

Working Cities Challenge Rhode Island

Request for proposals and Other Key Information

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and our partners are excited to announce the first phase of the Working Cities Challenge, a grant competition that is designed to support cross-sector, collaborative leadership and ambitious work to improve the lives of low-income people in smaller cities in Rhode Island.

Collaborative leaders from the nonprofit, private, and public sectors in eligible Rhode Island cities (see FAQs) are invited to compete in the Challenge by **submitting an expression of interest for a Design Grant by April 29, 2016, and submitting a full design grant application by May 31, 2016**. Design grants will afford select cities' teams the opportunity to build their capacity and strengthen collaborative leadership as they develop their initiatives. It is important to note that **teams must win Design Grants in order to compete for the larger implementation grants in March 2017**. We anticipate that 7 to 10 teams will win design grants of \$15,000 each. An independent selection committee will evaluate teams based on their written applications and an in-person interview. **Design applications are due back to the Fed by 5:00 P. M. on May 31, 2016.**

Upon completion of the design phase, grantees will be invited to submit applications for **implementation prizes. The RFP for implementation prizes will be due back to the Fed by mid-March 2017**. Prizes of equal amounts (TBD, but in the \$300,000-500,000 range) will be awarded to each winning team in the spring 2017. An independent expert jury will evaluate applications and announce Challenge winners by late April 2017. We anticipate that three cities or towns will receive a three-year prize with which to implement cross-sector, collaborative initiatives to change systems for the benefit of low-income residents and residents of color.

How does your city get started?

1. Learn more about the goals and criteria of the Challenge

Get started by carefully review of the materials available on this website to make sure the Working Cities Challenge is the right fit for your work. You should also familiarize yourself with the level of commitment that will be expected of teams during the design phase by reading the [Design Phase and Evaluation Overview](#) and reviewing the Boston Fed's responses to [Frequently Asked Questions](#). In addition to participating in up to four, full-day learning and work sessions, teams are expected to work independently to plan their initiatives and prepare their implementation grant application.

2. Determine the problem you wish to focus on, and your vision for addressing it

The Boston Fed doesn't specify what problem your city must focus on. Instead, we encourage you to select your own pathway to improving outcomes for low-income residents, reflecting your city's needs, assets, and momentum. Teams will work with the Boston Fed and outside experts to define a realistic, measurable goal for addressing that problem during the design phase, so it is essential to begin with a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the challenge you're taking on.

3. Ensure that your team is representative of key stakeholders and all sectors

Teams must be comprised of leaders representing your city's nonprofit, public, and private sectors as well as local community residents. The design phase is intended to help your team further define your approach as well as your team, and we understand that your team's composition may evolve and that you might not yet have all essential partners at the table. The design grant application thus allows you to identify underrepresented sectors or stakeholders and to share how you plan to engage them during the design phase.

4. Determine which member(s) of your team will serve as the lead applicant

Any organization or entity represented on the team may serve as the lead applicant. The lead applicant is responsible for managing the \$15,000 design grant award. Lead applicants are also expected to manage the team throughout the design phase, a time-intensive process that requires a certain level of capacity that the application

will gauge. Because some teams may not have a single team member that is suited to manage both tasks, you may elect to identify two team members to serve as co-leads.

5. Express your interest in applying by April 29, 2016

Leaders in your city may be working on more than one collaborative effort that seems suited for the Challenge, but the Boston Fed will disqualify any city that submits more than one application *unless the application is a city/town Joint Application (See question number 6 below)*. To help foster the collaboration and communication needed to determine how to proceed with just one submission, we require all prospective applicant teams to express their *interest in applying by April 29, 2016* after reviewing in detail all Working Cities requirements, then completing the *Expression of Interest form that you will receive*. The Boston Fed will share the full list of submissions on our website and via **email to all lead applicants of teams that completed the form**.

6. Ensure that the Boston Fed receives ONLY ONE APPLICATION FROM YOUR CITY

Teams should get an early start identifying other groups considering applying. If more than one single application team from your city expresses their interest in applying, you will have just four (4) weeks to determine how to work collectively to get to a single application.

7. Decide if you will be working with another city/cities to submit a joint application

Two cities may submit one joint application together to further collaboration opportunities across city/town lines if doing so helps them best address the challenges they have identified for their two cities, or builds team capacity. Core elements of the competition - meaningful collaborations, community engagement, cross sector participation, and systems change, are required for joint and single applications. Further, a joint application must demonstrate that award benefits will extend to *each city's low-income and residents of color and that local leaders and residents from each city will be actively engaged*.

If a joint application is selected to move forward, each city would receive \$15,000 design grant awards. If a joint application makes it through the design phase round and is selected for a final Implementation grant award, the application would receive one implementation grant of between \$300,000 and \$500,000, *and* an additional \$100,000 Joint Collaboration Award. For more information, see [Frequently Asked Questions](#) numbers 11, 12 and 13.

8. Complete the design grant application by May 31, 2016

Only teams that expressed their interest in applying will be eligible submit a full design grant application, using the application attached. All applications must be submitted by May 31, 2016 to be considered for a grant award by the selection committee.

9. Participate in an interview with the design grant selection committee

Design grants are small, but the stakes are high: only design grantees may go on to compete for three-year implementation grants. Because a written application may not fully capture why your team should be awarded the opportunity to win the Challenge, each applicant team will be given the opportunity to participate in a brief interview process. Lead applicants will be contacted by the Boston Fed to set this up; all team members are expected to participate.

10. Work Sessions - Save the date!

Design grantees will participate in the first working session module of design phase planning by mid-October. This and future work sessions will be scheduled and led by the Federal Reserve. All core team members listed in your application are expected to attend if your team is awarded a grant.

11. Working Cities Challenge – Rhode Island Timeline

Cities/towns must submit **Expression of Interest by 5:00 PM on April 29, 2016**

Cities/towns must submit **Design grant RFPs by 5:00 PM on May 31, 2016**

Selection Committee will review submitted RFP's and select cities/towns that will be awarded \$15,000 **design grants by mid-September 2016**, and move on to the next level of the competition; begin planning for first work session for design grant winners to continue to work on their plan; work sessions will be scheduled and led by the Fed **beginning mid-October 2016 through March 2017; a final Implementation Grant RFP will be due from each city/town in mid-march 2017.**

Selection Committee **will select implementation grant winners by late April 2017**