

Everyday Boston



FOUNDED: 2017

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$158,050

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Investment Opportunity

Everyday Boston seeks an investment of \$484,000 over the next two years in order to triple the number of Bostonians engaged by its programs, building greater connections across the city. The key to this growth is expanding strategic partnerships and boosting EB staff in the areas of program delivery and administration. This investment will take the organization from a “bare bones” start-up to an organization with the necessary infrastructure to be sustainable into the future.

Americans are more divided and isolated than ever. We’ve forgotten how to talk to each other. We’ve forgotten how to listen to each other. It’s damaging our health and the health of our society.

- 40% of Americans say they are lonely.
- Boston is the 7th most racially segregated metro area.
- The majority of Americans don’t have diverse social networks and lack friends of a different race.

Everyday Boston’s (EB) solution: the sharing of stories. When people hear a good story, their levels of a “feel good” hormone called oxytocin increase, boosting feelings of trust and empathy, and motivating them to work with others.

Since the beginning of time, humans have used stories to understand each other. EB provides the training and opportunities for thousands of Bostonians to do just that. EB’s vision is to help Boston become the most connected city in America.

Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of participants from 1,000 to 3,000 annually
- Increase stipend opportunities for youth and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Amplify the impact of Everyday Boston’s story library by developing it into an online educational resource
- Expand current strategic partnerships, including those in the healthcare and corporate sector

Ways to Invest

FINANCIAL

- \$55,000 funds a Bridge Project Coordinator to expand programming for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
- \$12,000 funds the expansion of EB’s annual city-wide event
- \$8,000 funds stipends for 10 teens to become story ambassadors

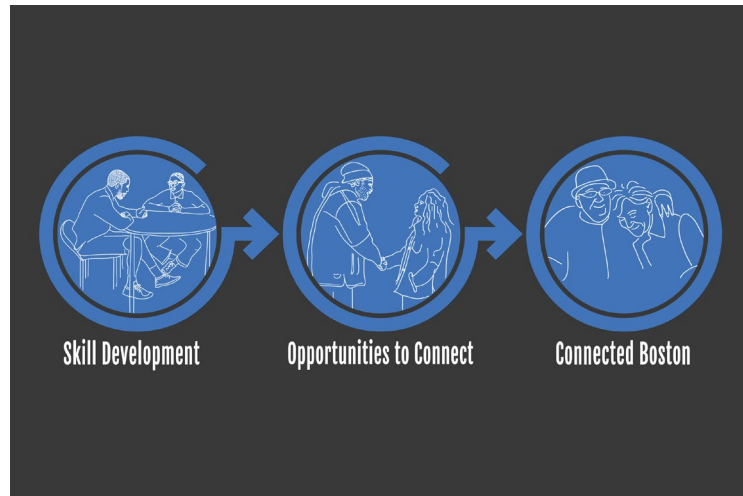
IN-KIND

- Provide office space for EB staff and programs
- Provide support for a marketing campaign to make Boston the most connected city in America
- Join EB’s Board of Directors or its fundraising committee

Leadership & Governance

Cara Solomon is the Founder and Executive Director of Everyday Boston. A graduate of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, she was a reporter at The Seattle Times and the Hartford Courant. Raised in Wayland, MA, she created EB in partnership with community leaders in Boston who believed in the power of stories to break down the city's divides. EB is governed by a seven-person Board of Directors and seven-person Advisory Board.

EVERYDAY BOSTON'S MODEL



“

Boston is where democracy began. We like to gather in small groups and tell stories. We had that once. It's time to get it back.

”

GREG TORRES,

Chairman of the Board, MassINC

TOOLS TO BUILD CONNECTION

Everyday Boston is a resource partner to schools, nonprofits, workplaces and prisons, among others. The model is simple. First, help people of all ages to strengthen their listening and communication skills. Then, provide them with opportunities to connect. Story by story, Boston becomes a more connected city.

Skills Development

The Curiosity and Connection curriculum developed by EB is at the core of the model. The introductory training is designed to strengthen the listening and communication skills everyone needs to connect across differences, whether in the community, at work, or at home.

Participants practice active listening, framing effective questions, and asking follow-up questions in a series of small group activities. Then, in a community-building opportunity, they pair up to interview each other in-depth about their life experiences.

Opportunities to Connect

EB has developed a flexible model to help residents of all ages connect across dividing lines.

- **Story Collecting Projects** connect neighbors one-on-one to collect oral histories. During the pandemic, for example, EB paired teens up with elders by phone for conversations about how the elders got through tough times. All recorded interviews are then edited and published in EB's online story library and on social media.
- **Story Share Events** bring people from different backgrounds together to share their life experiences in small groups. EB provides the story prompts. Participants bring their curiosity and desire to connect. EB runs these events everywhere from the Boston Athenaeum to Plymouth County Correctional Facility.
- **Pop-Up Story Shops** offer neighbors the opportunity to record each others' stories at community events, from the Franklin Field Health Fair to the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society.





Everyday Boston has been a lifesaver during this pandemic. My students were taught critical communication skills and then matched with essential workers and elders to interview. It was magical.



BRINDA TAHILIANI,
Teacher, New Mission High School

STRANGERS TO NEIGHBORS

Special Initiatives

- **The Bridge Project** helps currently and formerly incarcerated people develop their communication skills and connection to the community. EB provides training in prisons and with reentry programs and then offers paid opportunities to work with EB in the community.
- **The Youth Program** helps students develop critical soft skills through a school-based curriculum, then engages them as story ambassadors in the community, connecting them to adults who may act as mentors.
- **The Workplace Initiative** helps employees and job seekers connect across differences and departments through the sharing of stories, strengthening their sense of belonging and improving workplace performance.
- **The Online Story Library** includes nearly 70 oral histories Bostonians have collected from their neighbors. An evolving portrait of the people of Boston, by the people of Boston, the library is being developed as a multimedia resource for schools, the media, and the general public.
- **Everyday Boston’s Speakers Series** seeks to amplify the voices of everyday people with powerful stories related to the news.

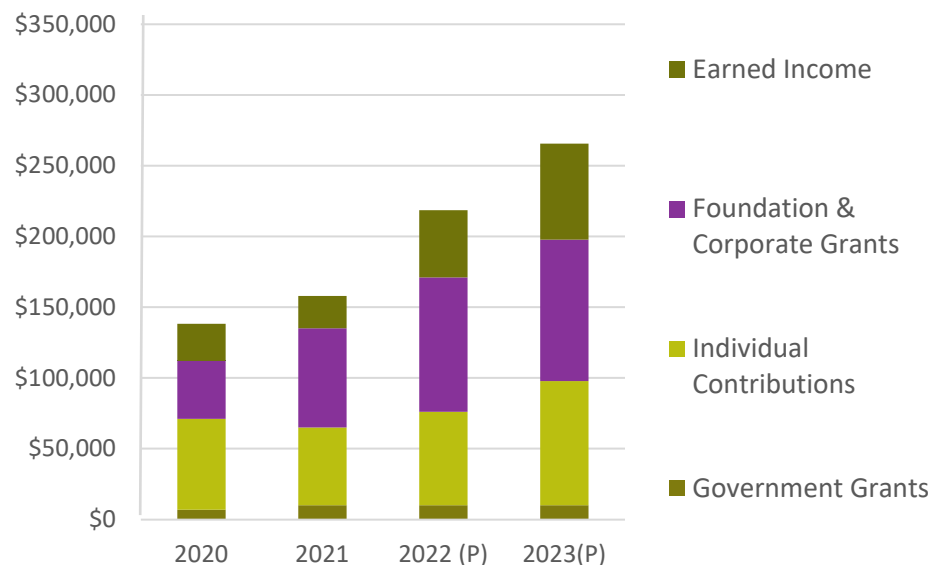
Signature Event

The annual Love Your Wicked Awesome Neighbor Challenge encourages residents of all ages to write uplifting notes to neighbors they don’t know. In 2019, EB partnered with 20+ organizations and handed out 1000 cards.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

With limited focus on fundraising to date, EB has grown organically and attracted enough funding to launch the organization. Over the next two years, EB will invest in operations and development staff to increase traditional fundraising and earned income capacity through workplace partnerships and corporate sponsorships.

Revenue by Source



Key Investors

- BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION
- GARDINER HOWLAND SHAW FOUNDATION
- MASS HUMANITIES
- THE BOSTON FOUNDATION

Partners

- BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER
- COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR JUSTICE
- NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
- PLYMOUTH COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
- YMCA OF GREATER BOSTON

Success Story: Dana & Nina

Dana lives in Roxbury. Nina lives in Back Bay. They shared stories during an EB training over Zoom during the pandemic.

“Sometimes you can hear something from a person that you never knew, and it changes your whole life,” said Dana, who spent 17 years in prison.

“After some really great advice that Dana gave me, I ended up writing it down and looking at it every day,” said Nina, who works for a start-up.

Since he joined EB’s Bridge Project, Dana has supported a story collecting project between teens and seniors; headlined an event series; and interviewed other returning citizens for a guide to post-prison life. He and Nina are working on a story share event between neighbors from Back Bay and Roxbury.



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that Everyday Boston will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2021	FY 2022 (P)	FY 2023 (P)
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE			
Program participants	1,000	2,000	3,000
Strategic partners	5	10	15
New stories published	20	40	60
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING			
Number of staff members	1 FT, 2PT	2FT, 1PT	3FT, 2PT
Number of board members	7	10	12
Formation of fundraising & development committee	Begin	3 members	5 members
Development of program impact evaluation measures	Develop & Pilot	Implement	Implement
Total Revenue	\$158,050	\$218,500	\$265,500

SOCIAL IMPACT

By providing residents with the skills and opportunities to connect across dividing lines, EB is working to dismantle the social segregation that keeps us lonely and helps drive racism and other forms of hate. Through the sharing of stories, people of all ages also practice the interpersonal skills they need to succeed as individuals, whether in school, at home, or at work, where many employers say soft skills are lacking.

INDICATOR	2023
Participants who said they would recommend EB’s programming to others	90%
Partner organizations who noted an improvement in collaboration among the participants in EB programs	85%
Participants who indicated they feel more confident in their ability to engage with people they don’t know	85%