



## The Blackstone Heritage Corridor Legacy Campaign: Reimagining Our Future

### The 25 communities of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor

#### Massachusetts

Auburn  
Blackstone  
Douglas  
Grafton  
Hopedale  
Leicester  
Mendon  
Millbury  
Millville  
Northbridge  
Sutton  
Upton  
Uxbridge  
Worcester

#### Rhode Island

Burrillville  
Central Falls  
Cumberland  
East Providence  
Glocester  
Lincoln  
North Smithfield  
Pawtucket  
Providence  
Smithfield  
Woonsocket



The Blackstone River Valley of Massachusetts and Rhode Island is the "*Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.*" America's first textile mill could have been built along almost any river on the eastern seaboard. But in 1790 the forces of capital, ingenuity, mechanical know-how and skilled labor turned

the Blackstone River into **the power that kicked off America's industrial engine.**

Four decades ago, Congress recognized this national significance of our history, culture and natural resources by creating a space later named as the *John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor*.<sup>1</sup> Today, we are the **Blackstone Heritage Corridor**, and are entrusted with preserving and promoting this national legacy.

The Blackstone River, the **backbone of the corridor**, is so much cleaner today than it has been in many years, with **dramatic reductions in pollution**. Canoe and kayakers now have 17 locations to access the scenic beauty of the river.

The well-traveled, multi-use trail used for biking and hiking between Worcester and Providence is **almost completed**. We want to coordinate efforts to finish this project that was identified as a **community priority**. The natural treasures of the Corridor are tremendous assets to the quality of life here. Our programs provide cherished experiences for all: families and visitors, including people with disabilities and veterans.



<sup>1</sup> In 1999 the corridor was renamed to honor the advocacy of the late Senator John H. Chafee.

## Honoring Our History

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor shares **inspiring stories of cultural evolution** in partnership with dozens of local organizations and communities. Through signage, interpretive panels, brochures, exhibits and five heritage centers, we honor the past as we look to the future.

We were a driving force for the creation of the *Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park*, one of our country's newest national parks. This unique park **celebrates the story of innovation** that literally changed how people worked and lived from the earliest days of the country to the present day.

We are the **only federally-designated partner to the new park**. We created and continue to lead its award-winning volunteer programs.

## Forging Our Future

In a 2021 survey we conducted, you shared a top priority: completing the multi-use trail. Other goals included more support of our local partners, improving signage throughout the corridor, and creating more opportunities to contribute through volunteering. With that critical feedback, we envisioned how to reimagine the important work of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor and invite you to participate.



- ***Champion for Completion of the Multi-Use Trail – Cost: \$350,000***

Even before the national park, the biggest dream has been to complete the multi-use trail from Worcester to Providence, following the course of our beloved Blackstone River. The popularity of the finished sections, largely in Rhode Island, show how important this space is to all of us. And as we learned from recent years, outdoor spaces have become more vital than ever for our physical and mental health. Too many miles are yet to be completed. It will take sustained advocacy by a passionate public, under the direction of a part-time dedicated coordinator, to motivate state governments to deliver on their promises to complete the project so the trail is complete.

- ***Keep the Corridor History and Stories Accessible – Cost: \$365,000***

After four decades, it is critical to replace, update, unify, and add to signs, information panels, digital materials, and heritage center exhibits that provide access for visitors to engage in our stories and history. The corridor provides access to hundreds of opportunities and we must improve the tools to share this important information for visitors with the help of a part-time project manager.

- ***Grow volunteer opportunities to support the Corridor – Cost: \$90,000***

Through our award-winning *Volunteers in Parks* program, we've recruited, trained, and placed hundreds of volunteers each year who are serving as guides, docents, and stewards at dozens of cultural and historic sites, and natural areas. By placing more volunteers at these important locations, we provide more access and support for visitors. We can do this by investing in new tools, uniforms, and training to provide more meaningful ways to be part of the corridor.

- ***Increase collaborative community partner resources – Cost: \$99,000***

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor has successfully served as the critical hub for the Corridor by managing resources in the most effective way for our community partners. There are over 60 nonprofit organizations working separately to protect the beautiful and historic Blackstone River Valley, not to mention municipalities and businesses. The impact to our communities is boundless when we put our actions and resources together. By expanding our community partner grants program, we can help our partners create and improve amenities and storytelling to enhance the historic, natural, and recreational treasures of the Blackstone Valley for even more access and enjoyment.

- ***Invest in the Blackstone Heritage Corridor – Cost: \$435,000***

As our federal support decreases, we are looking to replace that funding gap, and increase our own investment in expanding the important services needed to sustain all of the resources in the corridor. Our strategy is to hire a full-time development director and administrative support to manage much needed fundraising and amplify the impact of our critical services of preserving, promoting, and celebrating the Blackstone River Valley.

## Reimagining Our Future

The investment for these projects includes approximately \$500,000 total in one-time costs and just \$280,000 in increased annual operating expenses per year, for a total of \$1,340,000 over a four-year period.

Number of donors	Total needed per donor	Annual Support (2023 – 2026)
1	\$120,000	\$40,000
2	\$90,000	\$30,000
5	\$45,000	\$15,000
8	\$25,500	\$8,500
10	\$15,000	\$5,000
10	\$10,500	\$3,500
15	\$7,500	\$2,500
15	\$4,500	\$1,500
15	\$3,000	\$1,000
Numerous	\$1,500 or less	\$500
<b>Join us!</b>	<b>\$1,340,000</b> <b>total three year goal</b>	

We can accept gifts of cash via online credit card at [www.PreservetheCorridor.org](http://www.PreservetheCorridor.org) or mail a check to:

Blackstone Heritage Corridor  
Attn: The Legacy Campaign  
670 Linwood Avenue  
Whitinsville, MA. 01588

Securities and bequests are also welcomed.

### Contact Information

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### Our Mission

Blackstone Heritage Corridor, working with community partners, provides strong leadership to preserve, promote, and celebrate the Valley's historic, natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.



## **Champion for the Completion of the Multi-Use Trail – Cost: \$350,000**

The survey votes are in: your priority for the Corridor is the completion of the **multi-use trail** running all 48 miles from Worcester to Providence. Today, half the trail is already in place with 17 miles off-road and six miles of marked, on-road routes. The existing sections show the great potential of a completed trail to **attract visitors and improve the quality of life** for people living nearby. **The trail benefits everyone:** families, walkers, runners, hikers, cyclists, fishing enthusiasts, snowshoers, cross-country skiers. It also helps nearby businesses and communities with trail users visiting local retail outlets and special events.

Even before the national park, **the biggest dream has been to complete the multi-use trail** following the course of our beloved Blackstone River. The popularity of the finished sections, largely in Rhode Island, **show how important this space is to all of us**. And as we learned from recent years, outdoor spaces have become more vital than ever for our physical and mental health.

**Too many miles are yet to be completed.** It will take sustained advocacy by a passionate public, under the direction of a part-time dedicated coordinator, **to motivate state governments to deliver on their promises** to complete the project so the trail is complete. But it's taken nearly three decades to complete the first 24 miles.

With your contribution, Blackstone Heritage Corridor will:

- Hire a dedicated coordinator to lead public education and advocacy.
- Create a dedicated online advocacy hub with web-based maps, news, and links to important information hubs.
- Build citizen-led teams to support action on specific local sections and segments.
- Expand our bike programs like our accessibility rides, youth education initiatives, and bike safety.
- Add bike repair stations to the trail.

How your investment will help us be successful:

<b>Investment</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Three-year goal</b>
Coordinator	\$50,000	<b>\$350,000</b>
Advocacy materials and local organizing leadership activities	\$17,000	
Public bike, youth education, safety and accessibility programs; bike repair stations	\$50,000	
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$117,000</b>	

## **Keep the Corridor's History and Stories Accessible – Cost: \$365,000**

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor **contains a wealth of fascinating stories** and a broad range of cultural and recreational opportunities among its 25 cities and towns. But our decades-old signs and interpretive markers are suffering from years of use.

After four decades, it is **critical to replace, update, unify, and add to signs**, information panels, digital materials, and heritage center exhibits that provide access for visitors to engage in our stories and history. The corridor provides access to hundreds of opportunities and we must improve the tools to **share this important information for all visitors** with the help of a project director.

With your contribution, Blackstone Heritage Corridor will:

- Hire a temporary project director to manage the creation, production, and placement of signage, panels, and exhibits throughout the region.
- Purchase new welcome signs that greet visitors at five key gateway locations.
- Purchase new wayfinding signs that will easily guide visitors to museums, river, and multi-trail access points, trail heads and historic areas.
- Create new wayside interpretive exhibits that will support self-guided tours and enrich the experience offered at various locations.
- Purchase new interpretive exhibits and signage at five larger historic sites that will integrate and enhance your experience.

How your investment will help us be successful:

Investment	Cost over three years	Total three-year goal
Project Director	\$150,000	<b>\$365,000</b>
Corridor Welcome signs	\$15,000	
Wayside interpretive exhibits	\$100,000	
(5) Updated Visitor Heritage Centers	\$64,000	
Updated information materials	\$11,000	
Updated maps	\$25,000	



## **Grow More Volunteer Opportunities to Engage the Community – Cost: \$90,000**

Our **award-winning *Volunteers-in-Parks* program** recruits, trains, and places more than 200 volunteers each year. They serve at parks, trails, museums, and many other sites in the Corridor, from small community organizations to the National Park Service.

VIPs bring the Corridor to life. Visitors find welcoming and **helpful ambassadors and guides** for outdoor adventures like hiking, paddling, birding, bicycling, and photography. Companies, youth, and civic organizations benefit from **rewarding service opportunities** with the support of these dedicated volunteers. Historic sites and cemeteries receive tender loving care. It is due to the **generous dedication of our volunteers** that all can enjoy the Corridor. Such support would cost our community nearly a million dollars a year.

Many organizations in the Corridor have to come to rely on us to multiply their impact without added staff costs by connecting them to trained volunteers. By placing more volunteers at these important locations, **we provide more access and support for visitors**. We can do this by investing in new tools, uniforms, and training to provide more meaningful ways to be part of the Corridor.

With your contribution, Blackstone Heritage Corridor will:

- Expand our training program to add up to 200 additional volunteers each year.
- Add new youth service programs at seven colleges and three youth organizations.
- Supply more trained volunteers to the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.
- Increase the diversity of our volunteers and serve more host organizations.
- Provide more recognition and appreciation for our volunteers.

How your investment will help us be successful:

<b>Investment</b>	<b>Annual cost</b>	<b>Three-year goal</b>
Program materials	\$10,000	<b>\$90,000</b>
Uniforms	\$ 5,000	
Training	\$ 8,000	
Recruitment outreach & other capacity building	\$ 7,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	

## **Increase Collaborative Community Partner Resources – Cost: \$99,000**

Every day, more than 60 nonprofits, together with local businesses and government agencies, across 25 communities in two states do **essential work to preserve our beautiful and historic valley**.

We have **the most impact when we support each other**. Our community partners are eager and excited to work more closely together but need the resources to do so.

Since the very beginning, Blackstone Heritage Corridor has served as the **connecting hub**, keeping every partner in this large network informed and in sync with the others. We are uniquely knowledgeable about community needs. Our past grant making, especially for those with limited budgets, helped bring needed projects to life or improve organizational capacity.

Because our federal funding was reduced, **our goal is to continue to revitalize efforts** to convene, inform, and coordinate our community partners.

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor has **successfully served as the critical hub** for the Corridor by managing resources in the most effective way for our community partners. The impact to our communities is boundless when we put our actions and resources together. By expanding our community partner grants program, we can **help our partners create and improve amenities** and story-telling to enhance the historic, natural, and recreational treasures of the Corridor for more access and enjoyment.

With your contribution, Blackstone Heritage Corridor will:

- Increase our Community Partner Grants.
- Assess the upcoming needs of all of our partners.
- Organize a new *Partners Coordinating Council* to facilitate learning exchanges and coordinated planning for joint efforts on mutual needs like organization development, interpretation, marketing, and fundraising.

How your investment will help us be successful:

<b>Investment</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Three-year goal</b>
Community Partner Grants	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	<b>\$99,000</b>
Partner network support	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$23,000</b>	<b>\$33,000</b>	<b>\$43,000</b>	



## Invest in Preserving the Corridor for Future Generations – Cost: \$435,000

As a **successful organization that oversees and promotes the entire Corridor** encompassing its 25 cities and towns, we have a **proven track record** of strong stewardship of our resources.

To stay on path of a shared vision to preserve the corridor, we need to create a long-term plan **to ensure a strong financial future.**

We can achieve the goals of long-term financial stability by adding fund development professionals. We have a prosperous region, supportive state and local governments and a world of potential grants to pursue. A dedicated development director and additional administrative support will help make this happen by creating and nurturing our donors.

As our federal support decreases, we are looking to replace that funding gap, and increase our own investment in expanding the **important services needed** to sustain all of the resources in the corridor. Our strategy is to hire a staff to manage much needed fundraising and amplify the impact of our critical services of preserving, promoting, and celebrating the Blackstone Heritage Corridor.

With your contribution, Blackstone Heritage Corridor will:

- Hire a professional fundraiser to secure funds to support our programs.
- Build out efficient systems to support our donors.
- Strategize additional resources for long-term sustainability.

How your investment will help us be successful:

Investment	Annual cost	Three-year goal
Development staff	\$90,000	<b>\$435,000</b>
Fundraising and stewardship supplies	\$20,000	
Administrative support	\$35,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$145,000</b>	