Open Door Grants Funding Considerations
Greater Boston nonprofits often ask us about how to write a competitive, compelling grant proposal that best positions them for a Boston Foundation grant. In the spirit of openness and transparency, the Foundation wishes to share a brief overview of general criteria that we reference when we assess the strength of a nonprofit’s Open Door Grants application.

The Foundation strives to maintain a diverse Open Door Grants portfolio that is responsive to the community’s stated needs. Due to the open and responsive nature of Open Door Grants, the program is very competitive and demand far outpaces available resources. Typically, we are only able to support 17% of requests. In addition to the criteria listed below, we also consider geographic area served, service population, budget size and mission, among other factors, when determining which applicants the Foundation ultimately selects for investment.

Organizational Strength

- Clear organizational mission and vision
- Strong staff and board leadership that is diverse and representative of the community that the organization serves (demographic composition and lived experience)
- Strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Organization is engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, programs and/or initiatives)
- Strong emphasis on learning from a measurement/assessment plan

Proposal’s Potential for Impact

- Authentically connected to and building power in populations and communities historically excluded from institutions and/or systems (for example: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color individuals and communities; immigrants (including undocumented); elders; individuals with disabilities; survivors of domestic abuse; incarcerated and returning citizens)
- Impact of the proposed work on addressing the defined challenge, opportunity or need
- Impact of the proposed work on organization’s ability to meet its mission
- Clear definition of proposal’s success

Organization’s Ability to Deliver on Proposal

- Feasible and realistic annual goals
- Strong collaboration and partnerships with other nonprofits and the community served by the proposal
- Ability to adapt to meet potential challenges as they arise

Please visit the Open Door Website – tbf.org/odg – to learn more and access an application form.