



Request for Proposals

Strategic Planning Consultant(s)

Issued Date: May 5, 2022

SUMMARY

Hyde Square Task Force (HSTF) has proudly served Boston's Latin Quarter (the Hyde/Jackson Square neighborhood of Jamaica Plain) for three decades. We have worked with thousands of young people throughout this time, many of whom maintain their connection with HSTF long after completing our programming. A great many of them are thriving in the community as professionals, organizers, elected officials, and in other leadership roles. We are proud of our history and our long-term commitment to strengthening our neighborhood and fostering youth leadership that spans into the future. HSTF alumni are an integral part of our organization, including on our board of directors. We are currently in the last year of a 4-year strategic plan, which bolstered our mission, cemented a theory of change, and set us in the pursuit of five key strategic goals. While much has been accomplished over the past three years, our plan did not account for the global health crisis we have been experiencing since March 2020. As we emerge from the pandemic and begin to navigate a *new normal*, HSTF needs to develop a new blueprint to guide our organization into the next five years, 2023-2028.

BACKGROUND

Mission and Overview

HSTF has proudly served Boston's Latin Quarter (Hyde/Jackson Square neighborhood) for 30 years. ***Our mission is to amplify the power, creativity, and voices of youth, connecting them to Afro-Latin culture and heritage so they can create a diverse, vibrant Latin Quarter and build a just, equitable Boston.***

Our last strategic plan clarified our program model and areas of focus. HSTF provides Afro-Latin arts and culture opportunities not generally available in Boston as a way for youth to feel more confident and engaged, and more connected to their community and heritage. These opportunities serve as protective factors for youth. When coupled with academic support, youth leadership opportunities, and community organizing, they effectively empower youth to build skills, learn to work collaboratively, and share their skills to positively impact their communities. HSTF's core programs are rooted in best practices in the creative youth development field and lead to specific and important youth outcomes. In conjunction with programs benefitting youth, HSTF youth enrich and are enriched by, connecting and working in partnership with neighbors in the Latin Quarter through Afro-Latin arts and advocacy. Serving as managers of the Latin Quarter, HSTF is committed to uplifting Afro-Latin arts and culture, activating public spaces, and partnering with Afro-Latin artists and others to move our vision for the neighborhood forward. Boston's Latin Quarter recognizes Latinx residents, particularly those with Afro-Latin roots, and the longstanding contributions they have made to Boston and beyond. We are committed to preserving the identity and strength of our neighborhood for years to come.

Population

HSTF works with children, youth, and young adults, ages 6-25. A majority of HSTF participants are current students or graduates of Boston Public Schools. Our core Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action (JEA) program primarily serves Latinx and Black youth from low-income Boston households. Of the JEA youth that reported income in FY22, 83% were members of low-income households. Nearly all (98%) identified as youth of color, with 46% identifying as Latinx, 32% as Black, and 18% as bi/multiracial. 49% had families/caregivers/guardians that were not born in the U.S., and 20% were not born in the U.S. themselves. JEA serves youth from across Boston, and in FY22 35% of JEA youth resided in Dorchester, 15% in Roxbury, 12% in Roslindale, and 10% in Jamaica Plain. 67% of JEA youth identified as female, 30% as male, and 3% as nonbinary.

Our College Success Program (CSP) also primarily serves Latinx and Black young adults from Boston. 63% of students self-identify as Latinx and 30% as Black. 26% of these students were born outside the United States, with 14% born in the Dominican Republic and 4% in Haiti. 61% of CSP students self-identify as female and 39% as male.

Programs

HSTF has three core areas of programming, which are as follows (also see attached Theory of Change document):

Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action (JEA): JEA is our year-round program for youth in grades 8–12 that combines three components: Afro-Latin arts (dance, music, and theatre), education supports and mentoring, and civic engagement and youth organizing. Participants also benefit from social-emotional support both 1:1 and in small groups. Through this program, we aim to work with 150 youth annually.

College Success: Our College Success Program supports students as they transition into college or another post-high school training program, stay enrolled, and ultimately earn a degree or certificate. College students also benefit from social-emotional 1:1 support. Through this program, we work with approximately 250 college students each year.

Creative Development and Community Engagement: Our Creative Development and Community Engagement programs focus on creative place-making and place-keeping, advocacy and organizing, development of Boston's Latin Quarter as a cultural district, and community-based Afro-Latin arts enrichment. We provide in-school arts enrichment through our Learn Through Dance program and affordable music classes through our Music Clubhouse. Through these two programs, we work with an additional 100-150 children and youth each year.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

As we near the end of our current strategic plan, HSTF needs to engage in planning to map out the next stage of development and growth for the organization. We remain committed to our core programs, which amplify the voices of youth by engaging them in creative expression, supporting them academically, equipping them with critical leadership skills, and engaging them in positive community change. HSTF is also committed to utilizing Afro-Latin arts and culture to strengthen community and to increase a sense of belonging among residents in the Latin Quarter and beyond.

We recently selected a redevelopment partner for the Blessed Sacrament Church, which will bring affordable and workforce housing to the neighborhood and flexible space for creative events and community gatherings. This will bring new opportunities for HSTF, which we need to strategically plan for.

A new strategic plan will take all the gains that have been made over the past four years while reflecting on new opportunities to deepen and strengthen our work. All this needs to be done using an equity analysis and ensuring that the voices of our young people are lifted and reflected in our plans going forward.

We see this next strategic plan as an opportunity to step back and develop bold, strategic, and attainable goals to guide our work over the next five years. HSTF is seeking consultancy services for the development of a five-year strategic plan, with a broad community reach. The project has been budgeted for up to \$75,000.

We seek consultants with expertise in organizational development and community engagement to embark on a plan that is multifaceted and inclusive of as many voices as possible. The selected firm will be asked to partner with marketing/communications experts (if this function is not available in-house) to ensure we are communicating clearly across all of our stakeholders as the planning process unfolds. HSTF is interested in engaging board members, staff, youth, families/caregivers/guardians, Latin Quarter residents, and a broad set of stakeholders in designing a plan that outlines clear strategies to deepen our work and position the organization strongly for the next five years. Maximum engagement of key stakeholders may require Spanish translation of planning materials, surveys, and facilitated meetings. HSTF will work with the selected consulting group to make sure this happens as needed.

Specifically, HSTF is looking for a firm or set of consultants that can provide the following to the project:

- **Organizational Development:** As part of the planning process, consultants will conduct an environmental/field scan and research to understand HSTF's position in the ecosystem, specifically as a creative youth development and arts organization. This team will also conduct a SWOT analysis to note HSTF's current state, challenges, and opportunities as it looks to the future. In close collaboration with HSTF leadership, board, staff, youth, and families/caregivers/guardians, this group will help HSTF develop a 5-year plan, including specific goals, objectives, and metrics to track progress over time.
- **Community Engagement:** As part of the organizational development team or in collaboration with this team, the community engagement specialists will design a dynamic and multifaceted process (e.g., focus groups, interviews, surveys) to elicit feedback from as many community voices as possible regarding HSTF's work and opportunities for the future. Representation of key stakeholder groups will be a priority, including youth, families/caregivers/guardians, Latin Quarter residents, merchants, Afro-Latin artists, and other groups as determined by the strategic planning committee. Findings from this engagement process will be reflected in the final strategic plan.
- **Communication and Marketing:** To achieve as much participation as possible, we will rely on a communication and marketing strategy to make sure that there is significant community engagement in the planning process. Additionally, the team will develop communication and marketing strategies to help HSTF effectively share with the community the final plan.

HSTF welcomes the use of teams that include subcontractors who provide specialized technical expertise and/or community engagement skills.

The consultants must develop a process that looks at the following questions.

MISSION/VISION/VALUES:

- *Does the vision established in 2018 still capture the work of HSTF and its future direction?*
- *Does the mission established in 2018 still capture the work of HSTF and its future direction?*
- *Do our values still align with our approach to our work and the overall mission and vision for the organization?*

PROGRAMS:

Overview

- *Where is HSTF having the greatest impact?*
- *Going forward, how should HSTF define impact?*
- *How do we strengthen and/or modify our youth programs to increase impact, and possibly, engage more youth annually?*
- *How do we integrate an equity lens through all aspects of our organization, including our programming?*

Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action

- *How do we increase participation in Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action (JEA)?*
- *How can we strengthen JEA's civic engagement and organizing component?*
- *How can we strengthen JEA parental engagement?*

College Success

- *What is the best model for HSTF's College Success Program?*
- *How can the model be strengthened?*

- *How can we build on over 10 years of experience with the program to incorporate support not only for college-going students but students who select alternative postsecondary paths?*

Creative Development

- *What is the best model for in-school programming? What opportunities are there for expansion (if any)?*
- *Is there an opportunity to increase our offerings in community-based arts enrichment (affordable music classes, dance)?*
- *Are there successful creative place-making/place-keeping strategies being used across the country that HSTF can employ in Boston's Latin Quarter?*
- *What future programmatic opportunities can we foresee as the redevelopment of the Blessed Sacrament Church comes to fruition?*
- *How do we attract more Afro-Latin artists to bring their work to Boston's Latin Quarter?*
- *How do we increase the engagement of immediate residents in Boston's Latin Quarter activities?*
- *How do we grow and elevate the visibility of Boston's Latin Quarter?*

Other

- *How do we strengthen the social-emotional support we provide youth and college students?*
- *Is HSTF meeting the most pressing needs of its participants and their families?*
- *How can HSTF involve alumni more strategically in all aspects of its work?*

INFRASTRUCTURE:

- *What financial model will allow HSTF to better sustain its work and most effectively achieve its mission?*
- *Does the current organizational structure and staffing model align with what we are seeking to achieve?*
- *How do we continue to create an attractive work environment that encourages staff growth and retention?*
- *What changes in technology are needed to remain competitive and efficient?*

EXTERNAL CONTEXT:

- *How do key stakeholders define HSTF? Does it reflect our internal view of ourselves?*
- *What are the strategic alliance opportunities available to HSTF that are feasible and would further our mission?*
- *How can HSTF improve its marketing and outreach strategies to ensure more people understand the organization's work and its value to the City of Boston?*
- *Does the current fundraising model align with what we are seeking to achieve?*

SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. Working with a Strategic Planning Committee, made up of staff and board members, the consultant will design a 6-month planning process that engages HSTF's key stakeholders (including youth, families/caregivers/guardians, and Latin Quarter residents) in a meaningful way. The process needs to include a strong community engagement element that brings in as many voices as possible to inform HSTF's future direction. Additionally, the plan should include a marketing and communication strategy to help HSTF communicate about the planning process and the final plan once it has been completed.
2. Develop a five-year strategic plan.
3. Provide recommendations and strategies for the actual implementation of the plan.
4. Review and, if appropriate, revise/update HSTF's Theory of Change.
5. To arrive at the five-year strategic plan, the consultant will be willing to do the following:
 - a. Research: The consultant will scan literature to identify best practices and new knowledge related to HSTF's programming. Additionally, the consultant will do an environmental scan (mostly local) to understand where HSTF fits in the ecosystem and recommend ways in which the organization can position itself more competitively.

- b. Interviews and Focus Groups: The consultant will interview key stakeholders, including youth, alumni, families/caregivers/guardians, board members, staff, nonprofit partners, funders, and Latin Quarter residents to inform the strategic plan and explore key questions. Focus groups may be used as another means to gather community perspectives regarding HSTF’s current and future direction.
 - c. Document Review: Consultants will review relevant HSTF written materials, including newsletters, website, program collateral, and other relevant materials to ground themselves in the organization and to inform recommendations for the future.
6. In addition to a comprehensive plan, the consultant will prepare an abridged presentation of the plan, to be presented to the board, staff of HSTF, and other relevant audiences.

DELIVERABLES

HSTF expects the following deliverables as part of this engagement:

- Copies of all instruments used/created to collect the information gathered as part of the planning process.
- Periodic briefings to the Strategic Planning Committee and Executive Director throughout the engagement.
- A five-year strategic plan that includes clear goals, objectives, and metrics to track success.
- A revised Theory of Change, if appropriate.
- A short memorandum that outlines recommendations and strategies for implementing the five-year strategic plan.
- An abridged PowerPoint presentation of the plan that can be shared with multiple audiences, including staff, board, community stakeholders, and funders.

SCHEDULE

Strategic planning activities should commence in June, to complete the process by the end of February 2023. The following schedule provides target dates for the selection process, planning activities, and agreed-upon deliverables:

RFP issued	May 5, 2022
Proposals due (electronically)	June 3, 2022
Consultant selection announced	June 10, 2022
Planning begins	June 13, 2022
Consultants work with HSTF to complete the plan	June 2022 to January 2023
Board presentation	February 2023

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Consultant profile, including:
 - a. Summary of qualifications and resumes for all staff (and subcontractors, if applicable) that will be working on the project.
 - b. A minimum of three references of groups the consultant has provided comparable services to in the past.
 - c. A summary of comparable engagements or related work products that showcase the consultant’s work.
 - d. Evidence of experience and knowledge of working with organizations similar to HSTF and its population.
 - e. Evidence that the consultant can manage a collaborative process effectively which results in a clear plan.
 - f. Demonstrate a commitment to social justice.

2. A proposal that incorporates the scope of services outlined herein, including key tasks, associated deadlines, and approach to the work.
3. Project fees must include a line item project expense budget indicating all costs for carrying out the proposed work, including personnel, travel, supplies, materials, overhead, and all other necessary expenses.

Questions can be directed to Celina Miranda, Executive Director, at celina@hydesquare.org.

Hyde Square Task Force is an equal opportunity provider and employer. We value having a diverse staff who are representative of the community we serve and bring to our organization a variety of traditions, experiences, and points of view. Individuals of all backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.