

# Reparations Task Force

*July 13, 2023 Reparations Task Force Meeting*



# AGENDA



- I. Call to Order + Roll Call**
- II. RFP Presentation**
- III. Public Comment on RFP**
- IV. Bylaws**
- V. General Public Comment**

The background of the slide is a blue-tinted wireframe illustration of a city skyline, showing various building shapes and structures from an aerial perspective.

# Call to Order + Roll Call

## II. Administrative Updates

- RTF staffing team
    - Advisory Lead: Lori Nelson, Senior Advisor for Racial Justice
    - Operational Lead: Ajay Singh, Mayor's Office Policy Team
    - Operational Support: Maya Getter, Mayor's Office Policy Team
    - Advisory Support: Chief Mariangely Solis-Cervera, Equity and Inclusion
  - Upcoming meeting dates: **We will be finalizing meetings all the way up to December before the end of the week.** You can find those at [boston.gov/reparations](https://boston.gov/reparations) by Friday.
    - If you fill out the sign-in sheet, we'll make sure you get notification about upcoming dates once we post. Moving forward, we plan to have notices out for all dates at least a month in advance.
  - Trauma-informed care on-site
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The background of the slide is a blue-tinted wireframe illustration of a city skyline, viewed from an elevated perspective. The buildings are represented by white and light blue outlines, creating a complex geometric pattern. A dark blue horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the main text.

# RFP Presentation

# Roadmap

- 1. Framing the discussion: introductions and our process**
  - 2. Presenting language from the RFP (Carrie Mays, Dorothea Jones, Ajay Singh)**
    - a. Introduction
    - b. Scope of Work
    - c. Background & Qualifications
  - 3. Questions for discussion**
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# 1. Framing the discussion

# Some preliminary notes...

- A **Request for Proposals (RFP)** is a common tool used by the City to procure services.
  - The RFP process will be the primary vehicle by which the City will request historical research partners to support the completion of the historical report mandated in Reparation Task Force's founding ordinance.
  - The document we are about to present is *draft language* from the RFP. This is a work in progress – and subject to change.
  - The documents you will see today are directly reflect our current language on the **Introduction**, the **Scope of Work**, and the **Background Qualifications** that we would seek from prospective applicants. We've omitted confusing legal language to ensure fidelity to the community-grounded portions of the process + avoid confusion.
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# Our Process

- Staff put together a **foundation to work off of for the RFP**, consulting the best practices from various similar historical inquiries conducted by Evanston, Providence, the State of California, San Francisco, and Harvard University. Staff also consulted experts to adhere the text more closely with best practices in the academic historical community.
  - **Staff then presented the document to a smaller group of the Reparations Task Force for substantial review**, in line with the RFP playing a crucial role in the completion of Phase 1 of the RTF's work.
  - A smaller group of RTF members met with staff and rigorously vetted, revised, and reshaped the document to cohere with their understanding of the vision of the RTF and the community for the report. **The process of revision took up more than 7 hours of in-meeting discussions and work.**
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## 2. Presenting language from the RFP

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The Task Force on the Study of City of Boston Reparations requests proposals from academic research institutions or individual partners to conduct **a comprehensive historical inquiry and produce a report on the City of Boston's role in and historical ties to the slave trade and the institution and legacies of slavery.**

The City seeks a partner or partners with significant demonstrated experience in the study of African American history, with a preference for institutions or partners with understanding of the histories and archives related to enslaved Africans and people of African descent in the City of Boston; the trans-Atlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, and their legacies in the City of Boston.

# BACKGROUND

On **December 21, 2022**, the Boston City Council passed an ordinance initiating the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for reparations for descendants of formerly enslaved people of African descent in the City of Boston. The work of developing recommendations on a reparations program, advised by the Task Force with support from the City of Boston, comprises multiple phases:

- **Phase 1:** Research and document the City of Boston's role in and historical ties to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the institution and legacies of chattel slavery through the publication of a report.
- **Phase 2:** Assess the impact of the City of Boston's actions to date to address the legacy of slavery.
- **Phase 3:** Make final recommendations for the City of Boston for Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations addressing the City of Boston's involvement with the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

**The research partner or partners for this RFP will assist with the first phase of the Task Force's work** by conducting a comprehensive historical inquiry into the City of Boston's role in and historical ties to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the institution and legacies of slavery, as well as assessing the impact of the City's own programs, initiatives, and efforts to redress institutional racism over the same period of time. The historical inquiry and resulting report will be utilized to inform final recommendations of the Task Force.

# TIMELINE & PRICING

## **TIMELINE (*tentative and subject to change*)**

- RFP finalized during August's RTF meeting
- RFP will release for applications by end of August
- 6-8 weeks for submissions (September - November), bidder's conference in October
- 4-6+ weeks for review (November - December)
- Selection of consultants by end of December/early January

## PRICING

- This proposal is funded for a maximum of \$500,000 for twelve (12) months. There will be an option to extend this contract under the same terms for six (6) months.
- All prices are inclusive of travel. No additional charges, including travel lodging, subsistence, miscellaneous (ad-hoc) expenses and other expenses, will be allowed.
- Prices should include any relevant research costs, including expenses related to accessing archival collections, equipment for primary source work, and otherwise. Should the consultant firm encounter a collection that they do not readily have access to, the City of Boston and RTF will provide support (financial or otherwise) to ensure access can be achieved.



# SCOPE OF WORK

The City of Boston and the Reparations Task Force are looking for a partner or partners to provide historical research and writing services... The City intends to commission a comprehensive historical text from a set of historians comprising **units of study** as follows:

1. **Boston and Bostonians' economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies, 1620-1690**
2. **Boston and Bostonians' economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies, 1690-1750**
3. **Boston and Bostonians' economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies, 1750-1790**
4. **Boston and Bostonians' economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies and their legacies, 1790-1860**
5. **The economic, social, and political legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies, 1860-1940** (including but not limited to: reconstruction, sharecropping, Jim Crow, lynching and other forms of extralegal violence/racial terror, *de jure* segregation, eugenics and its legacies, legal/extralegal racial discrimination).
6. **The economic, social, and political legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies, 1940-Present** (including but not limited to: the Civil Rights movement and Black radicalism, “War on Drugs,” mass incarceration, the Moynihan Report, *de jure* and *de facto* segregation, redlining and displacement, police brutality, educational injustice and inequity, racial exploitation and discrimination).

The City intends for the report to detail the history of the ties between the trans-Atlantic slave trade, racial slavery from the Global South and its intimate **connections to Boston's specific histories of slavery**, the **history of Boston and its African descended peoples** and communities, and **the legacy of these historical ties within Boston's economic, political, and social history**. Woven throughout the report should be the relevance, legacies, and impacts of these historical phenomena upon American slavery in Boston, American freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants in Boston, and the people of the City of Boston.

Additionally, the report will center the City of Boston and its history, including its role as an institution and its relationship with other institutions (and how these institutions affirmed or perpetuated the trans-Atlantic slave trade and/or the institution or legacies of slavery), including but not limited to: **banks, medical institutions, insurance, real estate, religious institutions, private industries connected to trans-Atlantic slave economies or the slave trade, civic and political institutions, and higher education.**

While the scope of this inquiry is expansive, **we intend to deliver a report that addresses these many themes and topics with precision, rigor, and a deep sense of the report's purpose within the context of the ordinance.**

In keeping with these goals, each applicant should submit a proposal that includes the following:

1. **A short 2-4 page proposal for an original work of historical analysis on the City of Boston's historical ties to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the institution and legacies of slavery, adhering to one of the **units of study**...** The proposal should explicitly attend to harm produced by the trans-Atlantic slave trade or the institution and legacies of slavery in the City of Boston.
2. **A short 2-4 page proposal on how the candidate would contribute to a comprehensive literature review of the City of Boston's historical ties to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the institution and legacies of slavery from 1638 to the present** The response should include a proposal to draft one or more section/s of the historical review, adhering to the **units of study**... The individual/organization should also demonstrate clear understanding of the primary and secondary source materials available to accomplish the task relevant to their unit(s) of study and proposal.
3. **An example of a previously written original work of peer reviewed historical analysis by the respondent, 25-30 pages in length, on the topic of slavery and/or its aftermath in Boston, covering any time from 1638 to the present day. The work should take the form of a peer-reviewed journal article, or an excerpt from a peer-reviewed book.**

# **BACKGROUND & QUALIFICATIONS**

## VENDOR BACKGROUND AND COMPANY QUALIFICATIONS

Describe your or your organization's history, structure, strategy, and work. Focus on your ability to be a good partner on this project. Please list any relevant awards or other accolades your team has received.

***Specifically, this should include:***

A summary of the individual/organization's experience in conducting and completing large-scale historical research projects, highlighting any significant work or projects pertinent to African American history; histories of the African slave trade and slavery in the US and in New England; histories of African slaves and people of African descent in Boston; histories of Black radicalism; and public history related to any of the aforementioned subjects. Individuals/organizations should highlight experience of involvement and engagement directly with community-based primary sources (informal archives, oral histories, etc.). Any prior work or demonstrated relationships pertinent to local public history in the City of Boston, and especially local Black history in the City of Boston, should also be highlighted.

### 3. Discussion questions

**Note: This is a heavy document.** We have trauma-informed care providers who can provide assistance if you need it.

# Discussion questions

- Does this scope align with your vision for the historically-grounded “Truth” portion of the Reparations Task Force (Phase 1)? What do you appreciate about the current draft? What’s missing?
  - Are we looking for the right people? What else should we consider when looking for the right academic partners + teams to accomplish this important work?
  - Is there anything you’d like to add? Do you have any questions about the process?
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The background of the slide is a blue-tinted aerial wireframe map of a city, showing the outlines of buildings, streets, and parks. The map is rendered in a light blue color against a darker blue background.

# Public comment on RFP

The background of the slide is a detailed wireframe map of a city, rendered in a light blue color against a darker blue background. The map shows various building footprints, streets, and a central area that appears to be a park or a large open space. The perspective is from an elevated angle, looking down at the city.

# Bylaws

## Key Bylaw Sections

- Membership Guidelines
  - Tenure
  - Vacancies
  - Attendance
- Administration
  - Chair
  - Other Officers
  - Meeting deliberations
- Miscellaneous
  - Bylaw changes

## Key Bylaw Section - Membership Guidelines

- Tenure
  - Unless determined by the Mayor, members shall serve no later than December 31, 2024.
- Vacancies
  - Any vacancy on the Task Force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made. Each such successor shall hold office for the unexpired term of their predecessor and until his successor is chosen and qualified, or in each case until they sooner die, resign, are removed, or become disqualified.
- Attendance
  - *Members should plan to be in attendance at all regular Task Force meetings.*

## Key Bylaw Section - Administration

- Chair
  - The Mayor shall designate a Chair from among the Task Force members. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Trustees and shall perform such other duties and shall have such other powers as the Trustees may from time to time prescribe.
- Other Officers
  - *The Task Force shall elect a Secretary who shall keep or cause to be kept minutes of regular meetings.*
- Meeting deliberations
  - *There are lots of different ways to structure deliberations. This section usually includes instructions for how to elect an interim chair if the CHair is not available for all or part of a meeting.*

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# General public comment