



Innovation Islands: Mini Grant Opportunity

Grant Rubric

Context

Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park and the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership announce a second year of funding to support grants for local leaders to plan and execute island programming that speaks to the needs and interests of members of their community. Compelling proposals will create opportunities for people to come together through music, the arts, the sharing of cultural traditions, recreation, island exploration, and stewardship.

This grant program supports the partnership's goal of *"Connecting people through parks by providing inspirational experiences that strengthen community and foster broad based support for and engagement in island stewardship and care."*

Help us engage with your community and welcome them into the park!

What: We are awarding micro-grants up to \$5,000 to local community leaders. You can use grant funds to design, promote, and facilitate programming on and around the Boston Harbor. Boston Harbor Islands Partnership staff will provide program planning support. We are excited to learn from you about how we can shape the future of park offerings to better engage with your community.

Who: We hope to partner with groups, non-profit organizations, individuals, and others that may be new to the island experience, including but not limited to veterans and active duty military and their families; Boston families and community members of color; families of children on the Autism spectrum; and individuals engaged in adaptive sports programs.

When: Applications must be submitted by **11:59 pm ET on Friday, March 8, 2024**. Funded programs will occur between June 15 and September 2, 2024, though proposals for dates earlier in June or later in September will be considered.

Where: Your program can take place at any of the following Boston Harbor Islands: [Georges](#) | [Spectacle](#) | [Peddocks](#) | [Thompson](#)

Why: The Boston Harbor Islands is *your* park! Together, we can grow individual and community access to and use of the harbor and islands in ways that best serve your community's needs and interests. These micro-grants seek to empower and invest in these community members, amplifying their impact, voices, and presence within our recreational spaces.

Expectations for Grant Recipients

Boston Harbor Now will provide each grant recipient with up to 200 ferry tickets, with a \$5,000.00 value, to support transport to Peddocks, Georges, Thompson, or Spectacle Islands for programming. Grant recipients will design, promote, and facilitate park-based programming that meets their communities' unique needs and interests. In addition, recipients will:

- Promote the program and manage program sign-up;
- Secure photo releases; program photos may be used in promotional materials and media;
- Arrange for any land transportation and other essential programming content, experiences, or support;
- Encourage participants to share feedback and ideas with Boston Harbor Islands staff;
- Provide a final report with information on what the group liked most about the experience and recommendations for park partners on what steps we might take so that a future program like this is the best it can be. Completion and submission of a final report by the deadline is required to apply for funds in future years.
- Share and encourage program participants to share their Harbor Islands experience via social media to heighten awareness of the islands as a place that enables all people to experience the full, multi-sensory joy of being in the outdoors with family, friends, and community.

Within your application, we ask that you:

- Describe your intended audience and why this opportunity would be a strong fit for your group.
- Explain why this innovative program was explicitly chosen to meet your audience's needs. The project or program description should thoroughly address relevance and participation and how opportunities for meaningful intellectual and emotional connections will be made.
- Describe whether and how the program or event will appeal to people beyond your community (as applicable).
- Share how this program will help your organization reach its own strategic goals.
- Include a detailed budget plan, with expenses properly broken out and a clear and realistic connection to the scope and scale of the project. Please include items like transportation, supplies, staff time, and meals.

RUBRIC

Criteria #1: Engage New or Strategic Audiences (0 – 10 points)

Q1A: Who is the intended audience, and why are they being targeted?

Clearly define the intended audience and describe why this audience will be targeted (consider market research, statistics, or demographics). (0 – 5 points)

- **0 Points:** Does not identify an audience.
- **1 Point:** Identifies a broad or general audience to target. Presented a thin or weak case for why the audience was chosen but did not identify data or strategy for how the audience was chosen.
- **3 Points:** Identified a specific audience. Described how reaching that audience fills a gap or solves an issue, but didn't use data or research.
- **5 Points:** Clearly identified an intended audience that includes a unifying demographic, behavior, geography, or identity. Considered market research, statistics, or demographics in identifying a target audience.

Q1B: How will this project/program increase engagement for its intended audience, and how do you intend to translate this into sustained engagement with the intended audience?

Describe how this project or program will increase engagement for the intended audience. (0 – 5 points)

- **0 Points:** The proposal does not address how the project or program will increase or maintain increased engagement with the intended audience.
- **1 Point:** The proposal used techniques targeting an audience with limited opportunities for meaningful connections. Or it uses techniques not suited for the target audience.
- **3 Points:** The proposal articulates how the project or program will increase engagement with the intended audience. However, the engagement is one-directional or one-dimensional (intellectual OR emotional, but not both).
- **5 Points:** The proposal clearly describes why this innovative engagement was explicitly chosen to meet their chosen audience's needs. The project or program description thoroughly addresses relevance, participation, and how opportunities for meaningful intellectual and emotional connections will be made.

Criteria #2: Park Relevance (0 – 5 points)

Q2: How does the project/program help the intended audience forge meaningful and enduring connections with their Harbor Islands?

Describe how the project or program helps the intended audience forge meaningful and enduring connections with their Harbor Islands. (0 – 5 points)

- **0 Points:** Does not describe how the program or project helps the intended audience forge meaningful and enduring connections with the Boston Harbor Islands.
- **1 Point:** General description is provided but does not specifically answer or touch on how the program/project helps the *intended audience* forge meaningful and enduring connections with the Islands.
- **3 Points:** Includes how the project or program was developed for or about the targeted audience so that the audience can forge meaningful and enduring connections with your Harbor Islands.
- **5 Points:** Includes how the project or program was developed for the targeted audience so that the audience clearly has the opportunity to find value in and *enduring* connection with the resource (Harbor Islands).

Criteria #3: Apply Strategic Alignment (0 – 5 Points)

Q3: How does this project/program align with your organization's strategic goals or mission?

Specify how the project aligns with the community partner's strategic goals or mission. (0 – 5 points)

- **0 Points:** Project/program does not demonstrate a connection to individual or group long term plans/needs.
- **1 Point:** Proposal uses broad, non-specific language in an attempt to identify goal(s) or need(s) that could be addressed through this project/program, but the description lacks any specific or direct reference to individual or group long term plans/needs.
- **3 Points:** Proposal identifies goal(s) or need(s) that would be addressed through this project/program, but the description lacks any specifics or direct references to individual or group long term plans/needs.
- **5 Points:** Proposal clearly identifies what strategic goal(s), management plan(s) and/or identified need(s) that would be met through this project/program, and demonstrates organization-level management support for this effort by citing current management planning documents, annual planning strategies or other formal processes.

Criteria #4: Budget and Timeline (0 – 10 points)

Q4A: What are the project/program budget and the timeframe in which allotted funds will be used?

Include a budget that clearly and accurately reflects the needs of the project (clearly identified expense categories and realistic cost estimates). (0 – 5 points)

- **0 Points:** Lump sum or incomplete budget.
- **1 Point:** Has minimal budget detail. Cost needs to be better identified and/or little to no information in the description column.
- **3 Points:** Has a detailed budget plan that specifically addresses the project. Expenses are broken out with minimal lumping.
- **5 Points:** Has a detailed budget plan, with expenses properly broken out AND there is a clear and realistic connection to the scope and scale of the project.

Q4B: How is this project an effective use of limited resources?

Describe how this project is an effective use of limited funding. (0 - 5 points)

- **0 Points:** No information in the description column. No explanation of budget strategy.
- **1 Point:** Limited information justifies this budget strategy and how it might efficiently and effectively meet the project goals.
- **3 Points:** Justifies their budget strategy, but does not describe how that plan will support project goals or maximize the dollars spent.
- **5 Points:** Includes adequate information in the description column. Includes an explanation in the description section that justifies this budget strategy and describes how that plan will efficiently and effectively meet the project goals and maximize the dollars spent.

Criteria #5: Innovation (0 – 5 points)

Q5: How does this project/program offer exciting and imaginative ways to connect people to their island parks??

Describe how this project/program offers exciting and imaginative ways to connect people to their Island parks. (0 - 5 points)

- **0 Points:** The program idea is unoriginal and does not employ imaginative ideas for engagement.
- **1 Point:** Minimal amounts of creativity and innovation are included in the program.
- **3 Points:** The program includes several areas that promote exciting and imaginative engagement with the Boston Harbor Islands.
- **5 Points:** The program fully supports creative and innovative engagement with the resource.