



# **Request for Proposal VIP Neighborhood Lead Agencies**

Division of Violence Prevention:  
Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Initiative  
Child, Adolescent and Family Health Bureau

**Deadline Extended**

December, 2023

## I. Overview

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the local public health department for the City of Boston. BPHC’s mission is to work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities.

BPHC is seeking five (5) lead agencies to develop, implement and sustain a neighborhood VIP Initiative. VIP Neighborhood Initiatives can be newly established or can be launched from an existing neighborhood initiative that will embrace the goals of the VIP Initiative. This RFP will distribute \$82,000 per year to the VIP lead agencies for a period of up to 4 years, based on performance. During year 4, a new RFP will be issued. Current VIP lead agencies will be eligible to respond to that RFP for renewal but will not be automatically renewed.

All service contracts awarded by the Boston Public Health Commission may be subject to following the City of Boston’s living wage ordinance. This ordinance requires that all employees working on sizable city contracts earn an hourly wage that is enough for a family of four to live at or above the federal poverty level. This wage amount called the living wage, is recalculated every year. For more information, please visit <https://www.boston.gov/worker-empowerment/living-wage-division>.

As part of BPHC’s efforts to have an equitable procurement process, BPHC will consider and encourage Certified Unrepresentative Businesses Enterprises (CUBE) that includes; Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBE), Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBE), Veteran-owned Business Enterprises (VBE), Disability-owned Business Enterprise (DOBE), Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBE), Minority Non-Profit (MNPO), Women Non-Profit (WNPO), Minority Women Non-Profit (MWNPO) and local businesses to apply to this RFP.

## II. Scope of Work

BPHC’s Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Initiative is seeking five lead agencies to develop, implement and sustain neighborhood-based VIP Initiatives. Known as “Village in Progress” in many neighborhoods, VIP’s mission is to prevent violence through building and sustaining strong communities where residents are knowledgeable about the root causes of violence and empowered to address them. VIPs over-arching goals are to:

- Build Knowledge
- Build Capacity
- Build Community

Current/previous VIP neighborhoods are micro-neighborhoods that were selected because they have high rates of gun violence *and* a strong community infrastructure. The Boston Public Health Commission’s VIP Coalitions work to strengthen these neighborhoods’ capacity to develop community initiatives that **prevent** violence over the long term. Through this unique approach to violence prevention, the coalitions work to shift the narrative of violence and to identify and

address persistent social and environmental issues that contribute to elevated levels of violent incidents. VIP uses a trauma-informed community building approach which creates multiple ways for residents to participate in activities accessible to all community members. We are actively seeking partnerships that will engage a diverse group of residents, including strategies to engage 'hard-to-reach' populations (such as returning citizens, etc.) who don't often participate in such initiatives.

VIP Coalitions deepen the level of resident engagement\* in community building, increase social cohesion and activate community members around a set of positive and supportive goals that, over the long term, increase informal social controls and reinforce a culture of non-violence and social and racial justice. VIP Coalitions work with residents and other community leaders to address five violence *prevention* goals:

- 1) Each VIP coalition holds **monthly Community Meetings** where residents identify needs, challenges and root causes of violence in the neighborhood and mobilize neighborhood and City assets to address them.
- 2) Children and youth are engaged in positive activities, developing leadership skills and **given opportunities to take leadership roles** in the neighborhood.
- 3) Residents are aware of and have equitable **access to resources** necessary for physical and emotional wellness.
- 4) The **physical environment** of the neighborhood encourages outdoor activity and social connection.
- 5) When incidents of violence occur, **community members lead public actions** that call for accountability in addressing the root causes of violence and promote community building.

Central to the VIP Initiative is community engagement and activation. Community mobilization and coalition building through resident-led activities can increase a neighborhood's social connectedness and collective efficacy, which have been found to be protective factors associated with reduced crime rates at the community or neighborhood level. For many residents who have experienced violence in their neighborhoods the opportunity to engage in community actions to prevent further violence allows them to regain a sense of control and can help prevent the development of deeper traumatic symptoms.

Neighborhood VIP coalitions meet at least monthly and are made up of residents, community organizations, representatives from City agencies, business sector and faith communities. Each VIP is staffed by a Coordinator employed by the lead agency and will stipend residents to be Block Captains and support community building. The VIP lead neighborhood partner and BPHC will work together to ensure that VIP neighborhood residents have access to public health services and supports.

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\* "Engage/Engagement" in this document refers to working with residents and community members as leaders and assets in the neighborhood, not just as people needing services.

With resident participation and leadership, each neighborhood VIP will design and implement a Neighborhood Violence Prevention Plan. The plan describes the nature and extent of violence in the community and identifies goals, objectives and outcomes, including increasing youth access to leadership development and practice, improving and activating the physical environment in the neighborhood, and engaging hard to reach populations. VIP Coalitions design and implement community actions in response to shootings and homicides in their communities in order to support resident activation to address the root causes of violence.

Scope of work:

The Mission of the VIP Initiative is to prevent violence through building and sustaining strong communities where residents are knowledgeable about the root causes of violence and empowered to address them. VIP seeks to reduce community gun violence in city neighborhoods through increased mobilization of community-based organizations and neighborhood residents, increased coordination of city agencies, and increased knowledge of city resources in those neighborhoods. Through this community engagement and activation approach to violence prevention, VIP Coalitions work to shift the expectation of violence and to address persistent social, environmental and systemic issues that contribute to elevated levels of violent incidents.

Each neighborhood VIP partner will:

1. **Dedicate one full-time staff person** to coordinate the VIP Neighborhood Initiative. Coordinators must attend the following BPHC-led meetings:
  - a. Monthly VIP Coordinator Workgroup meetings (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm).
  - b. Monthly VIP Coordinator Trainings (last Thursday, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm).
2. Where funding allows, stipend at least 1 neighborhood resident as a Block Captain, Youth Organizer or other part-time support personnel. Block Captains will:
  - a. Get to know residents in their neighborhoods.
  - b. Bring new residents to meetings, events, etc.
  - c. Host or co-host at least 1 event/gathering during each grant cycle.
  - d. Attend monthly VIP Block Captain trainings.
3. During the first 6 months of this 4-year cycle, each VIP must engage a diverse group of residents and other neighborhood stakeholders to develop a neighborhood violence prevention plan, as well as an outreach and engagement/activation plan. Lead agencies must document efforts to include hard-to-reach populations. BPHC VIP Director/Associate Director will support this process.
4. The VIP Coordinator will engage and activate residents and other stakeholders in the Coalition through monthly meetings and other events/activities that build knowledge, capacity and community.
  - a. **Coordinator must sponsor or co-sponsor at least one Monthly VIP Meeting.**
  - b. Monthly VIP Meetings must be held during evening or weekend hours to maximize resident participation

- c. VIP Coordinators must document attempts to engage hard-to-reach populations in the neighborhood. Documentation should include outreach activities as well as which populations they attempted to engage.
  - d. Meetings must go beyond crime reports and announcements. They must include opportunities to uplift resident understanding of the roots of community violence and build resident leadership capacity and confidence to take action to address them.
  - e. Residents must take on meaningful leadership roles in the meetings and actions stemming from them.
  - f. Meeting participation should be comprised of at least 51% neighborhood residents. Other local stakeholders should also be involved.
  - g. In some cases, VIP partners may opt to 'join' existing monthly meetings, rather than creating a competing meeting. This is allowable if a) it is discussed with BPHC VIP Director and/or Associate Director; b) VIP Coordinators plays an active, collaborative role in the meetings and actions stemming from them (i.e., VIP must be an identifiable co-convenor of the meeting); and c) meetings meet the above requirements.
  - h. VIP Coordinators must work with residents to host events and activities that build capacity, increase access to resources and opportunities and address the root causes of violence in the neighborhood.
5. Implement community actions in response to incidents of violence.
    - a. Work with BPHC VIP Director and/or Associate Director to develop and implement an action plan.
    - b. Implement a public action in response to all shootings (not just homicides). This action must go beyond engaging residents as "people in need of services" to engage residents as assets/leaders taking action to build a stronger and safer neighborhood and to address the root causes of violence in the neighborhood. These actions can include (but are not limited to) the following: rallies, marches, community art creation, and other creative activities to activate the neighborhood.
    - c. When applicable, coordinate with local Community Healing Response Network (CHRN) Team, recognizing that **VIP Coordinators must still identify themselves as VIP Coordinators when participating in CHRN activities and must still convene VIP actions spelled out in this scope.** Conducting outreach with CHRN teams does not preclude VIP actions.
    - d. Promote positive neighborhood activities in order to build resident leadership capacity and confidence to address root causes of violence in the neighborhood.
  6. Advisory Board representative (typically the Coordinator's supervisor) must participate in bi-monthly Advisory Board meetings. If unable to attend a meeting, s/he must send an alternate representative.
  7. Submit regular VIP Data & Progress Reports. Reports are due **on the 7th of each month**. If the 7<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, the following Monday is the submission deadline.
  8. Submit invoices **by the 15th of each month**. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, the following Monday is the submission deadline.
  9. Advisory Board members must review budgets with VIP Coordinators. VIP funding must prioritize expenses in direct support of the VIP Coordinator implementing the scope of this initiative.

10. Meet the language needs of the community, including but not limited to translating materials and having staff on hand to work with residents in need of interpreters during outreach and community events. If VIP neighborhood partner does not have staff or resources to accomplish this they should work with BPHC VIP Director and/or Associate Director to find a solution.
11. Partner with other activities and initiatives of the Boston Public Health Commission, such as Start Strong, Healthy Baby-Healthy Child, Mayors Healthline, Neighborhood Trauma Teams, etc., to increase neighborhood access to resources and services. BPHC VIP staff can help make these connections, as needed.
12. Coordinators must actively participate in all training, capacity building and technical assistance sessions throughout the grant period. Such training will be predominantly focused on Healing Centered Engagement, Transformative Justice, resident engagement and activation, community organizing, etc., but will include other topics, as well. When applicable we hope Coordinators will share their areas of expertise and lead trainings, as well.
13. VIP Neighborhood Partners are expected to promote VIP neighborhood-wide.
14. Use VIP name and logo in accordance with branding policy on all VIP materials, announcements, flyers, etc. Partner agency logo can and should also be used, of course.
15. VIP Coordinator and Block Captains must identify themselves as VIP *AND* part of the partner agency at any public events, meetings, etc. This includes during collaborations with the Community Healing Response Network teams.

Boston Public Health Commission will:

1. Dedicate a staff person as a point of contact for each VIP partner.
2. Dedicate a staff person to support the neighborhood Violence Prevention Plan process in each neighborhood.
3. Dedicate a staff person to support VIP actions in the aftermath of a violent incident in each VIP neighborhood.
4. Provide technical assistance to VIP Coalitions to develop and execute violence prevention plan, as well as outreach and engagement plan.
5. Provide training to support the use of Transformative Justice and Healing Centered Engagement frameworks in the VIP neighborhoods. Other BPHC training will include resident engagement and activation, community organizing, etc. BPHC staff will also work with neighborhood Coordinators to encourage and support them leading training in their areas of expertise.
6. Use data from VIP partner monthly reports and BPD crime data to develop and share quarterly cumulative reports and bi-annual progress assessment.
7. Promote the work of the neighborhood VIP Coalitions and partner agencies to the Mayor's Office, other City agencies, service providers and others.
8. Partner with VIP Coalitions in order to ensure that City government actively joins the coalitions to problem solve and address challenges in the neighborhood.
9. Ensure active, accurate and consistent communication between the Boston Public Health Commission and the VIP Coalitions.

10. Work with VIP partners to support the development of a data collection process that accurately tracks VIP neighborhood activities and impact, including using a set of common indicators that will be collected across the VIP neighborhoods.
11. Continue to explore increased City of Boston funding and take advantage of external funding opportunities to support the neighborhood VIP efforts.
12. BPHC VIP Program Director will inform VIP neighborhood partner if non-compliance is putting them at risk of incurring a reduction of funds or termination of contract and give them an opportunity to resolve any issues.

### III. RFP Timeline

Sunday, December 3, 2023	RFP Legal Notice publication in The Boston Globe
Monday, December 4, 2023	RFP available online at <a href="#">BPHC RFPs and Bids   Boston.gov</a> <b>10:00 AM EST</b> . RFP will also be disseminated via e-mail to <b>relevant</b> networks
Monday, December 11, 2023	Questions due in writing by email only <b>5:00 PM EST</b> to:  Tania Mireles, <a href="mailto:tmireles@bphc.org">tmireles@bphc.org</a>  Subject – VIP Neighborhood Lead Agency RFP
Friday, December 22, 2023	Responses to questions available for viewing on <a href="#">BPHC RFPs and Bids   Boston.gov</a> by <b>4:00 PM EST</b>
Friday, February 16, 2024	RFP due by <b>5:00 PM EST</b> Submit via email to  <a href="mailto:RFR@bphc.org">RFR@bphc.org</a> CC: <a href="mailto:tmireles@bphc.org">tmireles@bphc.org</a>  Subject line – {Vendor Name} RFP For VIP Neighborhood Lead Agency  <b>NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE</b>
Monday, March 4, 2024	Eligible agencies will be notified of selection for interview by <b>5:00 PM EST</b>
Monday, March 11 - Friday, March 22, 2024	Lead agency interviews will be conducted.

Monday, April 1, 2024	Notification of Decision: Selected agencies will be notified by or before <b>5:00PM EST</b> of the award.
Monday, July 1, 2024	Contract Year 1 begins
Monday, June 30, 2025	Contract Year 1 ends
Saturday, July 1, 2027	Recompete process begins
Saturday, June 30, 2028	Initial 4-year partnership ends

**IV. Minimum Qualifications**

**Eligible Neighborhood**

There are currently 6 VIP neighborhoods in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan. This current Request for Proposals is a recompete for 5 lead agencies to implement the VIP Initiative in those or other neighborhoods in Boston with a high incidence of violence. The designated neighborhood should be consistently identified among highest incidence of gun violence by the Boston Police Department. In addition, the neighborhood should also have significant community assets such as schools, community centers, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, resident associations, Main Streets/strong business sector, and/or health centers that can collaborate and support the neighborhood VIP Initiative. The target area must be contiguous and be small enough for Coordinators and Block Captains to get to know and be known by residents. Previous/current VIP neighborhoods have included 900 to 1000 households.

*\*Please note that areas proposed will be reviewed by Boston Public Health Commission and grantees prior to approving and finalizing the proposed area.*

**Eligible Organizations**

Organizations encouraged to apply for this funding include grassroots community groups, faith-based organizations, tenant associations or established nonprofit organizations currently working with community residents. The organization must be based in Boston, preferably in the neighborhood proposed to work in. Organizations must have demonstrated experience in community organizing and advocacy; must have a mission statement that addresses systemic inequities or be willing to take on this mission; must be a 501(C) (3) based in Boston or must apply via a 501(c) (3) organization that will act as the fiscal manager for the funds.



## IV. Proposal Requirements

Complete a proposal of no more than 10 pages responding to the application questions. Responses should be double spaced, using a 12-point font with one-inch margins. A budget and proposed map should also be included in the 10 pages. Please email a PDF version of the original proposal to [RFR@bphc.org](mailto:RFR@bphc.org), and cc [tmireles@bphc.org](mailto:tmireles@bphc.org).

**All proposals must be received at the Boston Public Health Commission by Friday, February 16, 2024, 5:00 PM EST. There will be no exceptions to this deadline.**

### **Proposal Narrative**

Please answer the following questions by responding in the order in which they appear (maximum of 10 double spaced pages).

- 1) Please describe the mission of your organization and services you provide in your community. **(2.5 pts)**
- 2) Please identify the specific boundaries (streets) of the target area for which you are applying and justify the selection by describing the levels of community gun violence, other crime and factors contributing to violence in the area, as well as neighborhood infrastructure and other assets that will support coalition building. Please utilize data and be as specific as possible. **(10 pts)**
- 3) Please describe the nature, extent, and impact of violence in the neighborhood. What are your current and previous efforts to address violence in your community? **(15 pts)**
- 4) Briefly describe the demographics, challenges and community assets. Also discuss your experience and ability to reach, engage and activate residents in the neighborhood, including how you will engage hard-to-reach populations, in the VIP Initiative. Be sure to identify who the hard-to-reach populations include. Please address language needs in the neighborhood and how you anticipate filling those needs. **(10 pts)**
- 5) Describe how you will recruit and engage residents, youth, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, police, other city agencies, local businesses and hard-to-reach populations to develop and implement a Violence Prevention Plan for the neighborhood. In addition, please address the following: **(20 pts)**
  - a) Describe a new and innovative engagement tool or strategy that you have or would utilize to continue to engage all the above-mentioned stakeholders?
  - b) How would you sustain continuous resident engagement at Coalition meetings and events?
  - c) How will residents show leadership?

- d) How would you use social media to recruit and engage residents?
- e) How would you engage hard-to-reach residents? Please specify who those hard to reach populations are.
- 6) Describe how your organization serves and engages the youth in your community. **(10 pts)**
- a) Please describe previous experiences providing services and working with youth in your community?
- b) Please describe how you will actively engage youth in the Coalition and what their roles would be.
- 7) Describe your organization's past and current efforts in addressing: **(20 pts)**
- a) Physical disorder
- b) Youth access to employment and leadership opportunities
- c) Taking action to address the causes of violence in the community
- d) Health and social service referrals. Who are your partners and what are some outcomes from each of these efforts?
- 8) Please briefly describe how your organization will be able to support the VIP Neighborhood Coordinator and their work. Please include: **(10 pts)**
- a) The organization's ability to convene and support a monthly coalition meeting
- b) Where the Coordinator will be placed in your organization
- c) To whom the Coordinator will report and that person's ability to serve on the VIP Advisory Group. (Meets every other month; occasionally there are extra meetings.)
- d) Your ability to complete a monthly data collection process that accurately tracks VIP neighborhood activities that includes common indicators across VIP neighborhoods.
- e) Commitment to attend all VIP/BPHC meetings
- 9) Applications should include an annual budget: July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The budget should be up to \$82,000. You may also indicate any in-kind contributions your organization will add to the initiative. Funds may be used:
- To pay the salary of one full time VIP neighborhood coordinator
  - To pay a stipend of at least minimum wage to a minimum of 1 resident block captain.
  - To pay for a Block Captain Outreach budget to support house parties, door knocks, etc. facilitated by the block captains.
  - To pay for subcontracts with partner youth organizations
  - To pay for trainings
  - To pay for space
  - To pay for supplies, refreshments and materials

Funds will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis. Funds cannot be used for costs incurred before July 1, 2024 or after the contract date on June 30, 2025 (unless the contract is extended). Costs may not be used to cover non-VIP related expenses.

#### **V. Period of Performance and Location**

The effective date of this partnership will be from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2028. The partnership contract will be renewed annually for up to 4 years, contingent upon satisfactory completion of terms and continued funding from the City of Boston.

#### **VI. Submission Instructions**

Please submit your Proposal before Friday, February 16, 2024 due by **5:00 PM EST** - Submit PDF only via email to [RFR@bphc.org](mailto:RFR@bphc.org) and cc [tmireles@bphc.org](mailto:tmireles@bphc.org).

Subject line – {Vendor Name} RFP For VIP Lead Agency

**NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE, Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by 5:00 PM EST**