

**January 19, 2007**

## **Boston After School & Beyond: The Teen Initiative**

### **A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Boston After School & Beyond (Boston Beyond) is releasing a request for proposals (RFP) through its Teen Initiative. The goal of the Teen Initiative is to promote collaborative and scalable program models designed to increase the engagement, high school graduation rate, and job readiness of Boston teens, especially those most likely to drop out of high school. The Teen Initiative pursues that goal by supporting the development of organizational networks that link youth development programs with workforce development resources, BPS high schools, and other systems involving high school aged youth.

It is widely understood that programs and services for struggling youth of all ages are more effective when delivered in a coordinated and integrated manner. Yet, for a wide variety of financial, institutional, and technological reasons, the systems involving such youth often work in isolation. The Teen Initiative seeks to help end that isolation by building systems that facilitate and finance collaboration.

Several organizations around Boston are already pioneering collaborative program networks. Other organizations aspire to start or join such networks themselves. This RFP is designed to support these pioneering and aspiring networks and help them prepare to serve many more of the thousands of Boston teens likely to drop out of high school in any given year.

#### **Grant Making Process**

Over the next six months, the Teen Initiative will make two rounds of grants to support its goals. This is the RFP for the first round.

In this first round, the Teen Initiative invites out-of-school time (“OST”) providers, OST provider networks, workforce development agencies, community based organizations, community centers, and BPS High Schools to propose ideas for launching or further developing an organizational network that provides coordinated direct services to youth, especially those youth most likely to drop out of high school. The Teen Initiative will award up to ten of these first round applicants with a \$3,000 planning grant plus consulting support to prepare a more detailed implementation proposal. Grantees will have four and a half month to plan and prepare their second round proposals, which are due in mid-August. The Teen Initiative will award up to six of these second round proposals with a \$20,000 - \$50,000 implementation grant.

This two-stage process allows the Teen Initiative to support a variety of collaborative network forms, learn from their successes and challenges, and help stakeholders identify the network models with the most promise for particularly struggling youth. We recognize, however, that the funds currently available through the Teen Initiative are not enough to pay for long-term increases in program and network scale. Securing such resources is the next major goal of the Teen Initiative. This process is designed to support that effort by highlighting the skills and innovative spirit of local networks, identifying collaborative models with the most scalable potential, and positioning such networks to make the most of the greater funding that we strive to secure.

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**First Round: Key Dates**

- Bidder's Conference RSVP: Wednesday, January 31, 2007  
Register for the Bidder's Conference using this link:  
[http://www.bostonbeyond.org/event\\_registration.php?eventid=n9g9](http://www.bostonbeyond.org/event_registration.php?eventid=n9g9)
- Bidders Conference: Monday, February 5, 2007 @ 10 AM – 12 PM, 89 South Street
- Intent to Apply: By Wednesday, February 7, 2007  
Indicate your intent to apply to for a \$3,000 planning grant using this link:  
[http://www.bostonbeyond.org/event\\_registration.php?eventid=dt48](http://www.bostonbeyond.org/event_registration.php?eventid=dt48)
- First Round Proposals Due: February 28, 2007 @ 5:00 PM.  
Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.
- Interviews: Boston Beyond and members of the Teen Initiative Planning Team will interview select applicants during the week of March 5, 2007.
- First Round Selection: Boston Beyond will notify grant recipients by March 23, 2007.
- Second Round Proposals Due: August 15, 2007

**First Round: Submission Instructions**

We will consider all proposals that include:

1. Cover Sheet, attached as Exhibit 1 – make sure to list actual and potential partners;
2. Narrative: In no more than three pages, your Narrative should:
  - a. Summarize the youth development vision propelling your application and idea;
  - b. Identify and describe your area of service; and,
  - c. Describe your idea for launching or further developing an organizational network that provides coordinated programs and direct services for youth, especially youth most likely to drop out of high school. See the Guidelines section below for more detail.

Your narrative must be signed by an authorized agent of the organization submitting the proposal.

3. Timeline: Describe a process for turning your idea into an implementation proposal within four months.

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Planning proposals should be sent by email or US Mail to:

Adam Shyevitch, Program Initiatives Manager  
Boston After School & Beyond  
89 South Street, #402  
Boston, MA 02111

**First Round: Submission Guidelines**

OST providers, OST provider networks, workforce development agencies, community-based organizations, community development corporations, community centers, BPS High Schools, and others serving high school aged youth are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be based in Boston or serve (for the most part) Boston resident youth.

Applicants should propose new networks or ideas for increasing the capacity or coordination of existing networks. Applicants proposing a new network should describe how such a network will bring together youth development and workforce development resources, and how that network will increase the capacity of member organizations to serve the target population collaboratively and more effectively. Existing networks may propose anything that they think will improve their capacity, effectiveness, or growth potential. Such ideas might include, for example, a paid coordinator position, technology investments, equipment to support a new program model, or a facilities expansion study. Applicants are encouraged to include a BPS High School, Alternative Education program, or GED program in their proposals, but that is not required.

In general, you should propose innovative networks and ideas that align multiple organizations and services into coordinated networks designed to improve the quality and scale of programs and services for Boston's youth, especially those most likely to drop out of high school. However, proposals must also make sense given your organization or network's culture, location, youth development approach, and program characteristics. For more information about our approach to "alignment," "coordination," and "networks," please refer to the F.A.Q. below.

**First Round: Evaluation Guidelines**

The first round of this process is meant to be low-impact. We are looking for ideas that you would like funding and support to explore further while preparing your Round 2 proposal. At this stage, we do not expect a great deal of detail.

That said, we will evaluate First Round Proposals using the criteria listed below:

1. Is the proposed network or network improvement realistic given the Round Two grants available (\$20,000 - \$50,000)?
2. Is the proposal a natural extension of the mission and culture of the applicant and their current or proposed network partners?
3. What assurances do we have that the current or proposed network will provide programs and direct service to youth, especially African-American and Latino youth, most likely to drop out of high school? Does the applicant or its network partners have a track record of doing so?

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4. Does the proposal describe a scalable model, or, to put it another way, would a round two grant position the applicant to serve many more teens in the target population in 2008 and beyond, assuming additional funding becomes available?

Second round applications will be evaluated in much the same way, but at a much greater level of detail.

### **First Round: Grantee Expectations & Obligations**

Boston Beyond will award up to ten first round applicants with a \$3,000 planning grant to fund the development of an implementation proposal by August 15, 2007. Grantees will also receive limited consulting support to help facilitate meetings, review strategic options, and consider various networking models.

Grantees are required to attend two convenings between April 1 and August 1, 2007, to share ideas, discuss challenges, and consider solutions together. Grantees will also be required to participate in an evaluation of this grant making and network-building project.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (F.A.Q.)**

#### What are youth development organizations?

Youth development organizations prioritize relationships and empowerment in fostering the emotional, physical, and intellectual growth of children and teens. Such organizations foster relationships among youth, their peers, and caring adults, and encourage participants to set high goals for themselves and participate in decision making for group projects. They may include community-based organizations, arts providers, sports programs, science and environment projects, faith-based organizations, public service agencies, and others. Despite their number and diversity, however, such programs serve less than a third of Boston's teen population, and very few of them serve teens most likely to drop out of high school. The Teen Initiative seeks to increase the capacity of youth development organizations to serve teens generally, and struggling teens in particular.

Your response to this RFP should identify the values and practices that make your organization a youth development organization.

#### What are teen workforce development resources?

This refers to financial and other resources that support youth programs designed to inspire the behaviors and academic achievement that higher paying work requires. A variety of state and local agencies provide such resources. These include the Boston Private Industry Council, Jobs for the Future, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, ABCD, the Boston Youth Fund, the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Service, and others. These resources and the work-based programs that they support are key to better engaging Boston teens most likely to drop out of high school.

Responses to this RFP should describe how teen workforce development resources and work-based programming are integrated into their existing or proposed network, and how such resources will be directed, at least in part, towards teens most likely to drop out of high school.

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What do you mean by “alignment?”

Different programs are aligned when they share and contribute to similar youth development goals. Programs may contribute in unique and very different ways to that goal so long as they hold the goal in common.

The members of the High Risk Youth Network, a project of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston and its Partners, United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Emmanuel Gospel Center, and Boston Ten Point Coalition, for example, are very diverse. They include community-based organizations, arts providers, sports programs, workforce development organizations, faith-based organizations, public service providers, churches, businesses, and others. Despite this diversity, Youth Network members are aligned in their focus on “high risk” youth.

Responses to this RFP should propose networks aligned around the goal of serving teens, especially teens most likely to drop out of high school.

What do you mean by “coordination?”

Programs are coordinated when they work together to meet the needs of youth and manage the transition of youth from school to OST programs and from one program to another. By coordinating programs and direct services around aligned goals, schools and providers can improve the impact of their work and support better outcomes for teens.

The members of the GOTCHA program network and the Boston Youth Services Network, for example, each refer youth among network members in order to provide them with as full a range of programs and services as possible. The members of these networks are aligned around the goal of youth development, and have organized a coordinated system for providing a diverse range of youth development programs.

Responses to this RFP should describe systems for coordinating programs and services within networks.

What do you mean by “networks?”

By “networks,” we mean partnerships of like-minded organizations that form to better serve teens. Networks may be neighborhood based, like GOTCHA and SCI Dorchester, or more thematic and city-wide, like BMA’s High Risk Youth Network and the Boston Youth Services Network. Whichever kind of network you propose; it should be as natural a partnership of organizations as possible. The most sustainable networks are organic extensions of mission and organizational culture.

Responses to this RFP should propose neighborhood based or city-wide networks that involve diverse programs, services, and systems naturally unified by mission and organizational culture to better serve youth.

What does a quality network look like?

A quality network includes a few key elements, such as:

- Programs and direct services that are varied, but complimentary;
- A structure that integrates programs and services so they add up to a whole youth development opportunity that is greater than the sum of its parts;

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- A system for coordinating the movement of youth among programs and services;
- A plan for providing teens with a long-term, multi-year, youth development, and often work-related experience within the network;
- A governing agreement that establishes clear expectations for network members; and,
- The capacity to live up to that agreement and administer the network itself.

If programs within networks are very similar or duplicative, the organizations involved must have agreements in place to manage and minimize competition for participants and resources.

Who is paying for these planning and implementation grants?

This process is generously supported by The Boston Foundation, Boston Public Schools' Office of High School Renewal, and the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation.

What is the Office of High School Renewal?

The Boston Public Schools' Office of High School Renewal (OHSR), in collaboration with its partner organizations, supports the creation of small, dynamic learning environments that promote student engagement, positive relationships among adults and students, and a love of learning. It seeks to assist schools in the development of skilled, motivated, independent learners who graduate with a commitment to their communities. For more information about OHSR, see [www.highschoolrenewal.org](http://www.highschoolrenewal.org). We encourage applicants to include high schools in their networks in order to improve the overall impact of their direct services and programs.

How will you decide who gets a planning grant?

A select group of Teen Initiative Planning Team members will suggest grantees to Boston Beyond. Boston Beyond will make the final decision.

What is the Teen Initiative Planning Team, and who are its members?

The Teen Initiative Planning Team consists of the organizations listed below. For information about its history, see Exhibit 2 to this RFP.

The members of the Teen Initiative include:

<b>Boston After School &amp; Beyond - Convener</b>	Jobs For the Future
Barr Foundation	Massachusetts Cultural Council
Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston	Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services
Boston PIC	Office of High School Renewal
Boston Youth Fund	Sociedad Latina (BYSN Member)
B-SMART	The Boston Foundation
Citizen Schools	The Hyams Foundation
City of Boston	The Medical Foundation
Hyde Square Task Force (Boston Beyond Board Member)	Urban Ecology Institute

You may contact Adam Shyevitch at [ashyevitch@bostonbeyond.org](mailto:ashyevitch@bostonbeyond.org) or at 617-345-5322, Extension 47, for more information.



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## EXHIBIT 2: HISTORICAL & STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Boston After School & Beyond leads a partnership of the City of Boston and philanthropic, civic, and private sector organizations, designing and implementing an integrated youth development strategy for the children of Boston. Boston Beyond pursues this mission through strategic initiatives, research and evaluation, communications, and resource development. Its strategic initiatives include Partners for Student Success, the Teen Initiative, the Boston Youth Sports Initiative, the Arts & Cultural Initiative, and the Professional Development Initiative

The Teen Initiative was originally convened by Boston's After School for All Partnership in 2003 as an advisory group to study teen participation in OST programs. In that capacity, the Teen Initiative supported two studies, *After-School Programs in Boston: What Young People Think & Want* (2002, The Center for Teen Empowerment), and *Coming of Age in Boston: Out of School Opportunities for Teens* (2004, Technical Development Corporation).

In 2005, the Teen Initiative came under the auspices of Boston After School & Beyond and began the process of defining an action agenda based upon its earlier research findings. Simultaneously, the Youth Transition Funders Group (YTFG), under the auspices of the Boston Private Industry Council, was considering strategies to address Boston's high school drop out crisis and meet the needs of youth already disengaged from school. In 2006, YTFG published *Too Big To Be Seen: The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America*, culminating almost two years of work to document Boston's drop out crisis and craft recommendations to "(1) increase the number of high school dropouts who return to education and training and (2) decrease the number of students who leave the system without a diploma" (*Too Big To Be Seen*, page 20).

Based on its own research, YTFG recommendation #2 to "Develop early intervention strategies for struggling students", and substantial input from funders, providers, the City of Boston, and Boston Public Schools, the Teen Initiative dedicated itself to aligning, coordinating, and increasing the Out of School Time, Workforce Development, and Boston Public School resources directed at struggling BPS high school students. Specifically, the Teen Initiative seeks to align, coordinate, and increase the scale of youth development opportunities available in-school, after school, and during the summer, with a particular emphasis on increasing year-round access to high-quality work-based programs. To achieve these outcomes the Teen Initiative will support the formation, development, and growth of partnerships and networks among OST providers, workforce development agencies, and BPS High Schools and Complexes. The goal of these networks is to provide all youth, but struggling youth in particular, a series of aligned and coordinated opportunities that keep them engaged in school and better prepare them for success in the workforce or post-secondary education after school.

You may download *After-School Programs in Boston: What Young People Think & Want* and *Coming of Age in Boston: Out of School Opportunities for Teens* at this link: [Reports](#). The YTFG study, *Too Big to Be Seen*, is available [here](#). More information about Boston Beyond is available at [www.bostonbeyond.org](http://www.bostonbeyond.org).