

ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative

April 2011

Dear After School Director/Program Leader:

We are pleased to provide you with this Request for Proposals and invite you to participate in ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative. Created in 2000, ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative has worked with over 90 after school programs throughout the city of Boston promoting a love of reading, literature, and literacy. At its core, ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative increases the exposure of children and youth to reading, and builds their engagement, interest and skills. To accomplish this, ReadBoston works closely with after school directors and staff, coaching staff to lead engaging literacy activities. These activities include reading aloud with groups of students, creating independent reading times, and promoting book-related activities. ReadBoston also purchases and develops diverse book collections in after school programs, creating inviting spaces for reading. Since its inception, ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative has been a leader in the after school field, developing innovative approaches and practices. An evaluation of the After School Reading Initiative completed in 2006 confirms this.

This is a professional development initiative: ReadBoston *trains* after school program staff to sustain literacy practices initially modeled by literacy coaches. To accomplish this, literacy coaches meet weekly, on-site, with program staff. Coaching sessions include:

- How to lead an effective group read aloud; What kinds of questions engage children;
- Promoting Independent reading;
- Book-extension activities to promote literacy skills and creativity;
- Understanding and leading Environmental Literacy;
- Reaching reluctant readers; Supporting English Language learners.

Both school-based and community-based programs are invited to apply. Organizations may apply for more than one site, but must submit separate applications for each site. Below you will find a complete description and an application for participation in this professional development initiative.

Programs should **submit all application materials by Friday, May 20th, 2011.** Mailing instructions and other details for submission are located in the enclosed RFP. A copy of the application can also be found on ReadBoston's website <http://readboston.org>. All questions about the application process should be addressed to Anna Adler, Manager of Literacy Programs, ReadBoston, 617-918-5247, Anna.Adler.jcs@cityofboston.gov. We look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,
Anna Adler
Manager of Literacy Programs, ReadBoston

ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative

2011-2012 RFP

Overview of Program:

Created in 2000, ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative has worked with over 90 after school programs throughout the city of Boston promoting a love of reading, literature, and literacy. At its core, ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative is designed to increase the exposure of children and youth to reading, and build their engagement, interest and skills. To accomplish this, ReadBoston works closely with after school directors and staff, coaching staff to lead engaging literacy activities.

Key Goals:

- After school directors make reading activities a consistent priority in program schedules.
- After school staff receive intensive coaching from ReadBoston.
- After school staff lead quality-reading activities that support school day efforts.
- Students read more frequently and develop a greater excitement for reading.
- Students have access to quality books in their after school programs.



An after school library developed by ReadBoston. Independent reading in an after school program.

Coaching and Professional Development Scheduling Requirements:

ReadBoston's After School Reading Initiative trains after school staff to sustain literacy practices initially modeled by literacy coaches. To accomplish this, ReadBoston literacy coaches meet weekly, on-site, with program staff. During coaching sessions, literacy coaches follow a curriculum based upon ReadBoston's years of working with after school programs.

In addition to coaching sites will receive:

- Significant book collections, including quality books for multi-ages and abilities, intended both for read alouds and independent reading;
- Training materials that offer activities and tips for staff in making reading activities most effective.

All materials are for programs to keep.

The coaching and literacy materials are valued at approximately **\$10,000 per site.**

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The coaching support will last at least **6 months to one full school year, with coaches visiting one or two times per week**. This will involve coaches and staff working directly with children, as well as times when staff are coached individually or in groups.

- At least two (2) if not more consistent staff members coached every week for at least 30 minutes. (Staff must be freed from their usual direct service responsibilities during the coaching session.);
- Two literacy blocks, 45-60 minutes each, twice a week, for coaches to model reading aloud and independent reading with coached staff present. (For example, two reading blocks from 3:30-4:15 and 4:15-5:00 on Tuesdays *and* Thursdays.) **Staff will eventually lead these activities;**
- Weekly 20-30 minute meetings between director and coach (the director will receive some coaching during this time); and
- Additional times for literacy workshops – open to all staff – during staff meetings or other times.

Coaches will work out a coaching schedule with the site director at the outset of their involvement and programs are expected to adhere to this schedule as closely as possible.

Applicants should be aware that the overall intent of the coaching is to embed within programs a “culture of reading” and quality literacy practices ***that will endure long past the direct involvement of ReadBoston.***

The ReadBoston coaches *should not be considered program staff* and should not be expected to take on any responsibilities outside of those that are directly related to their coaching activities. For example, coaches should not be left alone to care for children in the program or be in programs without other staff present.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY:

Both community and school-based after school sites in Boston are invited to apply to receive this intensive literacy technical assistance.

An eligible grant recipient must:

- Include, as part of its mission, program design and schedule, a consistent program component focused on learning in which all students participate;
- Serve elementary school children;
- Operate its program from the end of the school day until 5:00 or 6:00 pm at least three (3) days per week for at least 30 weeks during the school year;
- Designate at least two staff if not all, to participate in this professional development coaching process. *Staff identified for coaching must sign this application to indicate their intended participation;*
- Commit time specifically for staff to meet outside of direct service responsibilities for coaching.

Organizations may choose to apply for more than one site, but must submit separate applications for each site. Each of these sites must meet the above qualifications.

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SELECTION CRITERIA

ReadBoston welcomes a diverse pool of programs to apply for participation.

Important:

- **The site director must show how his/her time and skills will be committed to the effort.** *Directors must meet weekly with the coach to insure continued understanding of the coaching process and to solve any problems that may arise.* The director will be required to facilitate and participate in all aspects of the partnership including meeting and setting goals with literacy coaches and holding staff accountable for coaching by relieving participating staff of their direct service responsibilities by arranging coverage during regular program hours.
- Programs should have a track record of maintaining solid attendance and retention rates among students.
- Programs should demonstrate a commitment to sustaining program quality, including maintaining reasonable retention rates among staff.
- School-based sites should, if possible, demonstrate strong support from school leadership.
- Agency-based sites should demonstrate strong support from the organization's senior leadership for participation in this professional development opportunity.
- *Programs can submit letters of endorsement from leadership and/or have them sign the signature page at the end of the application.*

Proposal Submission Information:

- Proposals may be submitted in either electronic version (preferred) or in hard copy. All application materials must be **received no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, May 20th, 2011.** A copy of the application can also be found at <http://readboston.org>.
- If you have questions please feel free to call **Anna Adler, Manager of Literacy Programming, ReadBoston, at 617-918-5247.**
- **In the days following the application deadline, ReadBoston may contact applicants about hosting a visit. These site visits will take approximately 60-75 minutes and are intended to follow up on any information provided in the written application.**

Mail/email applications to:

Anna Adler, Manager of Literacy Programming, ReadBoston

43 Hawkins Street, Boston, MA 02114

Anna.Adler.JCS@cityofboston.gov (email submission preferred) Fax: 617-918-5475

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Application

2011-2012

Please type or print answers. If you use additional pages to answer questions, please indicate directly on this application that the answer is printed on a separate page.

Agency Name: _____

After-School Site Name: _____

If School-Based, School Name: _____

Name of Director/Program Contact: _____ Email: _____

Phone Number at Site: _____

Program Address: _____

Days of Operation: _____

Hours of Operation: _____

Approximate total number of students served in the program: _____

Age range: _____

of Kindergarten: _____ # of 5th Grade: _____

of 1st Grade: _____ # of 6th Grade: _____

of 2nd Grade: _____ # of 7th Grade: _____

of 3rd Grade: _____ # of 8th Grade: _____

of 4th Grade: _____

Ethnic breakdown of student population:

African American: _____ Cape Verdean: _____ Haitian: _____ Ethiopian: _____

Caucasian: _____ Asian: _____ Hispanic/Latino: _____ Native American: _____ Other: _____

Language(s) spoken by students: _____

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Program Description

Please describe your program and how it operates. You should touch on the following areas:

1. The program's goals/missions/priorities.
2. The program schedule (**Please attach a daily/weekly schedule**).
3. Whether and when your program has a regular staff meeting; please indicate the average duration of these meetings.
4. How students are grouped in the program (e.g. by age, by grade, by mixed grades, etc.).
5. The approximate daily attendance rate, your attendance policy, and how you track enrollment and attendance.
6. The approximate percentage of returning students (from Fall 2010- to Fall 2011).
7. The program space (e.g., shared school space, classroom, school cafeteria, church basement, etc.) and access to different facilities (e.g., school library, classrooms, etc.).

Staffing

Because the Initiative focuses on training staff to work effectively with students, staff play a key role in the success of this initiative. Please describe your staff, being sure to include the following information:

1. The site director's education, experience, length at the program and interest in including literacy activities in the program. Also, please indicate if the director has other responsibilities that might impact his/her availability (e.g. manages another program in the building/outside the building, etc).
2. Number of full-time staff, part-time staff, or tutors/volunteers. How many are:
Boston Public School Teachers; BPS Paraprofessionals; College Graduates; College Students; High School Graduates; High School Students; Community Members; College volunteers; City Year volunteers; Other.

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3. The percentage of staff returning from last year and the percentage that has worked at the program 2 or more years.
4. Process for recruiting and retaining staff.
5. Current staff's experience or commitment to leading literacy activities.
6. The interest of the staff in engaging in an intensive literacy professional development program. (***Intended participating staff must sign on final page of this application.***)
7. Has staff participated in any other on-site professional development training? Which one? Please describe how it went. Were any goals sustained?

Program's Literacy Activities

Because the coaching will focus on enhancing your program's current literacy activities, it is essential for you to share what you are currently doing and describe areas that need improvement. ***Note that programs without current literacy activities will still be considered serious applicants.***

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. Does your program currently have a literacy component? If yes, please describe.
2. If you answered "no" to # 1, what challenges do you face in integrating literacy activities (e.g. lack of space, lack of books and resources, staff skill or initiative--programs will not be penalized for honesty).
3. Describe why your after school program is currently seeking literacy technical assistance and what literacy goals you hope to achieve.

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4. In terms of activities, please indicate if any of the following occur in your program and how often. Please check all that apply:

- Staff read books aloud to students _____ times per week
- Students read independently _____ times per week
- Students create stories, songs, or poems _____ times per week
- Students write in their journals _____ times per week
- Other, please describe _____ times per week

5. In terms of resources and materials, please indicate if your program possesses (or has access to) and uses any of the following. *Please check all that apply:*

- A school-based library
- A program library or book corner
- A rolling book cart
- Variety of storybooks; approx. # ____
- Variety of chapter books; # ____
- Variety of nonfiction books; # ____
- Poetry books
- Books in languages other than English
- Multicultural books
- Other (please describe) _____

6. Is there a quiet or self-contained place for reading books in the space you use? Yes or no? Please describe.

Supporting the Coaching

The success of the Initiative relies upon literacy coaches having time for:

- ✓ Coaching at least 2 consistent staff members every week for at least 30 minutes. (These 2 staff must be freed from their usual responsibilities during the coaching sessions.);
- ✓ Two reading blocks, 45 minutes each, twice a week, for coaches to lead reading blocks with coached staff present (for example from 3:30-4:15 and 4:15-5:00 on Tuesdays *and* Thursdays);
- ✓ Weekly 20-30 minute meetings between director and coach (the director will receive some coaching during this time); and
- ✓ Additional times for workshops – open to all staff – during staff meetings or other times.

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1. Propose how these above times could be arranged in your program and how the site director would facilitate these meeting times.

2. Describe how your agency (if community-based) or school (if school-based) will support this professional development cycle. (*You may either include letters of endorsement from relevant administrators or managers, or have them sign the signature page at the conclusion of the application.*)

Signatures of After School Administrator who understands and supports the After School Reading Initiative requirements, and Staff Members who agree to participate:

Director Signature (*required*): _____

Print name: _____

Staff Signature #1 (*required*): _____

Print name: _____

Staff Signature #2 (*required*): _____

Print name: _____

Staff Signature #3 (if needed) _____

Print name: _____

NOTE: Applicants may either secure signatures from the executive director and principal (if school-based) or submit letters of endorsement from these individuals.

Executive Director Signature: _____

Print name: _____

School Principal Signature: _____

Print name: _____