

Frequently Asked Questions - 2012

What is the MassWorks Infrastructure Program?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities and other eligible entities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation. The Program represents an administrative consolidation of six former grant programs:

- Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Grant
- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)
- Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grant
- Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Program (MORE)
- Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program.

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will replace each of the above cited programs and the six individual programs are now discontinued.

What types of activities does the program support?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides public infrastructure grants for publicly owned infrastructure including, but not limited to sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking facilities, site preparation and improvements on publicly owned land, demolition, pedestrian walkways, and water treatment systems to support three project types:

- Housing development at a density of at least 4 units to the acre (both market and affordable units)
- Transportation improvements to enhance safety in small, rural communities
- Economic development and job creation and retention

When will the MassWorks Infrastructure Program open a new funding round?

The 2012 competitive funding round will open August 27th for projects that are ready to proceed as soon as weather permits during the upcoming construction season. **Only those projects that are prepared to proceed to construction in the upcoming spring should apply for consideration.**

Has the MassWorks Application changed from 2011 to 2012?

The 2012 MassWorks application has been updated from the 2011 application. All of the questions from the 2011 application remain on the 2012 application however applicants should note some of the questions appear in a different order in the 2012 application. The MassWorks program has also eliminated the Community Revitalization and Sustainable Development category due to the number of applications in the 2011 round that qualified for inclusion in multiple categories.

If I submitted an application in the 2011 MassWorks Funding round, will I need to reapply to be considered in the 2012 MassWorks funding round?

Yes. If you wish to resubmit a project for consideration in the 2012 funding round you are required to reapply during the 2012 application period which runs from August 27th through September 10, 2012.

If I am resubmitting an application from the 2011 round, will I have to retype the information I submitted previously?

No, if you submitted an application during the 2011 funding round, the information has been saved to the online application system and will be available on June 1, 2012. At that time, you will be able to edit and change the information that has been saved to the system. You will be required to answer the new questions that have been added to the application for the 2012 funding round.

Will I need to set up an account to submit an application through the online system?

If you submitted an application during the 2011 funding round, your login and password for the online system have been saved and will remain the same. If you are a new user, you will be required to set up an account for the online system to be able to submit a 2012 MassWorks application.

What communities are considered to be “small, rural communities”?

Communities that have a population of 7,000 or less that were previously eligible for the Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP) as defined by MGL c.6C, s.47. In each year, there will be funds set aside and available only for transportation improvements to enhance safety in these communities.

Who is eligible to apply for a MassWorks grant?

A city or town, or other public agency with a charter that enables them to accept state grants on behalf of the municipality, and where the public agency has been designated by municipal officers to apply for grants on behalf of that city or town. A local Economic Development Corporation may be an eligible applicant, for example. Any eligible public agency acting on behalf of a municipality must submit a letter of support from the chief administrative officer of that municipality.

Is design an eligible expense?

Yes. Communities with a population of 7,000 or less are eligible to apply for design/engineering costs along with a construction grant. In that case, the project must be able to complete

design/engineering in a period that allows the project to advance to construction during the upcoming construction season.

Communities with a population over 7,000 are eligible to apply for design/engineering costs along with a construction grant however no more than 10% of the total grant request may be used for design/engineering. If a project is seeking design/engineering funds as part of an application, the project must be able to complete design/engineering in a period that allows the project to advance to construction during the upcoming construction season.

Will my project be considered “ready” if it does not require design/engineering?

Yes. Projects that are able to proceed immediately to construction are considered “ready”. There are no additional design/engineering requirements that would not otherwise be required for a municipal improvement project.

What are the program funding priorities?

Priority for funding will be given to projects that demonstrate consistency with the Patrick-Murray Administration’s sustainable development priorities and a reasonable level of readiness. Please see the MassWorks Infrastructure Program Guidelines for more details:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks/guidance-documents/>

How will the competitive round work?

A hard copy of the 2012 Application will be published by May 1st and the online application system will be available on June 1, 2012. Applications will be accepted between August 27th and September 10th. All applications must be electronically submitted by September 10, 2012 to be considered during the 2012 funding round. Written decisions will be rendered to all applicants six weeks after the close of the funding round.

Who will review and approve the applications?

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development will consult a team of reviewers to evaluate pending applications and develop recommendations for funding. The team of reviewers includes but is not limited to the State Permit Ombudsman, the Director of Policy Development and Implementation, MassWorks Infrastructure Project Managers, MassDOT including district offices, the Department of Housing and Community Development and other applicable interests.

In addition to the aforementioned parties, Regional Planning Agencies will also participate in the application review process and have been invited to provide feedback on applications from their region to the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

Final decisions will be rendered by the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, in cooperation with the Secretary of Transportation and Administration and Finance.

How will I be notified if my community is awarded a MassWorks grant?

Applicants that are approved for funding through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be notified in writing of the approval. Approval letters may be accompanied by instructions for demonstrating readiness and any other required submissions as determined by the Secretary. Grant contracts will only be issued for projects that successfully meet all readiness requirements as outlined in the award letter or by program staff. Any project that receives an award but does not meet all requirements by the specified date will lose its funding commitment for that year and may be penalized during future funding rounds.

How will I be notified if my community is denied a MassWorks grant?

Applicants that are denied funding through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be notified in writing and the notifications will cite the reason for denial. If the reason for denial is a lack of available funds, that applicant may be considered at a later date that year if additional program funds become available.

MassWorks Infrastructure Program staff will be available to discuss all project decisions upon request.

Do I need to submit project designs with my application?

No. In most cases design specifications will not be required. In some cases, such as a road improvement that impacts a state-owned roadway, design specifications may be required to evaluate the project and may be requested during the application review period.

Does Complete Streets apply to this program?

Yes. Projects seeking MassWorks Infrastructure Program grants should be consistent with MassDOT's Complete Street design guidelines, which call for accommodation of all roadway users in a manner that is appropriate to the type of roadway and location. The Complete Streets design guidelines were adopted in 2006 in the MassDOT Project Development and Design guide, and are explained in Chapter 5 of that document which is available at:

http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/downloads/designGuide/CH_5_a.pdf

What is Planning Ahead for Growth and how do I know if my community or project site falls within a Geographic District?

Since 2007, the Patrick-Murray Administration has been deliberately and consistently planning ahead for job and housing growth across the Commonwealth in partnership with local communities. The goal of the initiative is to provide consistent support to locally desired growth and development. To determine if your project falls within a district an Online Mapping Tool is available on the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory office website under the MassWorks Infrastructure Program page:

http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/eohed_mapping.php. For additional information on Growth Districts, Chapter 43D and regional planning initiatives please visit the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory office website: www.mass.gov/mpro. For information on Chapter 40R districts please visit: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/chapter-40-r.html>

What is the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan and how do I know if my community is part of it?

The South Coast Rail [Corridor Plan](#) is a blueprint for economic development, housing and environmental preservation in 31 communities in the South Coast region that will be serviced by the South Coast Rail Project. The goal is to preserve the strengths of the region and encourage support for sustainable development in close proximity to transit. The South Coast Rail Corridor Plan includes a map of local, regional and state priorities areas for development and preservation. For more information, please visit: <http://southcoastrail.eot.state.ma.us/corridor.html>

What is the 495/Metro West Development Compact region and how do I know if my community is part of it?

The 495/MetroWest Development Compact is a shared framework for state, regional, and local strategies for priority development and land preservation as well as transportation and other infrastructure investments in the 37 municipalities in the region.

A key component of this plan is the identification of priority development and preservation areas and significant transportation and infrastructure investments for the region. Like the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan, the 495/MetroWest Development Compact was prepared in collaboration with regional and local participants and engaged both public and private sectors to form the framework for public decision-making in land use regulation and infrastructure investment within the region over the next twenty years. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/planning/metrowest/>

What happens if my community receives a grant award but the project is not ready to proceed by the required date(s)?

In order to ensure that the maximum benefit is realized from available grant funds, it is important that grant awards are put to use right away.

Projects put forward for consideration in September will be expected to complete permitting and design, secure all necessary rights of way, and obligate all other funding sources within 120 days of receipt of grant approval or immediately thereafter. Any project that receives an award in September but does not demonstrate readiness within a reasonable timeframe that would enable construction during the upcoming construction season, will lose its funding commitment for that year and will not be eligible to submit the project for funding consideration again until the following September. Funds originally committed during the September round to projects that are unable to demonstrate readiness in a reasonable timeframe will be redistributed to other projects that are ready to proceed to construction.

What is the “Use it or Lose it” Policy?

There are limited funds available for statewide infrastructure projects in Massachusetts. It is imperative that all available funds are used in a timely fashion so that the maximum benefits of those investments are realized by communities in the near term. Therefore, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program places a significant emphasis on completing projects on-time and on-budget. All grant contracts will reflect a strict “use it or lose it” policy whereby communities must complete projects on-schedule and on-budget or the Commonwealth may terminate the grant. Accommodations associated with delays and cost overruns will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but only when the community can demonstrate that the delay was beyond their control and was reported immediately. Communities that complete their MassWorks Infrastructure Program projects on-time and on-budget will be recognized for doing so.

What happens if the project is delayed due to a state or local permit review period or utility company?

The applicant is responsible for completing all permitting, easements, town meeting votes, bidding, utility relocation and other requirements of the project, and these details must be included in the project timeline. Grant contracts will not be issued until all actions that are not covered under the MassWorks grant scope of work and are the responsibility of the municipality have been completed.

It is recommended that projects involving state permits seek advice of the permit issuing agencies prior to submitting an application for grant funds.

If there are unforeseen delays due to state permitting, the community should bring them to the attention of the program manager at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development immediately.

What should I do if I experience an unforeseen delay that is beyond my control?

If there are unforeseen delays, the community should bring them to the attention of the program manager at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development immediately. The grant contract will include instructions for this process.

Is there a set minimum or maximum grant award?

Communities that are applying under the economic development or housing category are encouraged to submit an application for the full scope of the infrastructure project costs. If the program supports the project but funding is not available to cover the full expense of the project, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program may work with the community to identify a portion of the project which can be funded through the MassWorks program.

However, communities with a population of 7,000 or less that are applying for a transportation grant to enhance safety are eligible for no more than \$1 Million in grant assistance in a three year

period. Multiple communities may submit a joint application under which each community is eligible for no more than one million dollars in a three year period.

If there are other sources of funds that will contribute to this project, should they be identified in the application?

Yes. Any funds that are needed to complete the project should be clearly outlined in the application. The community must demonstrate that all funds other than the MassWorks grant have been secured for the project or that they can be secured shortly after a MassWorks grant award is made.

Is a local or private match required?

No. A local or private match is not required of this program however those applications requesting infrastructure funds that support a development project will be favored if a match is available.

Will this program consider Commonwealth Capital Program scores?

No. The Commonwealth Capital Program will not apply to the MassWorks Infrastructure Program in favor of an alternate policy that is under development at this time.

Who will administer the consolidated program?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (ANF).

Where can I go for more information?

Please visit www.mass.gov/hed/massworks for additional information.