

East Boston Times-Free Press

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Save the Harbor Seeks Applications Better Beaches Grant Program



The Beach: Ability day in East Boston has mobility mats, beach wheelchairs, and kayaks for participants.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) are now seeking Better Beaches Program grant proposals from organizations to support free beach events and activities in East Boston this summer.

Last year, Save the Harbor awarded \$27,000 in Better Beaches grants to East Boston organizations like East Boston YMCA, Piers Park Sailing Center, Harborkeepers, Triangle, Inc, NOAH, and the Boston Circus Guild. This money was used to put on the Maritime Festival, Vamos a la Playa cultural celebration, the Safety Around Water Celebration, Beach: Ability accessible beach day, and more.

In 2022, Save the Harbor's Better Beaches Program invested more than \$250,000 in the program, supporting 62 organizations in nine waterfront communities from Nahant to Nantasket. In turn, those organizations ran over 180 events.

This year, Better Beaches state funding has increased. Save the Harbor we will be awarding more than \$300,000 in 2023 Better Beaches grants for even more events free to the public.

If you or your organization has a great idea for a free beach event or program, just follow this link.

"I'm just so delighted that the Better Beaches grant exists," said Magdalena Ayed, Founder and Executive Director of the Harborkeepers, a Better Beaches grantee. "This grant allows us to provide a platform to learn about what's happening

on the ocean and how we as the Community can be advocates to improve it. It's a fantastic opportunity."

The Better Beaches program puts resources in the hands of local beach lovers, supporting and empowering them to execute events for their communities. The impact is clear — Save the Harbor has brought millions of community members to the region's beaches with over 1,000 free events since 2008.

Grant applicants can come from any community as long as their idea centers one of our region's public beaches. Better Beaches funds will be awarded to organizations, programs, individuals, and creatives who empower, amplify and invest in community members of color, people with disabilities, people who's first language is not English and members of the Queer community. The event must be free and open to the public, be executed in Summer 2023, and comply with DCR's restrictions on what's allowed on the beaches.

"Vamos a la Playa is our gathering organized by the Veronica Robles Cultural Center to bring our community to this beautiful space by the water," said Veronica Robles, a Better Beaches grantee. "We want to make sure that everybody enjoys the summer with mindful activities. Thank you for DCR and the Better Beaches grant and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for the opportunity and for supporting this event."

A Trike Called Funk, a Better Beaches grantee, used their funds to perform at events on multiple beaches and host their own event series, Bike to the Beach and Boogie. "None of this would have been possible had it not been for the support of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Better Beaches initiative," said A.a.ron Myers, Co-Founder of A Trike Called Funk. "We are happy to amplify Save the Harbor and celebrate what they're doing to bring people together and to appreciate, but also become stewards of, these beautiful blue and green spaces in and around Boston."

Information about the events and programs that were supported last year can be found in Save the Harbor's 2023

Impact Report, which is available at <https://www.savetheharbor.org/publications>.

You can apply for a Better Beaches grant at <https://www.savetheharbor.org/better-beaches>.

You will be notified of the result of your application in April. If you have any questions about the Better Beaches Program, please contact Maya Smith atsmith@savetheharbor.org.

Funds to support the program come from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Baker/Polito Administration, and from the Harpoon Shamrock Splash, which will take place on March 12th, 2023. To register for the Splash, visit <https://savetheharbor.securesweet.com/default.asp>.

Save the Harbor's success would not be possible without our program partners and event sponsors, including Arctic Chill, FMC Ice Sports, Bay State Cruise Company, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA, The Blue Sky Collaborative, Boston & Maine Webcams, The Boston Foundation, BostonHarbor.com, Boston Properties, Coast Cannabis, The Coca-Cola Foundation, Comcast, Cronin Group, Constellation Generation, Comcast Foundation, the Daily Catch, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Eastern Salt Company, Inc, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Harpoon, IR+M Charitable Fund, JetBlue, John Hancock Financial Services, Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, Massport, P&G Gillette, Mix 104.1, National Grid, and The Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation.

In addition, Save the Harbor recognizes the Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chairs Senator Brendan Crighton of Lynn, and Representative Adrian Madaro of East Boston and the legislative and community members of the Commission as well as Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Ron Mariano for their support for our beaches and our communities. We also thank the Baker/Polito Administration, the Massachusetts Legislature, Save the Harbor's partners at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Boston Centers for Youth & Families, the YMCA of Greater Boston, and the hundreds of people who take part in the Shamrock Splash for their support.