



INNOVATIVE
STABLE HOUSING
— INITIATIVE —

Innovative Stable Housing Initiative UPSTREAM FUND

Requests for Proposals

December 2019

About Upstream Funding Opportunity

What is the purpose? To advance policy and systems change efforts that support and promote stable housing

Who should apply? Boston-based resident groups, grassroots organizations, or community-based organizations with 501(c)3 tax-exempt status or fiscal sponsorship

How much funding is available for this opportunity? A total of \$600,000 for up to 4 awards
Up to \$150K for a one-year grant period

How long is the funding for? One year, with option to renew every year for up to 2 years

Application Deadline: Monday, February 3, 2020



What is the Innovative Stable Housing Initiative Upstream Fund?

The Upstream Fund is an opportunity to amplify collective action and reduce barriers to accessing safe, healthy and stable housing through policy, systems and environmental change. This Request for Proposal (RFP) is one of three funding opportunities made available through the [Innovative Stable Housing Initiative \(ISHI\)](#), funded by Boston Medical Center, Boston Children’s Hospital, and Brigham and Women’s Hospital. ISHI is a collaborative effort designed to support individuals and families in Boston who are unable to secure housing or are in danger of losing their home, through innovative approaches to improve the health and well-being of residents.

ISHI envisions a Greater Boston where long-term affordable, quality housing is a human right and universally accessible to all. With a joint investment of \$3M, the initiative seeks to collaborate with a wide range of partners to:

- 1) identify policy, systems, population, and place-based approaches that address displacement and increase housing stability; and
- 2) fund these approaches through an inclusive participatory grant process that centers community voice and power.

To achieve the goals stated above, ISHI will award grants through three funding streams:

1. A **Flex Fund** for swift access to short-term, emergency resources for individuals and families to maintain or attain stable housing.
2. A **Resident Led Fund** to support a democratized process addressing root causes of housing instability.
3. An **Upstream Fund** to advance policy and systems change efforts that support and promote stable, affordable housing.

The Upstream Fund was developed to serve as a resource for community organizing and coalition building efforts that support policy and systems changes across four areas of focus:

- **Anti-displacement:** i.e. inclusionary zoning, zoning variance, and/or linkage fees
- **Tenant protections:** i.e. rent control/regulation, eviction prevention and/or right to counsel
- **Community control of land:** i.e. homeownership and/or land trusts
- **Asset building:** i.e. building wealth in historically disenfranchised communities



The Upstream Fund is informed by community-driven approaches that are grounded in the experiences of those most challenged by housing instability. In the summer of 2019, we released a request to gather ideas from the Boston community regarding which housing policies and systems should be changed and how. The four focus areas listed above reflect the input collected from community members and organizations. Housing experts, residents and organizations gathered at a subsequent public forum to better understand these focus areas and what is needed to move policies forward, and to provide ISHI staff and funders with guidance on the design of the Upstream Fund and the structure of this RFP. For more details on this process, please visit ishiboston.org/upstream-fund.

ISHI recognizes the influence of housing on health. Housing is a key pathway for improving health and well-being for all, as demonstrated by lived experience and scientific evidence. However, structural barriers within written policies and systemic practices have created and perpetuated long-standing limitations on population health and one's ability to live their healthiest life. Examples include the historical and current impacts of redlining, exclusionary zoning, racial and ethnic segregation, as well as housing and mortgage discrimination on communities of color. The 2014 Federal Reserve Bank's report, entitled [Color of Wealth](#) highlights the impact of these policies and practices on the staggering racial divide in wealth accumulation. In Boston, nonwhite households have a median wealth close to zero compared to \$247,500 among white households.

What activities will the Upstream Fund support?

The Upstream Fund aims to invest in organizing and coalition building efforts that are geared towards advancing policy and systems change, within and across four areas of focus: anti-displacement; tenant protections; community control of land; and asset building. The overall fund has a commitment to invest \$900,000 over the next three years.

The primary goals of the fund are to support:

1. Organizing and capacity building to increase stability for housing insecure and homeless residents;
2. Efforts that are community driven and community-centered;
3. Collaboration among organizations or groups and across neighborhoods; that
4. Work towards advocacy for policy and systems change.



This current funding opportunity will distribute up to four, one-year grant awards totaling \$600,000. Eligible applicants can request between \$75,000 and \$150,000 in grant support for a one-year project period. Awarded applicants will have the opportunity to apply for renewal funding for two additional years as the fund seeks to provide longer-term support for promising efforts towards policy and systems change. Investments will be made for two types of efforts:

- 1) **Planning Funding: For Emerging Efforts:** Up to \$75,000 will be available for partnerships to support activities such as initial coalition building or planning processes that contribute to housing-related policy or system changes or outcomes. Emerging efforts can include newly formed partnerships or those that have worked together previously but are beginning a new policy or systems change effort across at least one focus area of the fund (see pg. 2). Proposals should reflect collaborative partnerships involving a minimum of three community partners. Efforts involving 6 or more partners are eligible to request the maximum amount allowed in this category.
- 2) **Implementation Funding: For Advanced Efforts:** Up to \$150,000 to support activities that demonstrate a feasible path for policy change relative to the specific focus areas of the fund (see pg. 2). Proposals submitted should include activities that support implementation of an existing plan that has strong potential to enact a housing-related policy or systems change within two years. Proposals should reflect collaborative partnerships involving a minimum of three community partners. Efforts involving 6 or more partners are eligible to request the maximum amount allowed in this category.

Who is Eligible?

Massachusetts based non-profit 501(c)3 organizations are eligible to submit proposals. A lead agency without non-profit status must include a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor. Partnerships must include at least one community group or organizing effort within neighborhoods that have been identified as priority areas as part of ISHI's planning process – East Boston, Mattapan, North Dorchester and Roxbury. Lead applicants should have a history of leading organizing efforts, especially those focused on policy and systems changes.

For efforts that require regional and/or statewide partnerships (i.e. home rule petition or passing statewide legislation), the lead organization must be in Boston. Boston Medical Center, Boston Children's Hospital, and Brigham & Women's Hospital are not eligible to apply for funding.



How will my proposal be reviewed?

We evaluate all applications based on the following criteria. Please review ISHI goals, vision and values at ishiboston.org. Questions 1-5 are to be submitted as part of your narrative, not to exceed 5 pages in length (word limits are suggestions):

1. **Organizing for Policy and Systems Change in Housing:** What focus area(s) are you requesting funding for (see pg. 2)? How does your organizing effort align with ISHI goals, vision and values? What challenges do you anticipate and how might you address these? *(750 words or less)*
2. **Equity:** Is the collaboration led by and represented by members of the community? How does your work reflect the experiences and expertise of those most challenged by housing instability in Boston? What is your model for organizing or community engagement? How does your organizing effort serve ISHI priority neighborhoods? *(1,000 words or less)*
3. **Phase of Your Effort:** Are you seeking funding for planning for emerging processes or for implementing more advanced stage policy change over a two-year funding period? How will this funding help your partnership accomplish its next phase of work? *(300 words or less)*
4. **Collaboration & Movement Building:** Who are your partners and how will you work together? Do they represent multi-sector organizations and individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences? How does your proposal engage a broader audience? Where appropriate, how will you create opportunities for collaboration outside of grassroots organizing and across sectors (i.e. with for-profit businesses or developers)? *(1,000 words or less)*
5. **Success & Outcomes:** What do you hope to accomplish in year one? How do you define and evaluate success? What do you see as important evaluation measures for this initiative? *(500 words or less)*
6. **Feasibility:** Likelihood of resources supporting success.
7. **Budget:** All funded activities will need to take place within the grant year. Budgets should clearly indicate staff time dedicated to organizing or coordinating, and total dollars spent on community engagement activities such as translation, child care, or food.

Please note the following budget considerations:

Indirect or fiscal sponsorship costs should not exceed 10% rate for the agency overhead. Direct services, capital campaigns or endowment drives are not allowable expenses.



Applicants awarded funding and who successfully complete year one will be eligible to receive funds for an additional two-year period based upon performance. Receiving a grant in year one does not guarantee funding for additional years.

Required Submissions

1. Narrative (not to exceed 5 pages)
2. Budget Form (template provided)
3. A list of current Board members
4. Proof of Tax-exempt status
5. **Operating Budget for Lead Agency and Fiscal Sponsor:** Upload a PDF of your organization's current fiscal year operating budget. Specify the fiscal year start and end dates at the top of the operating budget. The current fiscal year operating budget should include only two columns: (1) line items for projected sources of revenue and expenses in the left column and (2) projected total amounts for each line item in the right column. In-kind revenue and expenses (if applicable) must balance.
6. **Financial Statement for Lead Agency or Fiscal Sponsor:** Upload your most recent audited financial statement. If you do not have an audited financial statement, please upload your most recent I-90 return.
7. **One** letter of agreement among the organizations/entities in your collaboration that delineates roles and is signed by an official signatory of each entity.

Application Process and Timeline

- Interested applicants are welcome to attend an informational session on Thursday, December 19th from 2:00-3:00 pm, at Health Resources in Action, 2 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02216. Please register [here](#) for additional details. Attendance at the information session is not required. Presentation materials and questions will be recorded and shared publicly.
- All applications must be received through the online portal by midnight on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 11:59 PM. This is a firm deadline with no exceptions. To access the application, [click here](#) and begin by creating an account. Submissions will not be accepted by mail or fax. Notification of funding decisions will be by the end of February 2020.

For more information please feel free to contact:

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For technical support to complete the online submission or upload documents please contact:

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ISHI is funded by the three hospital institutions in compliance with MA Department of Public Health Determination of Need (DoN) regulations. The ISHI fund was established with BMC's initial investment of \$1.2 million of its DoN Community Health Investment funds. This investment was developed to support community engagement and housing stabilization for populations who face significant challenges accessing housing resources, such as LGBTQ youth, men of color, or those involved with the criminal justice system. The ISHI collaborative welcomed BCH as a co-funder in the spring of 2018 by making \$1 million of its DoN funds available to support housing stabilization for young people and families with children. Subsequently, the partnership continued to grow with the addition of BWH's investment of \$750,000. The focus of ISHI also grew with BWH's investment in that support is intended to support housing stabilization among survivors of violence through the Flex Fund.