

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) PRE-DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AWARDS

BOSTON DEPARTMENT of NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT GRASSROOTS OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

Deadline for submissions is Monday, February 28 2005 by 4:00 p.m.

☞ **The Department of Neighborhood Development's Grassroots Program** is accepting proposals for its 2005 Technical Assistance and Construction Funding Awards. This RFP is for Technical Assistance. There is a separate RFP for construction funding that is being offered simultaneously. These awards are intended to assist nonprofit neighborhood initiatives in the planning and development of community gardens and public green spaces. Nonprofit organizations that need financial assistance for their proposed projects may apply.

The Grassroots Program will only support improvements on suitable sites with an established landowner. In addition, these open spaces must be made available for community use. Proposals which include local residents in the creation of landscape improvements will receive priority consideration.

The Grassroots Program anticipates awarding 2-4 Technical Assistance grants in amounts of up to \$25,000 and 2-4 construction grants up to \$150,000 in response to these RFP's. Proposals for new projects as well as for the complete rehabilitation of existing community gardens and green spaces will be considered. The Grassroots Program can only fund nonprofit organizations. Community groups which are not incorporated may work with eligible nonprofit organizations as a development team.

Grassroots awards for Technical Assistance are intended to support open space projects through all of the stages of design development. Awarded teams are expected to produce completed plans for the construction of site improvements within one year.

After the awarded Technical Assistance work is complete, the development team may then apply for Grassroots Program Construction Funding. Eligible development teams must have successfully completed a final design, construction documents, construction budget, construction schedule and fundraising plan. In addition, development teams must identify contributions from other sources to at least 15% of the total award for construction funding. This match must be secured through a commitment letter before any disbursement of Grassroots Program funding. For renovation projects, contributions may include the donation of landscape construction materials and / or professional services. A previous Technical Assistance award does not guarantee further funds for construction but preference may be given to these projects.

A. GRANT GOALS: Grassroots funding assistance supports projects that propose

1. sites with established landowners
2. open space improvements for community use and benefit
3. community participation in project design development
4. property management entity and maintenance plan

B. USE OF FUNDS: The Grassroots Program awards grants on a reimbursement basis only. All funded work is coordinated with DND Grassroots Program staff. Cost categories include

- professional design, engineering or legal services,

- community meetings toward designing and managing the open space,
- project management costs (up to 10%),
- supplies needed for successful project planning and development

C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Grassroots funds are awarded subject to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) regulations. These funds must be awarded to nonprofit organizations that have current 501-C-3 status with the Internal Revenue Service.

- To be funded, nonprofit organizations must fill out the attached “Property Affidavit” form and be current in their property tax obligations with City of Boston Tax Title Division and current in their payments to Boston Water and Sewer Commission.
- ◆ The City of Boston reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant organization, which it determines, is not creditworthy and not bankable. In general, an applicant will be considered not creditworthy if (1) debt obligations are not current and/or (2) there are public filings (e.g. liens, judgments) outstanding.
- ◆ DND will review the applicant’s prior participation in any City of Boston (DND) programs to ascertain the current status of that participation. Applicants currently not fulfilling requirements under a current agreement will not be eligible.

D. ELIGIBLE SITES: Grassroots funds are subject to CDBG regulations. Funds are to be used toward the development of open space improvements in neighborhoods where household incomes are limited. Use the following guidelines to do a preliminary screening of your proposal; if you have doubts about the eligibility of your project, call Andria Post, Senior Landscape Architect at (617) 635-0203 for a preliminary assessment.

- All project sites must be located in neighborhoods within the City of Boston where at least 51% of the residents have low or moderate incomes compared to the Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, as determined by U. S. Census information.
- All projects must be accessible for participation and use by the residents of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Once improved, project properties must be owned or managed by a nonprofit organization for public use. Grassroots-funded open space sites need to be secured through a 20-year restriction in the form of a DND approved covenant that guarantees the continued use of the site improvements.
- If the proposal includes improving a city-owned property, the applicant should check in with DND staff about the parcel’s availability for open space development and improvement. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, any city-owned land sold to non-profit entities must be conveyed under the requirements of Chapter 30B.
- Proposals for non-profits to improve land owned by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston Housing Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority or the Boston School Department need to show a memorandum of understanding, disposition agreement, license or lease that allows the terms of the community open space use. These proposals should include evidence of support for the project from the agency that holds the deed to the land.

E. SELECTION AND RATING CRITERIA: The Grassroots Program evaluates funding requests according to criteria designed to identify the merits of each proposed project.

Applications which are not funded in this round can be resubmitted in response to a future Grassroots Program RFP.

Following are the criteria and points used to identify high-scoring proposals. The examples given are taken from previous applications which were funded by the Grassroots Program. All proposals are evaluated on their own merits.

1. (20) Impact:

- the project will improve a blighted area, produce an attractive neighborhood amenity, complement residential development, or respond to need for a community garden
- it will provide opportunities to instruct residents or youth in design development, landscaping, gardening or agricultural work
- project work will create or build groups which impact other aspects of neighborhood life

2. (20) Level of Community Input and Support:

- local residents, including abutting property owners, will be part of the proposed project's planning and development.
- there is evidence of a garden committee or park partnership group that will ensure an ongoing community involvement in the open space.

3. (20) Site Feasibility:

- the features and conditions of the chosen site will be particularly amenable to community gardening or open space use
- anticipated site amendments or improvements will be completed at a reasonable cost.

4. 20) Capacity:

- the non-profit organization has expertise to complete the project
- each part of the development team will have clearly identified roles and responsibilities
- the team will include individuals who have successful fundraising experience

5. (20) Evidence of long-term ownership and maintenance plan:

- The project team must present a viable long-term ownership entity and a long-term plan to maintain the site.

F. REQUIREMENTS OF THE WORK: Once funded, the development team is expected to complete the products listed below. Copies of final designs and documents must be submitted to the Grassroots Program.

Technical Assistance Grant Expectations:

1. community meeting notification, sign-in sheets, minutes and notes
2. approved final design with construction documents
3. construction budget
4. proposed funding sources for all construction costs
5. construction schedule
6. Property management entity and maintenance plan

G. APPLICATION Requirements: Requests for Grassroots Technical Assistance funds need to include the following information:

1. Narrative section that includes:

- a description of the proposed work, conceptual design and the community who will benefit
- names of all organizations collaborating to execute the work proposed
- a description of the proposed ownership entity and its experience developing similar projects and a plan for the long term management of the site

2. Application Form (See pages 5 & 6)

- Completed Work Schedule (example attached to application form)
- Completed Budget (example attached to application form)
- Property Affidavit (attached to application form)

3. Evidence of Community Process and Support:

- Provide meeting minutes / notes, letters of support, and a narrative section description of the community process and level of support

H. QUESTIONS: Questions about proposal eligibility may be directed to Andria Post, NHD Senior Landscape Architect, Department of Neighborhood Development, 26 Court Street, 8th floor; Boston, MA 02108 Telephone: 617-635-0203, Fax: 617-635-0383, e-mail: apost.dnd@ci.boston.ma.us

I. DEADLINE: PLEASE NOTE LATE PROPOSALS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED. The burden is on the Offeror to ensure that the proposal is received at the address referenced below. Submit your proposal package in one sealed envelope, which is clearly marked for the Grassroots Program, and deliver it to the address below. In addition, incomplete proposals will not be considered.

All submissions are due on Monday, February 28 2005 by 4:00 p.m. at



the Bid Counter
 Department of Neighborhood Development
 26 Court Street 10th floor

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