REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

MEDIA RELATIONS SUPPORT FOR BARR FOUNDATION MOBILITY GRANTEES

For Release: September 29, 2023

Barr Foundation’s Mobility Strategy focuses on advancing equity-centered, low carbon mobility solutions by prioritizing funding of:

- Community-driven solutions that lower greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and land-use
- Cross-sector partnerships between a wide range of stakeholders working on transportation, land use, community planning, and related issues
- Capacity building and leadership of state and municipal government bodies engaged in transportation, land use, and planning

Central to the effectiveness of Mobility’s community-driven and cross-sector partnership strategy are strategic communications that help build trust and strong relationships, shift narratives, change policy, and inspire collective action. As such, the Mobility team looks to support and strengthen the communications capacity and efforts of their grantees.

Project Description

Overview

Media relations is an important component of strategic communications that most Mobility grantees have limited experience with. The objective of this project is to deliver media relations support - namely, messaging development, media list building, preparation of pitches and press releases, conducting press outreach, and guidance on social media amplification - to Mobility grantees, located in Massachusetts. Ultimately, we believe this support will diversify the voices, stories, and experiences covered in local, regional, and even national news about mobility and help Mobility grantees advance their missions and drive policy change.
Communications Objectives
The communications objectives of this project are to:

**Get:** Massachusetts public sector decision makers

**To:** make policy change and allocate funding in support of equitable solutions for low-carbon transportation, community planning, and development in Massachusetts

**By:** educating them on real-life opportunities, experiences, and success stories of people who have been most harmed by unjust transportation and land use policies

**Get:** Massachusetts residents - especially Indigenous, Black, and other people of color; women and non-binary people; low-income families; youth; older adults; disabled people; undocumented individuals; and non-English speakers

**To:** publicly share their real-life experiences with and perspectives on transportation, community planning, and development in Massachusetts

**By:** garnering media coverage that illustrates the positive impact of inclusive storytelling (in other words, by creating a ripple effect where one person or group sharing their story inspires others to do the same)

**Deliverables**

**Design and delivery of a one-year media relations support pilot program for Mobility grantees.** Specific media relations support should include, but not be limited to, messaging development, media training, media list building, media outreach, preparing media pitches, writing press releases and op-eds, and guidance on social media amplification.

To support grantees with identifying media opportunities, it will be important for the selected consultant to stay apprised of mobility and climate related news in Massachusetts and nationally. And given Barr’s focus on relationship-building, collaboration, and progress over the long-term, we will look for the selected consultant to draw connections between the activities of different grantees.

It will also be important to enable the grantees to ‘learn by doing’ by delivering support in a way that builds their skills. Because these organizations have such limited communications capacity, it is important to execute the work for them (e.g., write press releases, key messages, and talking points). But, sharing processes, tools, templates, etc. for how this work is created is also important so that program participants are equipped to do some of this work on their own in the future.
Timing
We will launch this program in January 2024.

Budget
We have allocated a budget of $125,000 for the first year of this project. However, we welcome discussions of options at higher and lower price ranges, which would allow us to understand potential tradeoffs and to gauge how potential partners push our thinking about the optimal solution.

Success Metrics
- Press coverage featuring Mobility grantees and constituents, especially people who have been most harmed by unjust transportation and land use policies
  - Number of stories
  - Depth of coverage (i.e., coverage beyond media mentions that positions grantees and their constituents as experts, coverage that drives toward desired program outcomes of a low-carbon transportation system and community development practices that enable people to get to what they need by using low-carbon modes)
  - Diversity of media outlets (e.g., language, geography, and reach) and modes (e.g., print, audio, video)
- Mobility grantee experience and capacity building evidenced through survey feedback

Partners
This communications capacity building pilot program is to support Barr’s Mobility Strategy within our Climate program. The Barr Mobility team will be the client but most of the work will involve interacting directly with Mobility grantees.

Mobility Grantees
Mobility grantees are generally Massachusetts-based nonprofit organizations whose work focuses on or includes themes related to reducing transportation-related GHG emissions in Massachusetts. It is a diverse group of organizations, including many that are led by people of color, and they pursue change through community organizing and policy advocacy. Most of these organizations work not only on transportation or planning/development, but in other areas related to environmental justice such as housing and public health.

A group of 18 Mobility grantees (See Appendix) have been identified to receive this media relations support (if they desire) as a start. These organizations are relatively small in terms of staff size (10 staff members or less) and as a result, have limited FTE communications support. Some organizations have one person fully dedicated to communications, some distribute communications responsibilities between a few staff members, and some have volunteers or interns executing their communications with support and guidance from staff members.
Project Managers
The Barr Foundation has engaged Folake Oguntebi to support the development of this pilot program including strategy development, consultant recruitment, and program management. Folake will be a key point of contact for this work alongside Najah Casimir from the Barr Foundation. Lisa Jacobson, Mary Chalifour, and Mariella Puerto from the Barr Foundation will also be engaged in this work.

Qualifications
We welcome proposals from independent consultants, firms, organizations, etc. who meet the qualifications, and will prioritize teams with people of color in decision-making roles.

Required
- Proven track record of expertise and experience with strategic communications, content creation, media relations, press strategy, and capacity building
- Experience working with nonprofits
- Familiarity with climate and mobility issues in Massachusetts
- Ability to respectfully consider multiple perspectives and discuss and incorporate feedback from multiple stakeholders

Preferred
- Strong preference for partners located in Massachusetts

Key Dates and Deadlines
- **Fri, Sep 29, 2023** - RFP released
- **Thu, Oct 12, 2023, 1:00 pm EDT** - Intent to Apply and Questions Due
  If you intend to submit a proposal, please let us know by completing this Interest and Question Form. You may also use the form to ask questions about this Request for Proposals or, more generally, Barr’s Mobility Strategy. Answers to all questions received will be emailed to everyone who submits an intent to apply.
- **Tuesday, October 17, 2023**: Answers to questions emailed
- **Tuesday, October 31, 2023 at 9:00 am EDT**: Proposals due via this submission form
- **Friday, November 3, 2023**: Notification of request for interviews
  At this time, we will let you know if you’ve been selected for an interview
- **Week of November 6, 2023**: Zoom interviews with finalists
  We ask that you hold the following times for potential interviews (all times in EDT):
  - Monday, November 6, 9:30 am - 2:00 pm
  - Tuesday, November 7, 9:30 - 11:00 am
  - Friday, November 10, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
- **Week of November 13, 2023**: Notification of final selection
- **January 2024**: Launch project work
Proposal Requirements

We request that you keep your scope of work, team overview, and budget to a maximum of a 5-page written document (e.g., Word Document), or a 10-page slide deck (e.g., PowerPoint). Resumes and inspiration samples may be included as additional pages. We ask that all documents be submitted as PDFs.

- **Draft Scope of Work** | A written document detailing how you envision working with Mobility grantees to provide the supports described in the project description.
  - Focus your submission ONLY on the scope outlined in this document. While we appreciate the range of capacities your consultancy may offer, we are eager to understand offerings related to this specific initiative and will not consider services beyond this scope in our evaluation. We are looking for a partner who will serve this role well and respect that we will have additional partners to support other aspects of our grantees’ communications work.

- **Team Overview** | Provide details about the team structure and the specific members of the team that will work on this project. If you desire, you may include resumes (one page per person) as additional pages.

- **Draft Budget** | Include a proposed budget with a high-level breakdown.

- **Inspiration Samples** | Provide three recent (within the past year) articles, podcast episodes, blog posts, or other media related to the topic of climate change, transportation, planning, or development in the state of Massachusetts that you have found compelling. *These may be, but do not have to be, pieces that you helped with (e.g., secured the placement, helped write, etc).* Similar to the method that we’ve used below in the “inspiration” section, **include 2-3 sentences about each piece, explaining why it is a compelling piece of communication.**

Additional Background Information

Inspiration

Examples of the types of media coverage we hope this program will deliver include:

Related to the Mobility strategy:

- **WCBV article and video spotlight** about pedestrian safety in East Boston featuring quotes from WalkMassachusetts’ (a Mobility grantee) team members - Jonathan Gomez-Pereira (an East Boston resident), Brendan Kearney, and Althea Wong-Achorn. This article brings in the perspective of the impacted community including that of a non-English speaker and illustrates a partnership between a community-based and advocacy organization.

- **Somerville Times report summary** of CultureHouse’s (a Mobility grantee) pop-up community space in East Somerville. This coverage illustrates the importance of local news coverage in promoting community related news.
• **GBH News article** about the extension of Worcester’s zero fare bus program through June 2024. This article highlights the efforts of the Zero Fare Coalition and incorporates a local resident’s perspective, showcases a successful policy outcome, and highlights the region’s position as a national leader in transit policy.

Climate Program examples:

• **Mother Jones article** about GreenRoots’ (a Mobility and Clean Energy grantee) work with the city of Chelsea on the nation’s first community-owned microgrid. This article details an innovative, community-informed approach to clean energy (i.e., microgrids) and illustrates the importance and some of the complexities of including marginalized communities in decision-making.

• **WBUR article** about New England states asking ISO New England to create a first-in-the-nation executive-level position dedicated to environmental justice and energy equity including quotes from Slingshot’s (a Clean Energy grantee) Mireille Bejjani describing the importance of including community voices in clean energy decision-making.

• **Boston Globe spotlight** on Massachusetts climate leaders including Dwaign Tyndal, Executive Director of Alternatives for Community and Environment (a Clean Energy and Mobility grantee). This piece positions Dwaign as an expert and highlights some of his/her organization’s specific ideas (e.g., importance of air quality, local political energy and governance).

**Potentially Helpful Links**

• **Barr Foundation About Us page**

• **Climate Program Overview**

• **Mobility Strategy Overview**

• **Blog post about the recent refresh of the Mobility Strategy**

**About the Barr Foundation**

The Barr Foundation’s mission is to invest in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. As stewards, Barr nurtures vital community assets. As catalysts, the Foundation advances breakthrough ideas to shape our collective future. We work in partnership with nonprofits, foundations, the public sector, and civic and business leaders to elevate the arts and creative expression, advance solutions for climate change, and connect all students to success in high school and beyond. Based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally and selectively engages nationally.

Founded in 1997, Barr has grown to become one of the largest private foundations in New England and has contributed over $1 billion to charitable causes. With assets of $2.6 billion, Barr’s 2023 grantmaking budget is $133 million. We focus our grantmaking on arts and creativity, climate, and education – complemented by grants to strengthen New England’s social sector and for targeted special initiatives.
Appendix
List of Mobility grantees eligible to receive this support:

- Allston Brighton Health Collaborative
- Alternatives for Community and Environment
- Arise for Social Justice
- Boston Cyclists Union
- Chinese Progressive Association Boston
- Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester
- Coalition for Social Justice Education Fund
- Community Labor United
- CultureHouse
- MassBike
- Mass Senior Action Council
- Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition
- Neighbor to Neighbor
- New England United for Justice
- StreetsblogMASS
- TransitMatters
- Transportation for Massachusetts
- WalkMassachusetts