

## **Request for Qualifications**

### **Leaders for Equitable Local Economies (LELE): a Community of Practice for smaller cities in MA**

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Working Places team, which supports place-based economic inclusion in small cities and communities in New England as part of the Regional and Community Outreach department, is seeking coaching support for a new initiative advancing racially equitable and inclusive leadership in Massachusetts cities.

This effort is being piloted to better understand what it takes to support community leaders working to change local systems in ways that make city economies more racially equitable. Beyond learning alongside these leaders, this initiative is being designed to strengthen leaders' local influence and impact through: funded participation in a community of practice of peers across 4-6 Massachusetts cities, technical assistance to support local projects, access to flexible funding to implement projects that test levers for long-term change, and targeted coaching to help leaders tackle complex, adaptive challenges emerging from their efforts to shift local systems.

#### **Background**

The Working Places team at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston has been working to support smaller cities' efforts to make their economies work better for all residents since 2013. Our work advances the efforts of community leaders to work collaboratively to change systems in ways that ensure all residents benefit from and participate in the local economy. We do this through strategies that inspire action, test promising new ideas, and elevate learning. Those strategies are currently embodied by the Working Cities Challenge, which supports 12 cities in MA, RI, and CT and more recently the Working Communities Challenge that was adapted for the more rural contexts of Maine and Vermont.

The WCC has pushed us more deeply into the area of leadership and the degree to which smaller cities need to adapt their leadership practices and ecosystems to ensure decision-makers and processes are more inclusive and representative---prerequisites for ensuring outcomes are more racially equitable and inclusive in turn. Through LELE, we will test new ideas to learn what it takes to advance inclusive, representative leadership in smaller cities while supporting and learning alongside practitioners in smaller cities across Massachusetts.

The initiative is currently guided by a cross-sector advisory group of diverse partner organizations represented which include MassDevelopment, the state's quasi-public economic development agency; MassINC, a think tank with a focus on our state's smaller "Gateway" cities; NeighborWorks America, a WCC partner across our New England states; Berkshire Bank; the Lincoln Land Institute; and community organizations based in smaller cities, including participants in the Working Cities Challenge.

#### **Initiative Goals**

In the long-term, the Boston Fed seeks to develop new ways to meet the needs of leaders pushing to make their local economies more racially equitable and inclusive. We believe leaders in small cities who are already doing this work are best positioned to help the Boston Fed and our partners shape a long-term strategy to support equitable recovery across New England cities. Leaders will contribute to the collective vision through a network of learning and practice while helping us design for advancing equitable recovery at a larger scale.

In the shorter-term, we have two goals: 1) for participants to achieve tangible positive outcomes related to their projects and their own growth in leadership and influence, and 2) for the Boston Fed and our

partners to more effectively answer and take action toward our learning question about what it takes to help leaders in smaller cities build more racially equitable and inclusive local economies.

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**Who we are looking to connect with:**

Supporting the community of practice and its individual members as they learn, act, and adapt is a task that the Boston Fed can support, but our lesson from the Working Cities Challenge is that there is tremendous value in partnering with an experienced coach/facilitator who can extend our capacity to nurture the cohort and work with leaders to brainstorm and troubleshoot as they pursue their local projects. As we continue developing our approach, we seek to engage a partner who:

- Has experience building capacity to advance racial equity and advancing racial equity in a local context
- Values the necessity of learning and adapting when tackling complex systems change work
- Can support local leaders navigate relationships that are essential to advancing their work, balancing diplomacy with advocacy
- Understands community organizing and how to navigate power dynamics to build support for and advance a local change effort
- Sees themselves as a teacher and coach when it comes to leading community change efforts
- Has a strong understanding of systems and their relationship with local civic infrastructure
- Has skills and experience building, nurturing, and sustaining cohorts and networks
- Has strong facilitation skills
- Understands the assets and challenges of a smaller-city context
- Has sufficient understanding of community and economic development in Massachusetts to support building connections between city leaders and state-level resources/opportunities

**Key LELE Milestones**

**January/February 2021** – Begin outreach to leaders across MA cities

**March 2021**- Finalize coach selection and begin onboarding; announce LELE with invitation to apply

**May 2021** – Selection committee completes interviews and determines LELE cohort composition. Participants notified.

**June 2021** – LELE begins; Boston Fed and coach begin onboarding practitioners and city teams.

**July 2021** – Cohort convenes

**December 2022** – Program concludes

**Response Format**

**All RFQ responses are due by Friday, February 26, 2021** with the following information so we can schedule a conversation to share more about the program and learn more about your interest and experience. Please include the following information in or attached to your email, limiting your response to four pages (not including CVs and references):

- Brief history and description of your firm/organization if applicable
- The general nature of your work and your experience in working with smaller cities, specifically low-moderate income communities of color.
- Examples of similar work, along with relevant references (please share at three references with contact information)
- Brief description of the qualifications and experience of staff who would support this project, including CVs.
- The values that guides your practice in your racial equity work

- Any known facts which would or could create a conflict of interest with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston if you were granted a contract.

If you would like to learn more about a role we will be hosting an informational session over lunch (consider bringing takeout from a BIPOC-owned restaurant!) on **Friday, February 12, 2021 @ 12:00pm-12:45pm**. Join us using the Zoom link below, and please RSVP to [Ines.Palmarin@bos.frb.org](mailto:Ines.Palmarin@bos.frb.org).

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83944525269?pwd=VFFMTEhVNm5FWkdGYU1yVmp3TnNPdz09>

**Dial by phone:** 1-646-558-8656 **Meeting ID:** 839 4452 5269 **Passcode:** 661485