

Request for Interest (RFI)

Massachusetts Placemaking Fund

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PARTNERSHIP



Request for Interest (RFI): Massachusetts Placemaking Fund

March 28, 2016

The Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance and LISC Boston are issuing a Request for Letters of Interest (LOI) from applicants around the state to implement placemaking projects in underserved communities¹. Mini-grants of up to \$5,000 (with most in the \$2,500-\$5,000 range) will be made with a required local in-kind match.

The Alliance supports placemaking around Massachusetts that helps: 1) Create public spaces that draw people together; 2) Build walkable neighborhoods that provide transportation choices; 3) Make strong, healthy communities with housing options for all residents, and 4) Craft vibrant commercial areas that spur healthy local economies. **The deadline to submit your LOI is May 13.** Please direct questions to Anabelle Rondon by email at arondon@ma-smartgrowth.org.

Program Timeline

Date	Key Benchmark
May 13, 2016	Deadline for applicants to submit Letters of Interest (LOI)
May 18, 2016	Review applications at GN team meeting
May 24, 2016	Finalize list of grantees
May 26, 2016	Announce winners
June 16, 2016	Sign agreements w/workplans; issue checks
Summer 2016	Coaching and TA support to support local implementation
October 31, 2016	Project completion
November 30, 2016	Project report due

I. Program information

a) Placemaking Fund goals

Successful projects will build social capital and public space around community priorities such as local business development, civic engagement, public safety, transportation, health, job creation, vacancy and community cohesion. Projects will strengthen relationships and collaboration among community stakeholders including the arts community, residents, local businesses and municipalities.

b) Eligible applicants

Successful submittals will demonstrate the following:

- Articulate how the project will advance a community development strategy already underway;
- Enables a creative collaboration among partners from the community, including community-based groups, nonprofits, artists or arts organizations, residents, businesses, and/or municipalities; and
- Engages the community in the planning or implementation of the project or brings positive impacts to families in the neighborhood.

c) Reporting

Awardees will be required to submit a 1-2 page report with photo documentation (before and after) at the end of the grant period. The report should include information on outcomes, lessons learned, and accomplishments of the project (use template in Exhibit C). Videos showing the projects and stakeholders involved are encouraged.

¹ Underserved communities are defined as low-income communities, people of color, or other vulnerable populations.

d) Completion and celebration

Projects are required to be completed by October 31, 2016. We encourage the grantees to celebrate the project success by having a celebratory event and inviting residents, major stakeholders, and funders involved in the project. We ask that projects be promoted through traditional and social media to help build public support for placemaking strategies.

e) Ineligible projects

The following are examples of ineligible activities: 1) Indoor facilities improvements such as libraries, community centers, etc.; 2) marketing and PR²; 3) Places with limited community access. Refer to Section V for project ideas.

II. Grant awards range and payment

Mini-grants of up to \$5,000 will be made, with most in the \$2,500 to \$5,000 range. Once awards are announced and agreements signed, MSGA will issue a check for the full amount to the grant recipients upfront to execute the project.

III. How to apply

The LOI should include:

a) Application and project description (Use Exhibit A template)

Describe the project concept and location and how it will help meet your community vision. Also, describe how residents and stakeholders will be involved on the project and how it will be implemented.

b) Project budget (Use Exhibit B template)

Complete the project budget using the budget template.

c) Letters of Support

Provide letters of support, if applicable. Letters are not required but highly recommended.

f) Project sustainability and maintenance plan

Local groups are required to provide a match for the mini-grant, and to invest staff or volunteer time in carrying out the activity.

d) Grant report (Use Exhibit C template)

Due a month after the end of grant period (November 30, 2016)

IV. Selection criteria

a) Strategic Importance: Explain how the project will help advance a long-term improvement strategy for the neighborhood, and how it connects to other relevant community goals such as economic development, public safety, and more.

b) Stakeholder engagement: Describe which community stakeholders (youth, small businesses, cultural minorities, etc.) you intend to benefit and how you will involve them in the planning and implementation of the project.

c) Artist collaboration: We believe that artists can help create new ways of looking at, and solving, community challenges. Please explain how your project integrates artists, especially ones that represent local communities and cultures. We also believe that artists should be paid for the work that they do. We may set aside some funding for artist-led projects.

d) Underserved community: Placemaking has the power to engage residents in powerful new ways, and our priority is to use these strategies to empower vulnerable populations to take ownership of public space and help shape the future of their community. Explain how your project will accomplish this.

² Listing your project as a marketing or PR campaign with just posters, direct mail or advertising is not suitable to this grant. Marketing, media and PR campaigns should be linked to a neighborhood improvement strategy.

- e) Visibility and impact: How noticeable will the project be? How many people in the community will it touch, and how profoundly? Will it get media attention?
- f) Replicability: We are looking for projects that can teach us how to carry out similar efforts in other communities, projects that can provide a model and clear lessons learned.
- g) Strength of partnerships: Describe the partners working on the project and their respective roles in carrying it out. How does your project foster new relationships and advance collaboration in the community?
- h) Project sustainability: How long with the project last? Will it continue, or be repeated?
- i) Local match: Show evidence of matching resources including in-kind contributions such as staff and volunteer time.
- j) Feasibility: Demonstrate the capacity to carry out the proposed project as planned and ability to secure any permits/approvals. Is your budget reasonable, and fundraising goals achievable? Describe any challenges and how you will overcome them.

V. Sample of type of projects to be funded

Parklets



Murals and public arts



Improvements to Health and Green spaces: community gardens, pocket parks activation, trails, greenways paths, and farmers market



Reclaiming alleyways for neighborhood use



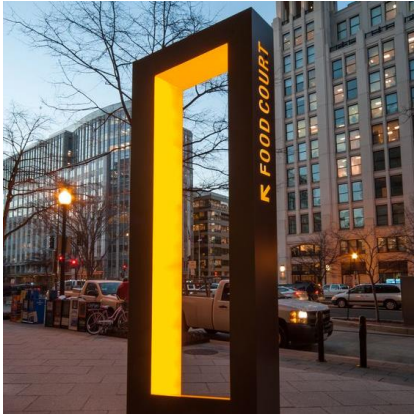
Improvements to Health and Green spaces: community gardens, pocket parks activation, trails, greenways paths, and farmers market



Reclaiming alleyways for neighborhood use



Wayfinding signage



Intersection repairs/ tactical urbanism



Street Plaza



Community festivals



Exhibit A – Application and Project description

(2 pages limit)

Contact Information

Name: _____ Title: _____
 Organization: _____ Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Address: _____
 Organization mission: _____

Project Information	
Project Name	
Neighborhood	
Describe your project concept and why you consider your neighborhood as underserved? (1-2 paragraphs)	
How this project will help meet your community vision or advance a short and long-term improvement strategy for the neighborhood?	
Describe your community partners, residents, businesses and stakeholders with which you will collaborate in implementing the project	
Explain how the arts community will be engaged into your project and what will be their role?	
Describe how you are planning to implement the project, including a timeline	
Do you have matching resources including staff/volunteer time and in-kind contributions to carry the project? If so, please describe the sources	
Please share your experience in implementing placemaking projects or activities, and what positive change resulted from the activities	
Describe how you are planning to measure the success of the project	

Submission Requirements: The deadline for submissions is **midnight on Friday, May 13, 2016**. Submissions should be made electronically to arondon@ma-smartgrowth.org. Each submission must include all the documents listed in section III (how to apply).

Exhibit B – Project Budget

(1 page limit)

Brief narrative: provide a written description about your projected expenses to help the reader understand how the costs will be incurred, and the basis for determining the amount of each expense (1-2 brief paragraphs)	
Placemaking Fund grant (Amount Requested)	\$
Matching funds, include source	\$
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Materials and supplies	\$
Labor – including rate and hour estimations for artists, artist assistants, etc.	\$
Contracted services	\$
Delivery of artwork to site (including insurance, etc.)	\$
Anticipated costs related to installation	\$
Anticipated travel costs related to installation	\$
Anticipated costs related to community and stakeholders engagement	\$
End of project celebration costs	\$
Other project related costs	\$

Exhibit C – Project Report

Due November 30, 2016

(1-2 pages limit)

The grantee should track project objectives and metrics and provide a final report summarizing the project, including:

Provide a summary of the project activities, processes undertaken, key lessons learned, and the results and summary indicators of project success	
Describe how this project furthered placemaking; and how the public was engaged (provide number of residents, youth, businesses, elderly engaged)	
Provide the number of stakeholders engaged; public, private and non-profit partners and organizations; and stakeholders in the arts community	
Did you have any social media, print and other media coverage of the implemented project? If so, please share links of online articles related to the project	
The final report shall include visual images of the project, which may be supplemented with video coverage of the project and be provided in a manner that can easily be shared online with the public	
Share accomplishments, quote/s or experiences that tell the story about how successful your project was	

Important notes:

- Grantees are encouraged to identify other meaningful metrics relevant to the project
- In all cases, the grantee shall provide electronic files in their original, editable formats (e.g., Microsoft Word, power point, etc.) in addition to jpg formats for images.