



Blueprint Communities® Initiative Request for Letter of Interest

Issued June 4, 2018

Due June 22, 2018

The FHLBank Pittsburgh (Bank) is seeking a lead partner for the expansion of the Blueprint Communities (BC) initiative in West Virginia in 2019. The Bank is seeking expressions of interest from prospective partners with the qualifications necessary to design and implement a high-quality program for West Virginia communities. The Bank's Pennsylvania Partner, Pennsylvania Downtown Center, who has led the BC Initiative in Pennsylvania for several years, will provide consultation to the West Virginia lead partner and transfer their experience with BC to the selected lead partner.

The BC brand and logo has been trademarked by the Bank to protect the brand and preserve the association with quality programming.

Blueprint Communities Initiative, Purpose, and Goals

The purpose of the BC initiative is to serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of older communities and neighborhoods.

That purpose is achieved by:

- Building strong local leadership, collaboration and development capacity;
- Developing sound local and regional planning skills, which include clear community vision statements, effective goal-setting strategies, comprehensive implementation plans and performance evaluation measures; and
- Encouraging coordinated investments in targeted communities by public and private funders.

Community Benefits

Designated Blueprint Communities will benefit from participating in the initiative as follows:

- Completion of a training series focused on developing individual and collective leadership capacity and providing the skills needed to create an effective plan for community revitalization;
- Access to a variety of technical assistance resources while in training, and for a period of time after the training, that will help not only create an effective revitalization plan, but also provide the necessary local capacity to ensure the plan is successfully implemented; and
- Access to a variety of funding opportunities to help implement community plans, including priority access to some the Bank's products.

History

In 2005, the Bank, along with numerous program partners, launched the BC initiative in Pennsylvania with 22 communities selected to participate. Since then, an additional thirty-six communities in West Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania have been selected to participate in the initiative.

In each state, selected community teams were grouped into a cohort that participated in a series of intensive training sessions designed to build community leadership and cohesiveness. In between the training sessions, the teams returned to their communities and completed homework assignments with the targeted intent of deepening civic engagement and envisioning their community's future. As a direct outcome of this work, which served to develop community capacity, each team produced a community plan. Once the training sessions concluded, teams continued to refine those plans while working towards accomplishing specific objectives and achieving outcomes set forth in the plans. The implementation of their plans was facilitated by assistance and technical support provided by numerous community, government and business partners.

Accomplishments

The BC revitalization initiative has performed well across the Bank's three-state district:

- The Bank has graduated 58 Blueprint Communities in 7 different graduations throughout Pennsylvania, Delaware and West Virginia. Currently, there are 17 active Blueprint Communities
- The BC designation is a 10 year eligible designation, with recertification for the communities at years 2 and 5
- Delaware, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia communities have received numerous other awards and community designations
- The Bank, through its participating members, directly links participating communities with our community investment products, which have resulted in investments of more than \$16 million in affordable housing and small business funding in BC communities, and that investment leveraged more than \$154 million in other investments in these communities
- The BC brand and logo has been trademarked to protect the brand and preserve the association with quality programming.

The Bank's community investment products and 2018 funding allocations are listed below. Additional information on these products can be found on the Bank's website.

- Affordable Housing Program - \$30 million for the creation or preservation of affordable housing
- First Front Door - \$11.8 million to support first-time homebuyers
- Banking On Business - \$6 million – small business start-up or expansion
- Community Lending Program - \$1.25 billion – variety of community development
- Home4Good - \$4.8 million – support for homeless initiatives

The Future of Blueprint Communities

The Bank is seeking a lead partner for the expansion of the BC initiative to a new cohort of communities in West Virginia in 2019. The Bank is seeking expressions of interest from prospective partners with the qualifications necessary to design and implement a high-quality program for West Virginia communities. The Bank's Pennsylvania Partner, Pennsylvania Downtown Center, who has lead the BC initiative in Pennsylvania for several years, will provide consultation to the West Virginia lead partner and transfer their experience with BC to the selected lead partner.

Listed below are the core program elements for the BC Initiative. These elements reflect the Bank's experience over thirteen years of implementing the BC initiative in three states and are considered vital to the design of a quality program. The elements also ensure consistency in program outcomes and establish the BC brand as a recognized standard of excellence for community building and community planning.

Blueprint Communities Core Elements

The lead responsibility for the core elements are indicated as follows.

Proposed Lead Responsibility: The Bank (with partner input)	Proposed Lead Responsibility: Program Partner (with Bank input)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bank member involvement and liaison 2. Bank product marketing and availability 3. Specifications for team composition 4. Specifications for team outcomes 5. Government Relations 6. Evaluation (contract with third party provider) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BC advisory committee 2. Website 3. Process for community recruitment and selection 4. Training format and schedule 5. Solicitation of qualified trainers 6. Curriculum development 7. Communications and database management 8. Liaison to BC teams 9. Coaching and technical assistance 10. Funder involvement

Descriptive details and guidance for each of the core elements outlined above are provided on the attachment.

The Bank intends to support the initiative with staff resources, direct financial support and linkage to our community investment products. The Bank's budget for direct BC support has been \$200,000 - \$400,000 in recent years. The annual allocation is determined by the Bank's Board of Directors.

Below summarizes the multi-year initiative for the BC initiative:

Year 1 for partner: Pre-Development work

- Program development (concept and timeline)
- Establish Technical Team
- Establish Advisory Council
- Community Recruitment and Selection
- Matching funds development
- Development of training & curriculum
- Kick-off event

Year 2 for partner: Implementation

- Execute training for Communities
- In-community technical assistance provided
- Coaching for communities
- Mini-grant distribution for communities
- Graduation event

Year 3 for partner

- Group training
- Administration of conference scholarships
- Coaching and technical assistance for communities
- Mini-grant distribution for communities

Year 4 for partner

- Administration of conference scholarships
- Coaching and technical assistance for communities
- Mini-grant distribution for communities

Year 5 for partner

- Administration of conference scholarships
- Coaching and technical assistance for communities

It is the Bank's intent to provide an additional \$25,000 anchor grant to eligible BC during the Communities' second, third and fourth year in the program, subject to funds available. The partner will assist in developing the application for the anchor grant, receiving and presenting grant submissions to Bank and track progress on the grant.

Request for Letter of Interest

Organizations interested in working with the Bank to offer the BC Initiative in West Virginia in 2019 are asked to submit a letter of interest that addresses the following:

1. An organizational mission, profile and history
2. Response to the highlighted items specified in Attachment B: Letter of Interest Submission Elements
3. Key staff to be assigned to this initiative, including relevant community development experience

The Bank reserves the right to due diligence and to request additional information as warranted.

Upon review of the letter of interest, if it is determined that your organization has the experience and capacity to develop and deliver a high quality program, the Bank will enter into the negotiation of an independent contractor agreement that will formalize the roles and responsibilities of the Bank and your organization.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The Bank is committed to providing equal opportunities in contracting and procurement regardless of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability status, genetic information, veteran's status, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a parent as defined by applicable law. We expect the same commitment from our vendors.

The Bank values fair and open competition and encourages proposals from all vendors, including certified minority-, women-, and disabled-owned businesses. We actively consider diversity and inclusion when selecting vendors and encourage vendors to include in their proposal evidence of their status as a diverse vendor and/or a description of their commitment to diversity and inclusion by describing the diversity of proposed teams and subcontractors as applicable.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Clause

In accordance with our regulatory requirements, selected vendors will be required to agree to our equal opportunity and non-discrimination clause, as well as to include such clause in any subcontract entered into for services or goods provided to the Bank.

Submission instructions:

Letters of interest should be submitted by June 22, 2018 to Megan Krider, Manager, Affordable Housing & Community Development, Community Investment Department, FHLBank Pittsburgh. Submission may be made by:

Regular mail: 601 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Email: Megan.Krider@fhlb-pgh.com

Questions can be directed to Megan Krider, 412-288-4577

Attachment A: Core Element Details and Guidance

1. Bank member involvement and liaison: A Bank member must be a core team member. Members are expected to delegate one individual from their institution to attend BC training sessions and participate in pertinent team meetings. Bank staff will be responsible for relaying specialized communications and training to members, including but not limited to BC announcements, member responsibilities, and member opportunities.
2. Bank product marketing and availability: Bank staff will be available to provide training and technical assistance to participating communities on the full range of Bank community investment products.
3. Marketing and media relations: Bank's Communications Department will provide guidance on use of the service-marked BC logo and will lend their expertise to assist with media relations throughout the BC training period.
4. In addition, the Bank will provide printed materials to initially announce and market a BC initiative, including a brochure explaining program benefits and a BC banner for each selected community.
5. Selected teams must include representation from:
 - Local government
 - Organization with community development capacity
 - Housing development entity
 - Regional Economic Development Organization
 - Local/County Chamber of Commerce
 - FHLBank member institution
 - Local community (resident or business representative)

The team should have eight (8) to ten (10) individuals, and the diversity of the team should reflect the diversity in the community.

The community should have some history of community development success and should *not* have completed a community plan within the last two years and should have a population of no more than 25,000.

6. Specifications for team outcomes:

Program Goals

Energizing local leaders, residents, and stakeholders
Facilitating holistic community planning
Encouraging public and private investments

Community Outcomes

Community Needs Assessment and Asset Map
Community Vision
Communities Plan
Expanded local leadership
Cohesive team

Learning Topics/Experiences

Identifying & developing community resources
Growing local leadership
Team building & cohesiveness
Roles and responsibilities of team members
Community asset mapping
Encouraging civic engagement
Understanding community development models
Creating housing capacity
Visioning & holistic planning
Marketing & communication
Networking with funders and community development resources
Organizational capacity assessment and development
Bank Products

Program Outputs

Neighborhood/community needs assessment
Training sessions
Community coaching/specialized technical assistance
Mini-grants project
Networking opportunities

"Blueprint Communities" is a registered service mark of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh.

Attachment B: Letter of Interest Submission Elements

Request for Letter of Interest

Organizations interested in working with the Bank to offer the BC Initiative in West Virginia in 2019 are asked to submit a letter of interest that addresses the following:

1. An organizational mission, profile and history
2. Response to the highlighted items specified below
3. Key staff to be assigned to this initiative, including relevant community development experience

The Bank reserves the right to due diligence and to request additional information as warranted.

Lead Responsibility – Program Partner (with Bank input)

Where indicated below, the program partner must address the below information in the submitted letter of interest.

1. BC Advisory Committee: A structure must be put in place that offers a collaborative approach to implementation and that provides a way for other entities to advise on programmatic goals, participate in networking events, and provide support and funding to communities. Previously, this Committee has been comprised of funders and resource providers, including the Bank.

The submitted letter of interest must indicate who the partner would plan on requesting to invite on the BC Advisory Committee and whether or not the partner has worked with the entity previously.

2. Website: The Bank will maintain a general BC website, for which the partner and individual community teams may contribute materials. Additionally, the partner will maintain a BC website for training materials, scheduling and other interactive and instructional purposes, which will be linked to the general BC website. The Bank will provide guidance on website quality for any other websites, whether maintained by the partner or by community teams that primarily communicate the BC initiative.

The submitted letter of interest must indicate 1) your organization's capacity to create a page within their own website or a separate site that will house the information above, 2) how your organization anticipates using the website for the WV cohort, and 3) a plan to ensure information is updated and timely.

3. Process for community recruitment and selection: The Bank can provide timelines and applications previously used as templates that may be helpful. All selected communities will be mutually agreed upon by lead partner and the Bank. The cohort must be within a reasonable (approximately a 1.5-2.5 hour drive of each other).

The submitted letter of interest must indicate the partner's previous history in community selection for initiatives similar to Blueprint Communities or other leadership/capacity building programs.

4. Training format and schedule: Partners are encouraged to provide a training format that encourages team cohesiveness and allows for community-based homework between sessions. Sessions can be spaced in a number of ways, but participants should be aware of the schedule of events, topics, and homework expectations at the orientation. Training topics must reflect the objectives and desired outcomes of the BC initiative as outlined above. The partner will work closely with the Bank and the established technical team to develop the training format and schedule.
5. Solicitation of qualified trainers: Local partners will be responsible for identifying potential trainers from the field. Previously, BC has had trainers experienced in community development training, as well as a proven track record of success with similar programs. Selection of qualified trainers will be made based on mutual agreement by both the Bank and the lead partner.
6. Curriculum development: While previously used outlines and manuals will be available for consultation, local partners will have discretion over curriculum development so long as outcomes and outputs are maintained.

To address items 4, 5 and 6, the submitted letter of interest must describe previous community development training and curriculum that has been developed or used by the partner for community development initiatives

7. Networking events: Local partners will have discretion over meals, receptions, and peer networking events which adds to team cohesiveness. These events must be balanced against budgetary constraints.

The submitted letter of interest must describe the partner's experience in logistical planning.

8. Communications database: Partners are required to develop and maintain a database of team members for regular communication needs. On request, the Bank will provide templates previously used.
9. Liaison to BC teams: The lead partner will have primary contact with BC teams. The Bank will inform lead partners before contacting teams with BC or the Bank product information.
10. Coaching and technical assistance: Local partners will have discretion over the coaching and technical assistance provision. The Bank can provide information regarding best practices in this area.

The submitted letter of interest must describe the partner's experience in providing coaching and technical assistance relevant to community development efforts. The letter of intent should include and describe the partner's particular areas of expertise.

11. Funder involvement: The Bank will advocate for BC with networks of funders, in concert with formal and informal networking and advisory opportunities provided by the lead partner.

The submitted letter of interest should describe the partner's proven history of fundraising. Additionally, the letter of interest should describe the partner's existing network of potential funders that may be introduced to the Blueprint Communities.

12. Diversity and inclusion: Diversity and inclusion are important factors in the RFP evaluation process. In addition to the above criteria, each proposal will be evaluated for the following: (i) vendors diversity status as a minority-, women- or disabled-owned business, (ii) the inclusion of partners (and/or equity owners) who are minorities, women and individuals with disabilities in teams handling the engagement, and (iii) the utilization of minority-, women- or disabled-owned subcontractors.

The submitted letter of interest should describe the partner's status as a minority-, women- or disabled-owned business, if applicable. Please be sure to identify any potential minority-, women- and disabled-owned businesses that you will partner with on this engagement.

Submission instructions:

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