The Boston Foundation
INNOVATION. INFORMATION. IMPACT.

Boston Coaching for Completion
Social Innovation Fund Transition Coaching Expansion
As of: November 17, 2014

<u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>

Where can I find the Boston Coaching for Completion application?
The application is located online, on the Success Boston website [www.successboston.org] and on the Boston Foundation's website, accessible by the following link: www.tbf.org/SBRFP.

Is my organization eligible if it is currently a grantee of The Boston Foundation?
Yes. 501(c)(3) organizations that are current grantees are eligible to apply for a grant through the Boston Coaching for Completion RFP process.

Does the Boston Coaching for Completion replace the Success Boston coaching grants process?
Yes. Current Success Boston grantees who would apply for continued funding this year to support students from the Boston Public Schools class of 2015 will apply for funding through the SIF Boston Coaching for Completion RFP process.

Can I apply in partnership with another organization?
Yes. All applicants are required to have a letter of partnership from one or more institutions of higher education. To be eligible for funding, applicants applying in partnership with one or more nonprofit organizations must apply through a single 501(c)(3) organization, acting as a fiscal agent and responsible for compliance with all federal guidelines and grant policies. Grant dollars, if awarded, may be distributed to organizations in partnership, but are still subject to all federal cost principles and policies. Organizations applying for funding in partnership should submit with their application letters of partnership, signed by the organizational heads of the partner organizations.

Will letters of recommendation or support be considered?
No. Only letters of partnership, on behalf of partnering nonprofit organizations or colleges are allowable. Letters of recommendation and other materials beyond what is requested in the application will not be reviewed or considered.

What is required to be considered in partnership with a college? *Corrected*
A letter of partnership, signed by the President or designee of one or more institution(s) of higher education. This letter must communicate the college's approval of your proposal to provide coaching to students of this institution, the college's willingness to partner with your organization, and to coordinate and collaborate accordingly around student needs and support services. Subgrantees will be expected to have negotiated formal partnership agreements with institutions of higher education where multiple students are enrolled by the end of the **2015** calendar year, which may include data sharing, staff time and coordination commitments.

Can my organization partner with more than one college?
Yes. Organizations may partner with as many colleges as they deem appropriate and effective for their proposed scope of work. Letters of partnership must be submitted for all colleges proposed in the application where multiple students are anticipated to be enrolled.

Can organizations support students on campuses with whom they do not have a formal partnership already established at the time of the SIF application?
Yes, as long as there is a letter of partnership articulating the college's willingness to work with the organization, if awarded. Preference will be given to applicants with preexisting partnerships that have a track record of success.

Can colleges provide letters of partnership for more than one applicant organization?
Yes. Colleges can and do partner with multiple nonprofit organizations.

Can college partners extend beyond those currently engaged in Success Boston coaching partnerships?
Yes. It is recommended, but not required, that college partners are those with high numbers of enrollees from Boston high schools.

Can I partner with private nonprofit institutions of higher education?
Yes. Priority will be given to organizations working with students bound for and enrolled in community/two-year colleges. In addition, SIF funds will be used to support up to 300 students at four-year public and private institutions.

Can nonprofit organizations/applicants partner with a for-profit institution of higher education?
No.

Can I partner with out-of-state institutions of higher education?
Yes, this is allowable, although may be less competitive in an application than partnerships with colleges in the Greater Boston area. Success Boston's coaching model to-date has focused on local campuses where multiple Boston graduates are clustered, enhancing coaches' ability to coordinate with campus-based student support services and help students navigate college environments.

Can colleges apply as the primary grantee organization?
Applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. The SIF-supported expansion of transition coaching is based on nonprofit transition coaching implemented by youth-serving organizations in partnership with colleges. As a result, priority will be given to proposals with this model. However, if colleges have an established 501(c)(3) nonprofit arm of the institution, that 501(c)(3) may be the lead applicant, but colleges **must apply** with at least one nonprofit coaching partner that will provide transition coaching to students. If a proposal includes the provision of coaching services by college staff directly, this must be done in partnership with a nonprofit service-providing organization, and coaching must be implemented in accordance with the Success Boston transition coaching model, which includes but is not limited to continuous mentorship-based coaching that begins prior to enrollment and data entry into a common database (additional guidelines may be found in the RFP). Additional information about the core elements of coaching will be published in spring 2015 and subgrantees will be expected to implement those common elements in their SIF-supported coaching.

Is there a minimum number of students that an applicant needs to propose to serve?
According to federal requirements, The Boston Foundation must make grants of no less than $100,000; a grant of this size requires a 1:1 match, for a total budget of $200,000. With this minimum grant size in mind, organizations that propose to serve at least 50 students in their initial cohort will be most competitive. Less than 50 students in the first year will be less competitive.

Is there a standard cost-per-student?
No. Informed by Success Boston coaching since 2009, The Boston Foundation has calculated an estimated average cost per student at around $2,000 in the first year, and slightly less than $2,000 in the second year. This

is not a firm rule, but rather a guideline, acknowledging that organizations have different organizational infrastructures and cost factors. However, this informs the general guidelines related to cohort size and the proposed total number of students served per organization per year.

What would be considered a Success Coach?
Success Boston's model of transition coaching is based on the provision of support through full-time coaches with youth development expertise, who are able to build a relationship with students over time. Applications that reflect this model will be most competitive.

What timeframe should be represented in the Program Budget Spreadsheet Template? *Updated*
The budget template is for an **annual budget**, or a single year's project expenses (the first year of funding is for year one expenses). This should reflect the requested amount from TBF and the organization's match ("agency contribution"). Please submit annual budgets using the template provided for **years one and two** (2015-2016 and 2016-2017), either by submitting two excel documents, or a single excel document with two tabs.

What timeframe should be represented in the Outcomes Chart Template? *Updated*
The Outcomes Chart should reflect long term goals for the proposal, but activities, indicators, and desired results for the **first year** (and corresponding baselines). The "Results as of Report Date" column should be left blank at the time of the application, and will be used by the organization to report results at the end of the year one grant term.

Can we propose to use grant dollars for laptops, other equipment, or for scholarships?
Boston Coaching for Completion awards are not intended for the use of purchasing equipment or for the funding of scholarship programs for students. For all cost considerations, there are government-wide regulations (referred to as the Cost Principles) which govern the costs that may be charged to Federal funds and matching funds under Federal grants. All Social Innovation Fund recipients will be required to comply with the Cost Principles that are applicable to their organizations (see Cost Principles for nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, etc.). Refer to the Federal cost principles at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars for information on allowable costs in Federal grants. In addition, The Boston Foundation does not make grants for capital construction costs, endowments, medical or academic research, scholarships, sectarian or religious purposes, or to support candidates for political office. More information about TBF guidelines may be found at: http://www.tbf.org/investing-in-non-profits/competitive-grant-making/grant-guidelines.

How should I treat indirect costs?
Subgrantees must have a federally approved indirect cost rate to include indirect costs in their Boston Coaching for Completion budget. Applicants with approved indirect cost rates for Federal grants must use those rates for any indirect costs they include in their budgets. Organizations without federally approved indirect cost rates may include indirect costs as specific direct costs, allocated appropriately with specific categories (e.g., rent, utilities, etc.).

Can my organization apply for more than one year of funding?
Applicants should propose to provide transition coaching (through at least the second year of college) for three cohorts of low-income Boston students: one each for students beginning postsecondary education during the academic years of 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18. BosC4C grantees will receive awards for the first year of program expenses (distributed on a reimbursement basis); funding for subsequent years is expected but dependent on satisfactory performance, continued federal appropriations and grant compliance.

Can SIF funding support students my organization works with who are already in college? *Updated*
No. BosC4C SIF funding should be directed toward students who are transitioning to postsecondary education as a new cohort with the support of coaching. While newly transferring college students (from a two-year to four-

year degree program, see below) are allowable, funds may not be directed toward students already enrolled in college (and thus, not considered a part of a 2015-2016 entering cohort).

EXCEPTION: If awarded through the competitive BosC4C RFP process, those organizations actively supporting Success Boston students from the Boston Public Schools Class of 2014 may include continued support of this cohort of students among their costs and program activities for the 2015-2016 grant term.

My organization works with students who may be entering a postsecondary institution a year or more after their high school graduation (may be considered "Opportunity Youth"). Is it allowable to include in my application coaching for these students? *Updated*
Yes. While priority is not given explicitly to this population, cohorts for 2015, 2016, and 2017 may include students from these high school graduating class years, as well as students beginning postsecondary during these academic years – even if they finished high school a year or more prior. However, students with interrupted formal education must fall within the ages of 16-24. Boston Coaching for Completion will also support transition coaching for students who begin college in January **2016** (spring enrollees during the 2015-2016 academic year).

Can I include in my proposal coaching for students who completed a High School Equivalency Test (HiSET, formerly the GED)? *Updated*
Yes, this is allowable.

Can my proposal include coaching for college stop-outs or students transferring from a two-year to a four-year college?
Yes, this is allowable.

Must students be Boston residents?
No. But they must be graduates of a public high school in Boston.

Can my proposal include Metco Program students? *Updated*
No. Students must be graduates of public high schools in Boston.

Will TBF provide assistance to subgrantees who wish to connect with BPS?
Yes. While not required, priority will be given to organizations that have successfully served BPS students and other priority populations.

How should applicants demonstrate that they serve/will serve low-income students?
At the time of the application, organizations should describe their work serving the priority population of low-income students. Poverty status for students served to-date may be reported in aggregate (percent of students meeting these criteria) using one or more of the following definitions: eligibility for free- or reduced-price lunch, eligibility for Federal Pell Grants, or household incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline. If awarded, organizations will be required to track students' Pell eligibility.

Could an organization apply from outside of Boston?
Yes. Applicants must demonstrate capacity and ability to begin transition coaching for Boston students enrolling in postsecondary for the 2015-2016 academic year. However, it is not required that organizations are Boston-based at the time of application submission.

What will be the major evaluation responsibilities and requirements of grantees?
TBF will engage an external evaluator to conduct a BosC4C portfolio evaluation across all grantees, and will absorb the majority of costs associated with the evaluation, as well as the design process and implementation.

Grantees will be required to maintain accurate record keeping about the coaches' caseload, interactions with students, and partnership with institutions of higher education. In addition, grantees will provide the necessary staff support for required data collection, reporting, and participation in all portfolio evaluation activities. This includes regular reporting on student indicators and services provided into a shared grantee reporting system housed within an existing Salesforce database. Additional activities may include the collection of administrative records for qualitative research (to understand coaching implementation), surveys, direct observation of the coaching model, and focus groups.

If I receive SIF grant dollars from the Boston Foundation, will I be required to conduct an A-133 audit?
All organizations funded through Boston Coaching for Completion must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and OMB circulars for grant management, allowable costs, and audits, including providing audits to the A-133 clearinghouse if expending over $500,000 total in federal funds per fiscal year. More information on these requirements and definitions may be found in OMB Circular A-133 [www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars].

Match Requirements

The following are common questions and answers regarding match requirements. Answers are in part drawn from the CNCS website; additional guidance and details may be accessed through the following link:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/SIF/2014%20Social%20Innovation%20Fund%20FAQs%20FINAL%2004.02.14.pdf

How does the applicant demonstrate the commitment of unrestricted dollars that can be used as match?
Applicants must match BosC4C funding 1:1 in cash, with a demonstrated commitment of at least 25% of the first year match at the time of application. Applicants may demonstrate commitments with a dated and signed letter from the applying organization's executive director, indicating the amount of new or existing unrestricted funds committed for the specific use of supporting the Social Innovation Fund grant. Pledges must be accompanied by a dated and signed letter from the foundation/donor indicating the amount of funds committed for the purpose of the Social Innovation Fund match. Subgrantees will also be expected to complete regular financial reports to The Boston Foundation, including financial statements confirming the use of new or existing unrestricted funds.

By when will subgrantees need to demonstrate that they have met the match requirement?
Subgrantees must meet a dollar for dollar match expenditure every 12 months, beginning at the start of their first award period. Subgrants will be terminated if organizations do not meet the dollar for dollar match expenditures at each 12 month check. For example, for a subgrantee whose grant agreement begins on April 1, 2015, if by March 31, 2016 the subgrantee has expended $150,000, then by that same date the subgrantee must have a documented match of at least $150,000. Subgrantees will also complete reports and conduct check-ins with The Boston Foundation throughout the grant term to monitor progress on securing match dollars.

What sources of matching funds are allowable?
Matching funds may come from state, local, or private sources, which may include state or local agencies, businesses, private philanthropic organizations, or individuals. Federal funds may not be used towards match requirements.

Do matching funds have to be unrestricted new or existing dollars?
Yes, matching funds must be unrestricted new or existing dollars. They cannot be previously-obligated funding that is redirected for purposes of meeting the Social Innovation Fund match requirement.

Is it possible to redirect city government funding to these programs?
Yes. As sovereign entities, local governments may (consistent with their legal authorities) reallocate their unobligated funding to provide Social Innovation Fund matching funds.

Can city funding that currently supports programming similar to a proposed Social Innovation Fund be counted towards the match?
No, local government funds which are obligated and already supporting existing programs will be treated in the same manner as restricted donor funds for nonprofits. CNCS does not intend to allow the availability of Social Innovation Fund to diminish ongoing programs in order to meet the Social Innovation Fund matching fund requirements.

Can funds that have been previously restricted for a purpose similar to our Social Innovation Fund proposal be counted toward the match requirement?
No, Social Innovation Fund matching funds must be unrestricted new or existing funds.

Can I reappropriate existing grant dollars in order to meet my Social Innovation Fund match requirement?
Yes, but only if they are unrestricted existing dollars.

Can program income count toward the match?
Yes, program income (as defined in the applicable OMB Circulars), may count toward the match requirements. Please see the following CNCS guidance on program income: http://nationalserviceresources.org/files/program-income-FAQs.pdf

Troubleshooting Tips for the Boston Foundation's Online Applications

If you are having trouble with your application, please first try closing all browser windows, then opening a new Internet Explorer window to log into your account at https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_333. Here are some steps you can take to prevent issues.

- **Use Internet Explorer**
  While you can access our applications and see the questions using most browsers, only Internet Explorer will correctly open and display the entire form. Some browsers will have issues related to cookies and some will not display the navigation buttons for the application.

- **Close your application between sessions**
  If you need to use another website while working on your application, be sure to save your application and then close that window. Otherwise the application software will open a blank form in place of your in progress application.

- **Do not open other browser windows while completing your application**
  Opening another window while your application is open may also cause the application to close and a new, blank, form to open.

- **Access your saved application here: https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_333**
  You will need to use the same username and password as when you created the application.

- **Use a word processing program to write your answers**
  Our applications use character limits, and the fields can be hard to read online. You may find it easier to type out your answers in a separate program and then paste the text into the application.