



Working Cities Challenge – Round 2 FAQ, updated September 18, 2015

This document reflects updates based on questions asked of the Boston Fed since expressions of interest were received, which helps us ensure that all teams have access to the same information. New questions and answers are listed at the beginning of this document for easy reference. Have a question that you don't see answered? Email Colleen Dawicki (colleen.dawicki@bos.frb.org).

NEW: answers to questions received between 8/27 and 9/18

i. Can one entity serve as a core team member on more than one team?

Yes. A number of eligible cities are located in the same region as other eligible cities, so it is not unexpected that core team members will overlap. However, it is important to remember that four design sessions will be held between November and April, and those sessions will include all design grantee teams and their core members. Those entities serving on more than one team should consider their capacity to support two teams at once, and may wish to assign separate individuals to each team. Entities that are members of more than one team may serve as a lead applicant, but not for more than one team.

j. Will the design selection committee be looking for high-level leaders to be represented on the core team?

Not at this time. While the selection committee will be assessing the composition of your team to ensure that it represents key stakeholders in the area of focus you have selected, they recognize that the nature of this work is very hands-on and time intensive, so high-level leaders like mayors, CEOs, and college presidents may not be available to participate fully in this process. Indeed, teams that won the first round of the Challenge have found that while buy-in from high-level leaders is important to their success, just as important is the participation of those leaders' staff who are often responsible for fulfilling their organizations' commitments.

k. Do we need private sector team members at this stage in the process?

Yes! It is important that your core team reflects buy-in from all sectors, but we also recognize that teams may evolve during the design phase to ensure that the right partners are at the table. Also note that the Boston Fed will consider anchor institutions serving in the role of employers or purchasers to be private sector partners.

l. November is almost here. So when is the first design phase session?

We recognized that November is a busy month for many, so we have scheduled the first design phase session for Wednesday, December 3. Please ensure that core team members hold the full day on their calendars so that all may attend. All other design phase sessions will be scheduled for 2016; these dates will be set once we have a better sense of the design grantee cohort composition.

As a reminder, we are currently setting up a workshop for designated facilitators in November and will share details as they become available.



m. Will teams receive design phase session materials in advance?

Yes. The Boston Fed will ensure that teams have sufficient time and information to prepare for each session by providing teams with an agenda, suggesting reading and/or pre-work as applicable, and identifying for teams the components of the implementation grant application that each session will be targeted toward. These materials will be provided at least two weeks before each session.

n. Can core partner entities substitute individuals attending design phase sessions in the event of a scheduling conflict?

The Boston Fed encourages teams to develop their own protocols for addressing scheduling conflicts and whether entities represented on teams may substitute individual members during the design phase. We understand that as the design work progresses, team members may need to change to ensure that the right people are in place to plan and ultimately undertake their initiatives. However, teams will be encouraged to make any changes to their team early on in the design phase.

UPDATE: answers to questions received between 7/30 and 8/27

a. Is the expression of interest mandatory?

Yes! Only teams that express an interest to apply will receive instructions to submit the design grant application, so any group that is even considering applying should be sure to complete [this brief, electronic form](#) by 9/11/15.

b. Must the lead applicant listed in the expression of interest continue to serve as lead applicant in the design grant?

No, a team does not need to apply with the same lead applicant it identified in the expression of interest. The Boston Fed recognizes that it is natural for the composition and leadership of collaborative groups to evolve as a team gets started on a long-term initiative.

c. What kinds of attachments may a team upload?

The design grant application will allow you to upload up to three documents in support of your answer to question #12 ("What is already going on in your city to address the problem?"). Otherwise, the only other attachments we'll accept are financial statements, 990s, and board member lists from lead applicants.

d. Should teams provide letters of support with their design grant applications?

The design grant application does not ask teams to submit letters of support. Instead, the design grant selection committee is most interested in learning about the members of the collaborative who will play key roles in designing their team's initiative.

e. Who will be facilitating the teams' work during the design phase sessions?

Because the design phase was developed to help teams build internal capacity as they develop their initiatives, teams will be asked to identify someone who will facilitate their work during each of the design phase sessions. The facilitator could be a team member or an external consultant your team chooses to hire through your design grant; it need not be the same person as the lead applicant. Teams may want to consult resources like [The Practice of Facilitation](#) to determine who is best suited to the



task of guiding teams through structured activities. The Boston Fed will offer a facilitation training workshop in early November (before the first design phase session) for designated facilitators who wish to sharpen their skills before shepherding their teams through the process. The date, time, and location for that training will be determined with the input of those individuals whose teams are awarded design grants.

f. When will design grants be formally announced?

We have scheduled a formal announcement event to be held in Boston in the afternoon of Thursday, November 5, though teams will be notified of the decision before that date so you can make plans to attend. The event will be preceded by a lunch for winning teams where you'll meet the Boston Fed team and receive an overview of the implementation grant application, and followed by a reception where teams can share more about their work. We expect to keep teams busy from approximately 11:30-3 that day; please keep your schedule open accordingly so you may join us if your team is awarded a grant.

g. Will the Boston Fed provide direct technical assistance to teams in the development of their individual initiatives during the design phase?

No. Boston Fed staff will work with teams collectively, and the focus of this technical assistance will be on the core elements of the Challenge, not on aspects of teams' individual initiatives. Individualized support will be provided to teams that receive implementation awards.

h. What expenses should design grant funds be used for?

Teams' \$15,000 grants may be used at the discretion of every team. Possible uses may include hiring a consultant or evaluator to assist with the planning phase, compensating team members for the cost of their time during the planning phase, and engaging community members through meetings or events. Capital expenditures and lobbying expenses are the only expenses that are explicitly ineligible uses.

A. About the Working Cities Challenge

1. How did the Boston Fed determine which cities are eligible to compete in Round 2?

Eligibility is restricted to Massachusetts cities that have a population of between 35,000 and 250,000, as well as below-median family income and above-median poverty (as compared to other Massachusetts cities of the same size). Cities that won multi-year grants in Round 1 (Chelsea, Fitchburg, Holyoke, and Lawrence) are not eligible to compete for design or implementation grants in this round. Based on those criteria, 17 cities may participate: Barnstable, Brockton, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Haverhill, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Salem, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

2. What is the role of the Boston Fed?

The Boston Fed provides leadership and staff support for the Working Cities Challenge. The Boston Fed does not provide any funding for grant awards; instead, those funds are contributed by our partners from the private sector, regional and national philanthropy, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Boston Fed does not play a role in selecting winners. An independent selection committee will award design grants, and an independent jury will award implementation grants.

3. How many teams are expected to receive grants in this round?



The Boston Fed expects that somewhere in the range of 8-12 teams will win design grants; as many as 17 teams may apply. Only teams that win design grants may compete for implementation grants. We expect that no more than five teams will win awards to implement their initiatives.

B. Team composition

4. What is the role of the lead applicant, and who can serve in that role?

Any organization or entity represented on the team may serve as the lead applicant, and teams may elect to have two entities serve as co-leads. Because grant funds can only be disbursed to tax-exempt entities, a private sector lead will need to identify a nonprofit or public sector co-lead that can act as the team's fiscal agent. In addition to managing the \$15,000 design grant award, lead applicants are also expected to manage the team throughout the design phase. This is a time-intensive process that requires a certain level of capacity that the application will gauge.

5. Must every sector be represented on our team in order to qualify for a design grant?

Yes. Having representatives from the nonprofit, private, and public sectors is required in order for your application to be deemed complete. Anchor institutions such as hospitals and universities may count as private sector partners if their involvement is based on their role as employers, procurers, and generators of economic activity.

6. How many members should my team have?

There is no required minimum number of team members, nor is there a maximum—but please note that each member of the core team must commit to participating in all of the design phase sessions convened by the Boston Fed. The web-based application will allow you to list up to 12 team members on your core team; if you'd like to mention additional partners you will engage beyond the core team, you may list them in your response to question #5.

7. What can our team use the design grant to fund?

Design grant awards are intended to support your team in the development of its initiative. Eligible expenditures include but are not limited to staff time, consultants, meeting and event costs, and supplies. Funds cannot be used for lobbying activities or capital expenses. It is important to note that the amount of time and effort your team members will invest in the design process will likely exceed the grant amount. To help teams budget accordingly for the time needed to engage actively in the design phase, we require you to show at least a 20% in-kind match of grant funds (\$3,000) in your budget.

8. Is there a preference for new versus established teams and initiatives?

The design grant selection committee's criteria (found on page 1 of the design grant application) do not explicitly address whether a team has worked together before. However, the committee may elect to give additional consideration to team that demonstrates a history of working together or, conversely, a team that reflects a promising new approach to collaborating around a selected problem.

9. Can a team include members that are not based in the target city?



Teams may include members that are not based in or exclusively focused on the target city. However, Working Cities Challenge funds may not be used to support work that primarily benefits residents outside of the eligible cities. Initiatives will ultimately be judged only on the intended systems changes and impacts created for low-income residents of the target city.

10. My team applied in the first round of the Working Cities Challenge and was not funded. Should we apply with the same team and focus?

Prospective teams should consider the best way to approach the second round based on current conditions in your city and the requirements of the Challenge, so it may or may not be appropriate for a team to reapply with the same partners or focus. The Boston Fed will not provide teams that were unsuccessful in the first round feedback on their application now that a second round has begun. However, teams can learn more about what factors helped teams succeed in the first round by reviewing the slides presented at our recent series of outreach events (available at <http://www.bostonfed.org/WorkingCities/Round2>) and by reading our [recent report on lessons learned](#).

11. Salem and Somerville won seed grants in the first round. Can teams from those cities apply for design grants, and must those teams include the same members as the seed grantee teams?

Salem and Somerville are both included in the list of cities that are eligible to submit design grants; accordingly, the Boston Fed does not specify who should be involved in a team or what problem they should select as their focus. Like the other eligible cities, Salem and Somerville leaders should work together to determine the best approach to seeking a design grant.

Application and selection process

12. How do I get access to the electronic version of the application?

Applications must be submitted electronically, but only teams that express their interest in applying on or before September 11 will receive access to and instructions for submitting the web-based application. Every prospective team is encouraged to use the MS Word version of the application available on our website to craft their responses so that narrative responses can be easily copied and pasted into the electronic version.

13. Our city has more than one team interested in submitting an application. Can the Boston Fed help us get multiple applications down to one?

The importance of collaborating to ensure that only one application is submitted on behalf of your city cannot be overstated: if the Boston Fed receives more than one application from a single community, that city will be deemed ineligible for a design grant and thus an implementation grant as well. Therefore, it is essential that prospective applicant teams work together to determine how to get to one application. The Boston Fed will help you identify other prospective applicants by sharing the expressions of interest we received with lead applicants via email on September 14. However, the Boston Fed cannot advise any city on a strategy for getting to one application.

14. What is the purpose of the video interview?

The independent selection committee that will award design grants recognizes that a brief, typewritten application may not fully capture your team's collaborative nature, capacity, and enthusiasm for taking



on this work. Therefore, they would like to talk directly with your team through a brief (30-45 minute) videoconference-style interview with your core team members. These interviews will be scheduled for the week of October 12; teams will be contacted as their applications are received to schedule an hour-long period during which their team members can virtually meet with members of our selection committee. Boston Fed staff will work with each lead applicant to manage logistics beforehand in order to eliminate technological barriers to a team's participation.

15. What criteria will the selection committee use to make their decision?

Members of the independent selection committee will score applications based how strongly a team's application addresses the following (also included on page 1 of the design grant application):

- Team composition and representativeness of key stakeholders
- Focus on low-income residents
- Lead applicant's capacity to manage their team in the design phase
- Team's ability to articulate a problem and a shared vision for addressing it
- Likelihood that team members will participate fully, actively, and thoughtfully in the design phase.

The selection committee will also consider whether a team: can be expected to achieve a measurable, long-term impact; has aligned its work with existing efforts and assets; is oriented toward systems change; and is oriented toward learning from their work.

16. When will teams get access to the implementation grant application?

The implementation grant application will be made available concurrent with the announcement of design grantees. This will allow your team to structure your work during the design phase so that you're building your team's application as you move through the process.

Selecting a challenge and describing an approach

17. How developed should initiatives be at key points in the process of participating in the Challenge?

The Boston Fed included a design phase in this second round to give teams additional time to understand and integrate the core elements of the Challenge and develop implementation-ready initiatives. The [CORE ELEMENTS OF THE WORKING CITIES CHALLENGE](#) document provides definitions of each of these core elements and where your team should be at each step of the way. Meanwhile, teams that win design grants will get access to a version the implementation grant application at the start of the design phase so they can begin working independently to develop their initiatives.

18. When should our team describe our specific goals, strategies, and activities? Will those things be considered by the grant selection committee?

Because the design phase will be structured to give your team targeted support to work on refining your goal and identifying the strategies and activities that will help you accomplish it, we are not asking your team to present a goal, a set of strategies, or the activities you intend to undertake at this time. Instead, those details will be captured by the implementation grant application next spring.

19. Can our team focus our approach on a neighborhood within our city?



Teams may wish to focus their work on a geographical subset of their city. If your team elects to address multiple problems within that neighborhood, you should select data that depicts the scope of those problems in your response to question #9 in the application.

20. Will the Boston Fed accept applications that involve collaboration across a region?

Regional applications involving formal collaboration between two or more eligible cities will be accepted, though joint applications will count as each represented city's single application. Additionally, joint efforts must demonstrate that benefits will extend to each city's low-income residents and that local leaders and residents from each city will be actively engaged. Design grant and implementation prize amounts will be the same for all successful applicants, regardless of the number of cities formally collaborating on a single application. Teams from multiple cities that do not wish to formally collaborate on a single application may choose to identify in their applications opportunities to coordinate efforts regionally, but coordination across eligible cities is not among the selection criteria (see question #15).