

Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley



Request for Proposal (RFP)

**Asset Building in Low-Income Communities
Grant Program**

Release Date: August 1, 2011
Response Due Date: September 15, 2011
Funding Start Date: November 14, 2011

Grantor: Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley
Address: One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108
RFP Name: **Asset Building in Low-Income Communities**
RFP Contact Person: Paul Heithaus
Email: AGOgrants@state.ma.us
RFP Deadline: September 15, 2011
Award Notification: October 17, 2011
Funding Start Date: November 14, 2011

Background and Overview

During the first decade of the 21st century, subprime lending practices devastated the lives of millions of homeowners and harmed countless communities. Unsound and imprudent underwriting, volume-driven incentives, and the continual passing along of risk all contributed to a difficult economic recession and to the depression of the housing market.

Attorney General Martha Coakley has been one of the nation's fiercest pursuers of accountability for the subprime fallout. Her office's attorneys and investigators have initiated and resolved dozens of matters involving mortgage brokers, lenders, and securitizers. As part of these broad efforts, Attorney General Coakley's Civil Rights Division discovered that African-American and Latino homeowners were routinely charged higher rates than their white counterparts.

In May of 2011, the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division reached a settlement with Massachusetts' largest residential mortgage lender, Mortgage Master, for alleged discriminatory lending practices. As part of the settlement, Mortgage Master agreed to pay restitution to affected borrowers and to provide funds to support consumer-oriented non-profits in Massachusetts.

In keeping with the Attorney General's interest in ensuring a fair lending environment for all Massachusetts consumers, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) is proud to announce the **Asset Building in Low-Income Communities** grant opportunity. Up to four grants will be awarded to consumer-oriented programs that serve low-income populations within Massachusetts. The purpose of the grants is to support organizations that have creative and innovative approaches to any of the following:

- Providing consumer education and other assistance pertaining to increasing household assets/increasing savings to support long-range financial goals (such as becoming a first-time homeowner, paying for college, or planning for retirement); and/or

- Assistance relating to debt management, including, but not limited to, maintaining homeownership; or
- Promotion of investment, job development, and small business opportunities.

The AGO anticipates that it will award two to four grants in the range of \$25,000 - \$75,000 each. Recipients will be Massachusetts non-profit organizations that provide services and support to low-income communities. The grant will be a one-time only payment.

Source of Funds:

Funds for this opportunity come from the settlement of Attorney General Martha Coakley’s civil rights investigation into Mortgage Master’s alleged discriminatory lending practices against African-American borrowers.

Important Dates:

- Two optional bidders’ conference calls will be held on Wednesday, August 10 at 11:00 a.m. and on Thursday, August 25 at 2:00 p.m.
- Questions may be submitted via email to AGOgrants@state.ma.us until 4 p.m. on Tuesday, September 13, 2011.
- Grant proposals are due as email attachments to be sent to AGOgrants@state.ma.us by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 15, 2011.
- Successful applicants will be notified on or around Monday, October 17, 2011.
- Grant period will be from November 14, 2011 to December 31, 2012.
- All services provided under this grant must be completed by December 31, 2012.

Qualifications:

Applications will be accepted from any 501(c) 3 organization in good standing with the AGO Non-Profit and Public Charities Division and the Internal Revenue Service.

Components of Grant Narrative:

A. Project Description:

The Project Narrative should be no more than **8 pages** and should include the following information:

- The attached grant cover sheet with agency contact information including: the name of the agency/organization and the name, address, phone number, and email address for the primary contact person and a secondary contact person related to this grant.
- A description of the organization’s mission, population served, and service area.
- A description of the applicant’s previous experience working with consumer education and/or asset building and the capacity to provide the proposed services throughout the course of the grant period.
- A description of the proposed activities or services provided as a result of AGO funding.
- A description of the specific goals you hope to accomplish, and the steps you will take to accomplish them. Include a detailed timeline illustrating the achievement of each goal.

- A detailed description for how the applicant will measure progress towards identified goals.
- A budget narrative of no more than two pages, double-spaced. This will not be included in the 8-page limit.

The grant narrative must be addressed in a proposal that is no longer than eight pages, double-spaced, 12-point font (exclusive of the budget, budget narrative, and any attachments).

B. Budget: Using the provided line item budget form, please outline each expenditure you plan to make, including formulas for each expenditure. Note any in-kind sources of funding. Although there is no in-kind funding requirement, those proposals which demonstrate the greatest cost-efficiencies will be most favorably reviewed.

C. Required Forms: In addition to the 8-page grant narrative, please submit the following forms as attachments:

- Line Item Budget and Budget Narrative
- Commonwealth Terms and Conditions
- Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing

Applicants must complete these forms in their entirety; however, applicants will defer ink signatures until grant award. After successful applicants are chosen, the completed paperwork will be returned to the successful applicants for original ink signatures and notarization. In addition, the Massachusetts Standard Contract Form will be completed upon notification of a successful grant.

Payments will not be processed without original ink signatures on all forms; copies of signatures are not acceptable.

Copies of forms may be obtained at www.mass.gov/ago/grants.

Reporting: Grant recipients are required under the terms of the grant to provide a final budgetary and program report to the AGO upon completion of the grant period. More information will be provided to successful grant recipients.

Bidders' Conference calls:

Bidders' conference calls are optional. They are offered to provide an opportunity for prospective applicants to go over the grant requirements and ask questions. The calls will be held on Wednesday, August 10 at 11:00 a.m. and Thursday, August 25 at 2:00 p.m. Interested applicants should email AGOgrants@state.ma.us to request the dial in toll-free number and access code to join the call on either date. Please include "Asset Building in Low-Income Communities Grant Conference Call" in your email subject line.

Submission:

Please submit the project proposal as an attachment by email to AGOgrants@state.ma.us no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 15, 2011. The response must be double-spaced.

Attachments and line-item budget are not included in the 8-page limit. **Applications that are not received, in full, by the deadline and/or do not meet the stylistic requirements will not be considered.**

Please also submit the following forms as attachments: Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, and the Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing. Applicants must complete these forms in their entirety; however, applicants will defer ink signatures until grant award. After successful applicants are chosen, the completed paperwork will be returned to the successful applicants for original ink signatures. Successful applicants will also be required to complete the Standard Contract Form at this time. Payments will not be processed without original ink signatures on all forms.

When submitting your grant proposal, please include “Asset Building in Low-Income Communities Grant” in your email subject line.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Applicants with disabilities that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of the RFP information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person no later than Thursday, September 8, 2011. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. An applicant requesting accommodation may be required to confirm his or her request in writing to the contact person. The request must state that it is based on a disability and specifically identify the accommodation desired. Although entities of the Commonwealth will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the requests of applicants with disabilities, they reserve the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Public Records:

All responses and information submitted in response to this call for applications are subject to the Massachusetts Freedom of Information Law, M.G.L., Chapter 66, Section 10, and to Chapter 4, Section 7, Subsection 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Questions:

Questions may be asked by email only to: AGOgrants@state.ma.us. The deadline for questions is 4 p.m. on Tuesday, September 13, 2011. **Please include “Asset Building in Low-Income Communities Grant Question” in your email subject line.** Questions and answers will be posted on www.mass.gov/ago/grants.