

# Berkshire Taconic

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIONS

#### ECONOMIC AND TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

##### 1) Introduction and Purpose

With funding from Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, this initiative will provide one-year grants of up to \$10,000 for nonprofits, community organizations, public agencies and town committees to plan and implement outreach activities that explore the issue of strengthening conditions for economic opportunity and town center development with a core component to include affordable housing. The grant program is designed to support projects that will help improve the economic well-being of residents and/or sustain town centers as commercial and civic hubs for communities. A priority is supporting new or ongoing processes that directly engage local residents in the planning and implementation of funded projects, believing their input and involvement will contribute to the project's success and strengthen public will to pursue the goal of the project in the long term. The total amount of grant funding available for the funding year 2018-2019 is \$39,000.

##### 2) About Berkshire Taconic's Community Development Collaborations and the Grant Program

Berkshire Taconic's Community Development Collaborations, formerly known as HousingUs, is a cooperative effort of nonprofit organizations and community leaders that has its roots in expanding the array of affordable housing options in the tri-state region. The region includes towns throughout the Northwest Corner of Connecticut, northeast Dutchess County and all of Columbia County in New York and Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Governed by an advisory board of nonprofit and community leaders, the mission of Berkshire Taconic's Community Development Collaborations is to promote and strengthen the conditions for economic opportunity, town center development and affordable housing in the tri-state region. The program reflects knowledge gained through broad community assessments and resident engagement that revealed jobs and economic opportunity as the highest priority issue for the future of our region.

## Grant Program Goals

Over the next year, this grant program seeks to provide grant funding and promote convening activities to support community engagement activities that bring partners together to develop strategies for improving the conditions for economic development and business growth.

In addition to providing grants in the range of \$1,000 to \$10,000, this grant program will bring together representatives from the communities receiving grant support for at least one collaborative training or mutual learning forum. This forum will provide participants with opportunities to learn new skills related to community planning and mobilization, as well as a venue for sharing promising practices and lessons learned from participating communities. Outcomes will help inform the development of a regional convening or convenings in 2019.

Toward this end, BTCF is seeking proposals in this first funding year that could:

- Build local capacity in community engagement activities that contribute to actionable community development strategies for town or village center, main street and/or neighborhood revitalization that include the goal of supporting small business development and economic opportunity;
- Convene community stakeholders around the issue of affordable housing as a key component of long-term economic stability;
- Create strategies that take into account the spectrum of determinants influencing community economic health, including access to capital, and technology and expertise gaps;
- Cultivate broader public awareness of the elements of a healthy and resilient community, including the ability for all residents to economically thrive;
- Share information and facilitate community partnerships around economic development among residents.

### 3) General Grant Guidelines

#### a) Who Can Apply

Either nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status or public agencies (e.g., town, county and/or regional governments) in the region can serve as lead applicants. Organizations outside this region but who work in it are also eligible to apply.

<https://www.berkshiretaconic.org/Map>

Community organizations without formal 501(c)(3) status and business groups or associations are encouraged to partner with at least one lead organization. For the purpose of this proposal, one organization should be named as the lead entity for ease of project management and reporting.

## **b) Eligibility**

BTCF strongly encourages collaboration among nonprofits, community organizations, government agencies and private sector businesses. Strong preference will be given to collaborative proposals with two or more partners – that is, one lead applicant and at least one other partner from the list above.

One partnership may submit only one application for one project for the 2018 deadline. However, individual partners may participate in more than one collaborative proposal. For example, a lead organization may join with two separate partnerships and submit two separate proposals for each collaboration, if desired. Or conversely, a partner organization who is not a lead may participate in more than one proposal.

BTCF does not support organizations that in their constitution, by-laws or practice discriminate against a person or group on the basis of age, race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or religious belief.

## **c) Types of Projects BTCF Will Consider**

The program seeks proposals that are collaborative, cohesive and focused on aligning need, resources and impact in strategic and enduring ways.

Examples of community outreach and engagement projects BTCF/Berkshire Taconic Community Economic Collaborations will consider include the following:

- The continuation of community convenings that strengthen existing networks or reach new audiences, geographic areas covered and/or expand the scope and topics of conversation;
- New convenings, either single or multiple, that meet our goals, broaden our partnerships, share resident expertise or leverage local leadership;
- Local workshops that a single town organizes or multiple towns organize on topics that pertain to economic development, revitalization and town center development, and a continuum of housing options;
- Convenings that specifically engage nonprofits and nonprofit developers, other community organizations, the private sector and towns in partnership to address these topics;
- Survey research that assesses resident interest in economic development strategies;
- Train-the-trainer workshops on topics of relevance to our goals.

## **d) Invitation to Apply**

*Emails of intent will be accepted through October 2, 2018. Applicants will be selected by committee and will be invited to submit full proposals by October 30, 2018. Grant awards will be made on November 15, 2018. Grants from approximately \$1,000 up to a total of \$10,000 will be made to a limited number of applicants.* At its discretion, BTCF may fund multiple

projects at smaller amounts or one large project, depending on the strength of the proposals, the audience to be reached and project outcomes and impacts.

**Submit a 2-page letter with the following information:**

- A description of the project;
- A description of how you propose to address the issue of economic opportunity and how it meets the review criteria;
- The credentials of the individuals/organizations that will be involved;
- The estimated costs involved and timeline for project;
- If the project is already underway, your intentions for the project's future, including future funding;
- Strategies for raising matching funds or in-kind donations;
- The expected outcome of your proposed project.

**Contact Information and Online Proposal Submittal Process**

Emails of intent may be sent to Betsy Maury, Community Engagement Officer at BTCF, at [bmaury@berkshiretaconic.org](mailto:bmaury@berkshiretaconic.org). Please contact her with any questions via email or via phone at 413.429-8406.