A grant program of Third Sector New England

Funding a vision for racial and economic justice in our communities

Program Overview
Our vision is to promote the development of “inclusive communities” through support for cross-sector, community-led networks in communities of color working to address the root causes of poverty in five main areas—education, healthcare, environmental justice, the arts, and community and economic development.
Fifty years ago, the March on Washington, the Civil Rights Act, and decisions like Brown vs. Board of Education marked hope and progress toward racial and economic equality.

President Johnson declared then as he launched the ‘war on poverty,’ “unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity.” This initiative focused on legislation that would “…not only relieve the symptoms of poverty but cure it, and, above all prevent it.”

Fifty years later, in Massachusetts, the rate of poverty remains largely unchanged in two decades; and more than 90 percent of people living in poverty are people of color. The violence of poverty and racism has caused trauma in communities; and the systemic conditions that allow economic and racial injustice to continue are still in place today both nationally and internationally. We see it in Ferguson, Mo., in the Voting Rights Amendment Act, in the death of Sandra Bland, and the expelling of Haitians from the Dominican Republic.

We are at an inflection point. Movements like Black Lives Matter, the fight for fair wages, and immigration reform are shifting our narrative. People directly impacted by oppressive systems are turning inward; trusting in their own leadership, organizing their own resources, and engaging in ways to heal from the trauma and injustice of poverty that has long held back communities of color.

The Inclusion Initiative grant program is working with community-based groups making progress toward change, and investing in the leadership of people of color. We invite you to join us and to help us envision the changes we want to see over the next 50 years.
Our Grant Program

The Inclusion Initiative provides grants and technical assistance to grassroots networks through a multi-year planning and implementation grant program that supports the development of cross-sector, community-led networks in communities of color.

The program encourages the idea of *inclusive communities* to accelerate solutions to persistent and systemic problems that perpetuate poverty and inequality. Through collaboration, relationship building, and leadership development, networks bring together community leaders and stakeholders that touch many aspects of community life to take an active role in creating community wealth and prosperity, realizing racial equity, environmental sustainability and healthier communities.
Our Guiding Principles

There are central pillars of poverty in communities of color that have their roots in systemic causes; and it will take systemic solutions to help break down these oppressive structures and create the new foundations which make equity and justice possible.

**Equity**

There can be no racial justice without equity and no equity without an end to poverty.

**Healing**

Poverty has caused trauma in communities of color and we must acknowledge the need for healing to achieve social justice.

**Investment**

Communities have the internal resources to make changes, solve problems and meet basic needs; investment is needed to organize these assets.

**Relationships**

Networks are vehicles for relationship building and collaborative problem solving that support social justice.

**Change**

In order for lasting change to occur, community members who are directly impacted by injustice must lead the change process.
Inclusion Initiative Program Overview

Marriage Equality

Universal Healthcare

The Barbershop Health Network

Mattapan United

STEP UP Network

Boston Food Justice Hub

The POWER Network

Immigrant Youth Leadership and Solidarity Initiative

Roxbury Food Justice Hub

End Racism

Boston Tenant Coalition

Criminal Justice Reform

Equity and Access to Opportunity

2015

2018

2020

2023

2025
Our Networks

Our grantees helped us learn what it takes to build successful networks. As funders, we engage in partnership-based philanthropy and co-learn with our grantees. Together we collaborate, develop leaders, build relationships and create a shared vision to achieve racial and economic justice.

Collaboration

“We built a lot of unity through the planning process. We have developed a shared understanding of how to make our effort successful...We knew that in order to turn things around, it was important to work together.”
— POWER Network

Relationship Building

“It’s worth it to take your time and not rush it. Collecting people’s wisdom took longer than we planned. You have to make time to do this work together, with different languages and cultures, etc. It is worth it to take the time to build that up.”
— STEP UP Network

Leadership Development

“I have learned how to be a leader, how not to accept ‘no’ and fight for what we need. We are learning to have the courage to say what we want and push for it. This has helped me realize what we can accomplish.”
— Boston Tenant Coalition Network

Trust

“We know that in order to deal with community capacity, you have to deal with trust issues. People have been let down and have suffered a lot.”
— Barbershop Health Network

Transformation

“Cooperative relationships mean mutual support and caring. People can balk at that. But, it really is about how you do ‘love-based’ organizing. This is the core of change in communities. It’s not about efficiency. It’s about how you remain open and trust each other to have the best interests of everyone at heart.”
— Boston Food Justice Hub
The Inclusion Initiative invites proposals from community-led, cross-sector networks who are working on systemic solutions to end poverty and injustice in communities of color in these major areas:

### Youth Organizing
- Organizing
- Leadership
- Safety
- Economic Mobility

### Health
- Healing
- Wellness
- Access

### Education
- Learning for sustainability
- 21st Century readiness
- Community resilience

### Community Economies
- Jobs
- Development
- Alternative economy
- Asset building
- Collectivity

### Environmental Justice
- Green space
- Healthy foods
- Community land trusts
- Air and water quality

### Arts and Culture
- Dance
- Music
- Storytelling
- Art
Applying for Funding

Applications for our planning grant are due in early December 2015. Applicants must demonstrate how their cross-sector network and partners they support are community-led.

Community-Led

Applicants must demonstrate community leadership within their network. Members of the community who are most impacted by the issues identified in the areas of focus must not only be involved in the network, but have a true voice in its decision-making process.

Cross-Sector

Promoting the idea of inclusive communities, networks must involve residents, nonprofits, government officials and businesses as key partners in their collaboration. Applicants must initially identify at least 3 partners to be eligible for the planning grant.

Geographic Scope

We accept applications from networks working in communities of color in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Technical Assistance

We provide technical assistance to all of the networks. Applicants must be able to commit to participating in individual meetings, peer learning sessions and training.

Lead Organization

Each network applying for funding must select one organization [a 501(c)3 in good standing] to serve as the network coordinator. This organization will function as the main liaison, will receive grant monies, and will be responsible for reporting.
Working Together Toward Justice

Creating a Shared Vision:
The Planning Grant
Taking time to work collaboratively and build trusting relationships is the key to successful planning. The Inclusion Initiative supports 6-8 networks over a planning period of 12 months. Networks will be able to use the planning time to:

- Build a foundation for network development
- Integrate cross-sector partners
- Cultivate relationships
- Learn to work collaboratively across difference

Building Movement Together:
The Implementation Grant
In the second phase, the Inclusion Initiative supports 3-5 of its planning networks with $250,000 over an implementation period of 12 months as they work toward realizing their collective vision. Networks use the implementation time to:

- Implement network activities
- Build movement together
- Deepen partnerships
- Work collaboratively
Join Us!

The Inclusion Initiative invites you to become a part of the vision for racial and economic justice in communities of color. Whether you are a prospective grantee, funder, or a potential partner to our networks, we welcome your inquiries and insights.

Request for proposals will open on October 5, 2015. Planning grant proposals are due on December 2, 2015.

To contact us, learn more about the application process or hear about what we are learning from our grantees, contact:

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About the artwork

What’s Your Vision for the Next 50 Years? is a visual tool developed from an exercise at one of our quarterly grantee convenings. The exercise was grounded in the “7th generation” principle taught by Native Americans that in every decision – be it personal, governmental or corporate – one must consider how it will affect descendants seven generations into the future.

Using the anniversary of the 50 years of the ‘war on poverty,’ grantees were encouraged to consider the impact of their work as a network for the next 50 years. For the Inclusion Initiative, we learned that our investment in networks must focus on developing a collective vision for building leadership from within the communities impacted by poverty and oppression to realize racial and economic justice.
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS?

1965
- March on Washington
- Brown vs. Board of Education
- Assassination of Malcom X
- March on Selma

1970
- Civil Rights Act
- Assassination of Medgar Evers

1985
- Voting Rights Act
- Immigration and Nationality Act
- War on Poverty

2000
- President Barack Obama
- Tony Robinson

2008
- Eric Garner
- Michael Brown
- Same Sex Marriage
- The Barbershop Health Network

2015
- Universal Healthcare
- New Jim Crow
- Mattapan United
- The P.O.W.E.R Network
- Sigma Alpha Epsilon
- Immigrant Youth Solidarity Network
- The S.T.E.P.U.P. Network
- #BlackLivesMatter
- Trayvon Martin
- Challenge of the Voting Rights Act

2025
- Boston Food Justice Hub
- Boston Tenant Coalition
- Reform
- Eradication of Poverty
- Inclusion
- Tolerance
- Equity
- Justice

2040

2065

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