless achievable

For more on this question, we recommend two articles: one from Living Cities on the "Eight Yummy Tensions of Collective Impact," and one by *Inc.* on "How to achieve big, hairy, audacious goals."

f6. Our team would benefit from more examples of what systems change might look like as we begin implementation. Are there resources you can share?

The teams that won Round 1 of the WCC are now two years in to their three year grants and have learned a great deal about how and why to change systems to achieve their shared results. In early March, these teams presented on their approaches to systems change to a group of local and national funders hosted by the Boston Fed. Videos of each team's presentation, as well as copies of their slides, have been posted on the Living Cities blog. You can access them at this link: https://www.livingcities.org/blog/1054-collective-impact-toolbox-partnership-leaders-explain-their-work.

f7. When does the implementation grant period officially begin and end?

The grant period will formally begin on September 15, 2106 and conclude on September 15, 2019. Teams need not wait until that time to begin their work. Grant funds will be remitted once teams have their budget and work plan approved by the Boston Fed, after which a grant agreement will be executed between the Boston Fed and the team's backbone organization. All teams will need an executed grant agreement in place by September 15, though some teams may be able to complete this step and receive their first payment sooner.

Jury review process and criteria

g. What is the process the jury will undertake to select implementation grantees?

The jurors—which are entirely independent of Boston Fed staff—will independently review and score applications upon receipt. They will then meet during the week of May 23 to interview each applicant team in person for up to 45 minutes per team. Following the completion of all interviews, the jury will deliberate and select implementation grantees that week.

gg. How should our team plan for the interview?

Each team will be invited to appear before the jury for 45 minutes during the week of 5/23 (likely on 5/24 or 5/25). The full team is not required to attend; instead, we encourage you to select 4-8 team members who are sufficiently representative of the full team's perspectives**.** Interview participants should be able to speak to their connection to the work (now and in the future) and their experience with the design phase. The jury will use the interview to learn more about your application, but also to gauge less tangible factors like your team's dynamics, learning orientation, and orientation toward systems change.

h. What criteria will the jury use to score applications?

The jury will be asked to score applications using a format that mirrors the application submission materials. The categories of criteria, as well as a description of each, are below:

1. ***Design phase process and results*** – teams participated actively (both attending sessions and working independently) and have made demonstrable progress in the development of their team and initiative during the six-month phase
2. ***Collaborative leadership*** – teams have grown and diversified, and include the appropriate set of leaders to achieve the shared result; members all play a role in the initiative's work and have a stake in the shared result; teams have a plan for governing their initiatives during implementation; leadership is distributed across team members
3. ***Community engagement*** – teams understand why and how the community will be engaged during implementation, and may have already engaged residents in the design phase
4. ***Systems change*** – teams have concrete ideas for what the team may do to change systems in the service of their shared result; strategies reflect an orientation toward systems change and away from programmatic interventions
5. ***Evidence-based decision-making*** – team has clear understanding of how evidence will be collected and shared to inform decision-making and what they will track in terms of outputs and outcomes
6. ***Results framework*** – team presents a clear, logical understanding of how their strategies and actions will change the conditions that contribute to the achievement of their shared result
7. ***Initiative management*** – team has a realistic plan for managing the initiative, including a capable backbone organization in place, a first-year work plan that integrates the core elements as well as the team's results framework, a job description that reflects the qualities needed for an Initiative Director, and a budget that sufficiently addresses expenses for the first and subsequent years of funding
8. ***Impact*** – initiative is likely to have a broad, deep, and lasting impact on low-income residents in the city

i. What must a team demonstrate in order to be considered eligible for an implementation grant?

Each team must ensure that they have met the following requirements as part of their application for implementation:

- ☐ Include representation from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors
- ☐ Document a local match of at least 20% of the $475,000 grant request; at least half of the match must be in cash ($47,500)
- ☐ Submit a budget that includes funding for an Initiative Director
- ☐ Have a financially sound and responsible organizational lead (backbone) with a reasonable overhead rate
- ☐ Have participated actively in the design phase (attending all four sessions)
- ☐ Provide a completed design grant report and budget

Please note that all design grantees must submit a design grant report and budget, regardless of whether they submit an implementation application.