

Boston University's Initiative on Cities Launches **MetroBridge** Program to Partner with Cities and Towns on Catalyzing Key Projects *Currently Seeking Project Proposals for 2018-2019 Academic Year*

Let's Work Together

We are seeking an inaugural local government partner for our launch of **MetroBridge**, a new approach to bridging the needs of local government with the capacities at Boston University. Every city or town has a wish list of projects, but not always the time or capacity to address them. If you've ever needed additional assets to help move the needle on an issue, or desired to address your community's needs with a deeper set of knowledge, then let's work together. Boston University's new **MetroBridge** program, housed at the Initiative on Cities, is designed to help local leaders catalyze sidelined initiatives by connecting you with the knowledge capital of our faculty and the "mental sweat equity" of our motivated student body. Whether it's an issue related to land use, public health, civic engagement, housing, historic preservation, sustainability, economic development, disaster mitigation, city branding, tourism, racial equity, or gentrification – just to name a few – we can help tackle your project wish list alongside you in the structured context of a university course.

How MetroBridge Works

Each year, **MetroBridge** will partner with a city or town in the New England region to co-create a set of projects for Boston University students to undertake within the context of their coursework. Our team will work with you to design project ideas and develop scopes of work, and then match each project to our faculty expert in the related field. **MetroBridge** can connect local government partners to a breadth of faculty expertise across a variety of disciplines, including city planning, geographic information systems (GIS), climate, communications and social media, computer science, web application development, data analytics, public health, historical preservation, art, and archaeology.

The types of projects that can be taken on through **MetroBridge** can include: focus group surveys, analyses of public data, GIS mapping, historical analyses, communication plans, and program recommendations from national scans of best practices in other municipalities. At the end of each semester (December 2018, May 2019) our partner community will receive a final, high-quality deliverable for each project.

The proposed timeline for the pilot year of the **MetroBridge** program is:

<i>May-Aug. 2018:</i>	Project Planning Phase
<i>Sept.-Dec. 2018:</i>	Projects in Fall 2018 Academic Semester (Completed in December)
<i>Jan.-May 2019:</i>	Projects in Spring 2019 Academic Semester (Completed in May)

Why MetroBridge?

MetroBridge is led by a team of former city employees who understand the competing day-to-day demands on local government leaders and staff. We therefore aim to create an environment that eliminates the typical hurdles of working with external collaborators and maximizes the real value delivered to your community, neighborhoods, and residents. Throughout the academic year, **MetroBridge's** Program Manager and Faculty Director will lead the process and help ensure that coordination is seamless, projects stay on track, and our partners are driving the agenda for all projects.

Boston University is a top research institution in the nation housing a deep range of expertise and research within its 21 schools and colleges, and over 250 academic programs. **MetroBridge** will connect you with this

wealth of knowledge by serving as the central point-of-contact and navigating the potential collaborations that could benefit your city or town.

Our program is aligned with the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities (EPIC), a national model for university and community collaborations. Over 25 universities in the U.S. participate in the EPIC cohort to constantly learn, innovate, and iterate with each other on how best to connect the needs of local governments to the unique capacities of higher education institutions. Cities, towns, and counties across the country have capitalized on the EPIC model to address a variety of city issues, all in cooperation with faculty and students from their local universities.

Potential MetroBridge Projects

Each project completed through **MetroBridge** will be customized to meet the specific needs of your city or town, and we will work with you to identify project ideas and develop a scope of work for each project. In the past, Boston University faculty and students have worked on the following community-oriented projects:

Data Analytics

- Analyzing user data to inform the ideal locations for future bike-share stations
- Studying public school bus routes to explore opportunities for greater efficiency and cost savings
- Creating a “happiness index” to measure the satisfaction of residents

Racial and Social Equity

- Exploring racial health disparities in lower-income neighborhoods
- Investigating climate mitigation efforts from a social justice lens
- Examining major urban issues including homelessness, gun violence, and gentrification

Climate and Sustainability

- Conducting air and water quality tests
- Measuring the impacts of noise pollution on residential neighborhoods
- Investigating approaches to mitigate sewage overflows

City Planning and Economic Development

- Evaluating the impact of a transportation plan on local businesses, residents, and commuters
- Assessing the feasibility of urban farming in specific localities
- Producing geographic information system (GIS) maps to inform public decision-making

Communications, Marketing, and City Branding

- Developing communications plans for public health commissions
- Collecting data on public sentiment for local proposals via social media
- Exploring opportunities for city branding around local tourism

Archaeology, Art, and Historic Preservation

- Discovering a city’s unique connection to major historical events
- Planning and implementing a public art installation at a transit station
- Capturing a neighborhood’s history through its architecture, public spaces, culture, and environment

Public Health

- Creating public service campaigns about the health impacts associated with the use of e-cigarettes
- Designing a mobile web application to increase access to information about health services
- Investigating public health crises including the opioid epidemic and HIV-AIDS

Starting the Conversation

Let us help you think through your project wish list and see if we can work together in the pilot year of **MetroBridge**. We will follow up with you soon to arrange a phone call or a visit to your community to talk more about launching our program. Among the topics we would like to discuss with interested cities and towns are:

- A general sense of your project wish list from local leadership
- The ability to devote staff time to program coordination (estimated 1-5 hours per week)
- Capacity for funding commitment to support the program - \$15,000 for the first project and \$10,000 for each additional project (our fee-for-service structure is based on the EPIC model and helps offset the cost of the program and ensures the quality of projects)

Contact Information

The **MetroBridge** program team is available to connect with you at any time. You can reach us by phone at (617) 358-8084. Program Manager Emily Robbins can be reached at erobbins@bu.edu and Faculty Director David Glick can be reached at dmglick@bu.edu. Visit our website: www.bu.edu/ioc/metrobridge.

About the Initiative on Cities

The Boston University Initiative on Cities researches, promotes, and advances the adaptive urban leadership strategies and policies necessary to support cities as dynamic and inclusive centers of growth and positive development in the 21st century. Learn more at: www.bu.edu/ioc.

About Boston University

Boston University is an international, comprehensive, private research university, committed to educating students to be reflective, resourceful individuals ready to live, adapt, and lead in an interconnected world. Boston University is committed to generating new knowledge to benefit society. We remain dedicated to our founding principles: that higher education should be accessible to all and that research, scholarship, artistic creation, and professional practice should be conducted in the service of the wider community—local and international. Learn more at: <http://www.bu.edu>.

About Education Partnerships for Innovation in Communities (EPIC)

Cities and communities face serious challenges related to social equity, environmental sustainability, fiscal health, livability and more. Matching local governments (cities, counties, transit districts, tribes, etc.) and universities to take advantage of one another's needs and capacities, and doing so at a bigger scale than more typical one-off university-community projects, is the EPIC innovation that actually helps move the needle on pressing community issues while also training the next generation workforce and professionals. Learn more at: <http://www.epicn.org>.