

Working Cities Challenge Rhode Island - Design Phase and 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 within 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 non-profit 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 do not win the Challenge

STRUCTURE: The design phase will last approximately 4-6 months of team planning opportunities and working sessions. Teams will participate in up to four day-long working 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 are 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 sessions, 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. Acknowledging that \$15,000 design 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 made available early in the design phase and once design winners are announced (late summer; early fall 2016) winning teams will be able to begin planning their implementation application immediately.

EVALUATION: The design grant phase 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 of work. In order to ensure that this phase is effective at building the capacity of teams and helping them to develop high-quality initiatives, the Boston Fed will continue to work with evaluators 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 fully participate 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 will be confidential. The evaluator will only share information in overview format. Responses of individual team members will not be shared with the Boston Fed or the selection committee.