



## Request for Proposals

Deadline: September 15, 2013

### 1. Overview

The Boston Foundation invites proposals for ExpressingBoston, an initiative that celebrates the diverse cultural identities of Boston's over 140 ethnic communities through public expressions that embed arts into daily life across all of the city's 22 neighborhoods. With the belief that local, culturally-responsive artistic expressions foster vibrancy within communities, the Boston Foundation seeks to elevate cultural expression through small grants or contracts for cultural flash mobs in any of their infinite forms—performances, random acts of culture, installations, exhibitions and beyond—and in any artistic medium. In this round, up to 12 applicants **residing in the city of Boston** will be selected to receive grants of up to \$2,500 to each coordinate and present **one** project or performance that represents **one specific cultural artistic practice** in one of Boston's public spaces between March and July of 2014. **The deadline for submitting an application is September 15, 2013.** A second RFP will be released in February 2014 for up to 13 additional performances between August and December 2014.

Boston residents may apply as single artists and/or as a group regardless of their connection to a formal organization. All organizations or collectives must be not-for-profit, though they are not required to have 501(c)(3) status to qualify for this grant. Previous recipients of ExpressingBoston grants are not eligible to reapply, but recipients of other Boston Foundation grantmaking initiatives are eligible.

#### **ExpressingBoston has three goals:**

- To uplift and share the rich history, traditions, identities and assets of Boston's ethnic communities, particularly those in neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized in Boston, in order to ultimately broaden how the city is perceived. In doing so, ExpressingBoston seeks to elevate and promote Boston through a broad range of artistic and cultural practices that are key drivers of vibrancy.
- To diversify the types of art created and presented in Boston by providing opportunities to uplift new art forms and/or traditions that are not typically represented in galleries and museums and are not yet connected to the Boston Foundation's network.
- To challenge and destabilize normalized notions of what qualifies as art, who can create art, how art should be made, where art should be exhibited, and how audiences should engage with art, with a

specific focus on increasing participation in the arts by residents of historically marginalized neighborhoods and/or communities.

Embedded in these goals is the Boston Foundation's values statement that in everything we do, we seek to broaden participation, foster collaboration, and heal racial, ethnic and community divisions.

## 2. Definitions

- Cultural Flash Mob:** A person or group of people who assemble suddenly in a place, perform an unexpected and coordinated act that reflects a specific cultural artistic practice belonging to an ethnic identity for a brief time, and then disperse, for the purpose of cultural expression. Flash mobs are often organized via internet communications or social media. A cultural flash mob can take an endless number of forms and is not limited to performative art; the 'act' may include exhibiting a visual installation. While we cannot imagine all of the possibilities for a cultural flash mob, here are some examples that we found inspirational:
  - Heard NY:** A performance piece by artist Nick Cave that illuminated New York's Grand Central Station with a herd of thirty colorful life-size horses. The horses' design, which was influenced by African ceremonial costumes, highlighted the culture of specific African ethnic groups, including the Fon people of Benin, West Africa. The sculptures were also influenced by Thai embroidery and speak to the international visual language of hybridity that is New York City.
  - North End Stories:** A "living museum" by Boston resident Jeanne Dasaro that paired the practice of storytelling with the more traditional presentation format of a museum. In addition to photography and short documentaries displayed on iPads, 10 individuals held photographs of past and current Italian-American residents & businesses in the North End. Instead of the typical museum information card, attendees had one-on-one conversations with the individuals holding the photographs to learn more about the cultural heritage and personal histories of this community.
  - Be Loud, Be Proud, Be Genki!:** A performance piece by The Genki Spark that utilized big, loud, Japanese taiko drums. The drums, combined with vocal participatory exercises and movements, created a flow of energy that transforms and inspires the audience to awaken their true 'genki' self. As performers shared the history of taiko art, from its roots in Japan to its evolution as the Asian American art form it is today, the audience was evoked to celebrate art as a vehicle for reclaiming culture and heritage.
- Cultural Artistic Practice:** A representation or reinterpretation of an artistic medium within an individual's ethnic identity or heritage.
- Ethnic Identity:** An individual's understanding of self in relation to one or more sizable groups of people sharing a common and distinctive national, religious, linguistic, or cultural heritage.

### 3. Criteria and Conditions

While each grantee-partner will have the flexibility to design their project according to their own expertise and community traditions, a number of core requirements must be met by all grantee-partners.

Grantee-partners must present **one** cultural flash mob in a public space located within the City of Boston. Ideal grantee-partners will be flexible in regard to the date and location of the presentation, which will be decided in collaboration with the Boston Foundation after grants are awarded.

This cultural flash mob must:

- Be an expression of a single **cultural artistic practice** (see definition on previous page);
- Be presented by individuals and/or organizations that reside within Boston's city limits;
- Utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, etc.) to engage existing networks before and after the flash mob to encourage community participation and expand awareness;
- Engage the broader public by taking place in a publicly-accessible space, free of charge;
- Include, at any point, the flashing of the official ExpressingBoston banner, which states "We are ExpressingBoston: A Boston Foundation Civic and Cultural Vitality Initiative"; and
- Be in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws.

### 4. Funding Priorities

Priority will be given to applicants who:

- Propose to present a cultural artistic practice that has not been featured in a previous ExpressingBoston flash mob (see [www.expressingboston.org](http://www.expressingboston.org) for videos and descriptions of previous flash mobs)
- Can demonstrate the artistic quality of their work or cultural artistic practice through documented examples (audio, video or images);
- Have the capacity to engage in social-media outreach before and after the flash mob to encourage community participation and expand awareness;
- Have individual or organizational missions aligned with ExpressingBoston's goal of challenging and destabilizing normalized notions of what qualifies as art, who can create art, how art should be made, where art should be exhibited, and how audiences should engage with art;
- Exhibit strong relationships with local residents and neighborhood institutions; and
- Are interested in or open to selecting flash mob locations in underutilized public spaces, especially in neighborhoods along the Fairmount Corridor (Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan) and areas not selected by previous ExpressingBoston flash mobs.
- Have an interest in building a lasting partnership with the Boston Foundation, regardless of the Foundation's ability to provide future financial resources, in order to elevate the voices of their communities and help inform the work of the Foundation.

## 5. Application Submission and Deadline

Proposals will be reviewed by the ExpressingBoston Review Panel, which is made up of Boston residents, local artists and TBF staff. Early submissions are encouraged.

Applicants must submit all of the following materials through the [online application platform](#), which is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Cape Verdean Creole](#), [Chinese](#), [Haitian Creole](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Vietnamese](#):

- Cover letter of no more than 1 page, 12 point font and 1 inch margins on all sides, that explains why you are interested in being a part of ExpressingBoston and details any previous experience or training that will serve you in coordinating and presenting a cultural flash mob.
- Application form, which includes four narrative questions:
  1. What will you do? Explain the proposed concept for the cultural flash mob that you seek to present. Please specifically address how this presentation demonstrates or is derived from a cultural artistic practice.
  2. Please explain how you plan to use social media to promote the flash mob prior to the presentation.
  3. What impact will your presentation have on people who view and/or experience it?
  4. How will your project help us meet the goals of ExpressingBoston listed in Section 1?
- [Project budget](#) that reflects the whole real cost of planning, designing, rehearsing, promoting, and presenting your cultural flash mob. All expenses related to any of these aspects of your project are eligible for funding and should be accurately reflected in your project budget. (Please note that Expressing Boston grants are up to \$2,500. Should your budget exceed this amount, please also include information about additional funding sources.)
- Proposals may be submitted in any of the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Chinese, English, Estonian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Lebanese, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil, Portugal), Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Swahili, Thai, Tibetan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Yiddish, Zulu.
- If electronic submission poses a problem for you or your organization, please reach out Nicole Montojo at 617-338-4093 at least 5 business days prior to the submission deadline.

**All proposals must be received prior to the deadline of 5:00 p.m. on September 15, 2013. Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

**Have Questions?** First, please check the [FAQ section](#). Should you have additional questions, please consider attending [an information session](#) or contact Nicole Montojo at [Nicole.Montojo@tbf.org](mailto:Nicole.Montojo@tbf.org) or 617-338-4093 with inquiries or to schedule a one-on-one session. The Boston Foundation will be available to consult with applicants in need of assistance with the application process, particularly those without previous grant writing experience. Only a limited number of sessions are available, and will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis.