



Boston Capacity Tank

Overview of 2008 (Year 1) Extensive Technical Assistance Services

Summary. The Boston Capacity Tank (the Tank) offers faith-based organizations (FBOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) the opportunity to apply for free technical assistance (TA) services to build their capacity, so they will become sustainable and more effective. A program of the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, the Tank works with our partners to provide these services: United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley, Emmanuel Gospel Center, and Boston TenPoint Coalition. Twenty-five agencies will be selected to receive 20 to 40 hours of individualized TA valued at up to \$2,250, through an application process (see attached). Tank staff are available to help agencies plan their project and complete the application. Agencies will not receive a check; they will receive consultant hours. Projects will run from March 3, 2008 through September 29, 2008. TA services should address the agency's most important capacity need in two of the following areas: leadership development, organizational development, program development, revenue development, and community engagement.

This opportunity is made available through a Compassion Capital Fund Demonstration grant for \$500,000 annually for three years from 2007 to 2010. Through this grant, **each year** the BMA and our partners will provide to FBOs and CBOs that serve youth in Boston:

- 5 capacity-building grants to clusters of agencies at \$40,000 each
- 25 Individualized TA projects
- 6 core workshops, provided twice annually, and 10 elective workshops, provided once annually (free and open to all). Follow up TA is provided to 25 agencies.
- High Risk Youth Network, a public planning process of monthly meetings to strengthen the system of services for youth at high risk.

Overview of Capacity-Building Process. Capacity-building seeks to strengthen the management, leadership, planning, and infrastructure necessary for an agency to deliver effective services to the community in a sustainable manner over the long-term. An agency not operating at full organizational capacity is compromised in meeting its mission and providing the best value to its community. The five primary capacity-building areas are as follows:

1. Organizational development (financial management, human resources, information technology, systems, fiscal controls, nonprofit incorporation)
2. Leadership development (Board development, staff development, volunteer development, succession planning, adapting to change)
3. Programs and services (program planning and design, program evaluation)
4. Fundraising capacity (development planning, diversifying funding sources, sustainability decisions, donor development)
5. Community engagement (asset mapping, collaborative relationships, needs assessment, outreach strategies)

Just as your agency's community services are delivered in the context of supportive relationships, so our capacity-building services are provided through the same kind of supportive relationships. Tank staff and consultants seek to build a relationship with your agency's staff and volunteers as we engage in the following activities:

Agency Assessment. We use the Social Venture Partners Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool, at [http://www.svpseattle.org/about/key-documents/SVP%20Org%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Tool%20\(2006\).xls](http://www.svpseattle.org/about/key-documents/SVP%20Org%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Tool%20(2006).xls), supplemented by our financial assessment. Three individuals from your agency (direct service, management, and board) will complete the assessment, then share results with each other to reach consensus on priority capacity needs. Your assessment results will be shared with Tank staff and the consultant you hire; otherwise, they are completely confidential.

Develop Technical Assistance Plan and Select Consultant. Tank staff work with your agency staff to draft a TA plan. This plan includes desired outcomes or organizational changes, agency and consultant activities, deliverables, a timeline, and a budget. The Tank draws on partner staff and independent consultants from the Tank's Consultant Pool. The Pool provides access to expertise in a variety of capacity areas, with demonstrated effectiveness working with community agencies. Consultants are pre-selected through a competitive public process for expertise in each area of capacity-building and an understanding of the unique needs of community agencies. Tank staff will recommend two or three staff and/or pool consultants who may be a good fit for your agency's culture and required expertise. Agency staff will then review their resumes and interview desired candidates. Agencies are matched with consultants based on agency and consultant preferences expressed to the Tank. After the match is finalized, the agency, consultant, and Tank finalize and sign the TA Plan, making any desired changes, and articulating in writing clear and specific roles and responsibilities for each party and expectations for activities, timeframes, and results, including consultant deliverables. Finally, the BMA signs a contract with the consultant.

Project Implementation. The assessment and TA Plan are the foundation for communication about the project. Together, they help all parties communicate effectively and agree regarding project expectations. The pool consultants have two clients: the BMA and the agency. Your agency has both a consultant and a Project Manager at the Tank to advise you. Consultants submit monthly written status reports tracking progress on TA Plan activities, to both the Tank and the client, showing number of hours spent on each activity. These status reports must be approved before accompanying invoices are paid. In addition, your Project Manager will be in contact with you and your consultant at least once monthly, to ensure that the project is on track and that all parties are satisfied and fully engaged.

Achieving Capacity Outcomes. We will help ensure that your project remains on-track and intervene with the necessary support if the project goes off-track. Any changes in the TA Plan must be approved by all parties. We are pleased with the success of our previous grantees: 100% of our consultancies have completed the agreed-upon work, and 91% of agencies have achieved the capacity-building goals they set for themselves, by the end of the consultancy.

Budgeting and billing. The cost of your consultancy is established in the written TA Plan document, signed by all parties. Your agency will receive an award letter specifying the exact number of hours in the TA Plan. Pool consultants bill at a flat rate of \$75 per hour. Consultants may not spend more than the number of hours granted in your award letter. **Consultants bill the BMA directly and are paid by the BMA, not by your agency.**

Reporting. Each agency will submit a written final report, rating your satisfaction with the consultant, describing what activities were particularly helpful or should be changed, and progress on achieving your agency's outcomes. You are also invited to attend a face-to-face feedback session with Tank staff. Consultants also complete a written final report describing the progress of the project.

Eligibility Criteria. To be eligible to apply for Extensive TA services, agencies must:

1. Provide direct services to youth in the City of Boston, for at least the past year.
2. Have paid staff or plans to hire, at minimum, a 25% paid staff person

Successful applications will address the following criteria:

1. Organization is ready to receive capacity-building services.

- Mission of FBO/CBO is clearly defined. (Alternatively, organization may request assistance to focus mission statement more clearly.)
- FBO/CBO articulates clear community benefits resulting from its programs and services.
- FBO/CBO demonstrates commitment to realistic and meaningful organizational change (past change, evidence of commitment to proposed plan).
- FBO/CBO demonstrates availability to participate in TA activities (basic staffing, Board meeting schedule, other simultaneous capacity-building projects).

2. Agency presents an important, clear, logical capacity building plan.

- FBO/CBO articulates clear need for TA services
- FBO/CBO describes, in concrete terms, plans for using TA to improve effectiveness and/or sustainability of agency and/or programs
- FBO/CBO articulates measurable expected impact of TA services
- Capacity-building plan seems strategically important for the agency's sustainability and effectiveness.
- FBO/CBO articulates realistic sustainability strategy for related activities

You are encouraged to contact Curtis Jones at 617-445-2737 x14 or cjones@bmaboston.org, or Deandra Robinson at 617-445-2737 x26 or [drobinson@bmaboston.org](mailto:drobenson@bmaboston.org), with any questions about your application or the capacity-building process. We will gladly work with you to plan your project and/or to complete the application.

Applications are due to the BMA on a rolling basis, on or before Friday, February 1 **OR** Friday, April 4 at 12:00 noon. We look forward to working with you!