



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Economic Development
1 Ashburton Place, Room 2101, Boston, MA 02108

Community Workforce Partnerships Grant Program 2026

Request for Proposals (RFP) Program Guidelines and Application Template

Open Date: **Monday, March 24, 2025**

Information Sessions (virtual): [Wednesday, April 2, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m.](#)
[Wednesday, April 16, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m.](#)

Application Deadline: **Friday, May 2, 2025 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Questions: eoledgrants@mass.gov

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1. Introduction

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is pleased to announce the Community Workforce Partnership Grant. This program builds on the success of the Urban Agenda grant, which has supported local economic priorities and collective problem-solving for the past ten years. It aims to promote economic mobility and create opportunities for grantees to collaborate with each other. The program also now offers a longer implementation period and higher maximum award amounts.

Administered by the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), the Community Workforce Partnership Grant program supports community-led responses to community-defined economic opportunities and challenges, with a particular focus on equipping residents and small business employees with the knowledge, support, and skills to succeed in today's economy.

The program's increased emphasis on workforce skills reflects this grant's new funding source, the Workforce Investment Trust Fund. The fund's goal is to develop and strengthen workforce opportunities for low-income communities and vulnerable youth and young adults in the commonwealth, including providing opportunities and strategies to promote stable employment and wage growth.

Similar to the former Urban Agenda program, this program is focused on supporting projects in a single geographic community within Massachusetts. Funding grant projects that serve target populations in just one city or town allows the projects to be tailored to

the specific needs of the communities they serve while also engaging multiple active organizational partners with deep understanding of the people impacted.

Finally, this grant program will also offer two peer-to-peer sessions for grantees and partners to present successful projects, network, and work through challenges as a cohort. These sessions will be scheduled during the grant period.

2. Eligibility Requirements

a. Eligible Lead Applicants:

- Massachusetts nonprofit organizations with IRS tax-exempt status as of the date of application, who are
- Experienced in providing workforce development services, and are
- Applying on behalf of a partnership, coalition or collaboration involving at least one other active organization, and
- Has a minimum annual operating budget of \$200,000 for the prior fiscal year.

b. Additional Criteria:

- The lead applicant must be the organization who will primarily carry out the grant project and be responsible for managing grant funds and filing reports.
- Applicants who are themselves employers (for example, hiring participants for a transitional work program) must pay all participants at least the Massachusetts minimum wage.
- The grant project must be distinct from any project currently funded by the EOED Community Empowerment and Reinvestment grant program.

3. Key Components of the Community Workforce Partnership Grant Program

Community-Defined Responses to Community Economic Needs or Opportunities:

The Executive Office of Economic Development recognizes that Massachusetts' 351 communities face unique economic and equity challenges, and that the path to success lies in tapping into the unique local assets that they already possess, rather than in one-size-fits-all directives from government. As such, we look to communities to define their own workforce-related economic goals and objectives.

Single Geographic Community: Projects must be focused on a single Massachusetts city or town (or neighborhood, if located within the City of Boston) and include active partners and stakeholders located in that community. Generally, applicants should base their project proposal on locally significant economic trends. The key is that the project is in direct response to a need or opportunity that the group has identified and deemed important in that geographic community.

Partnership Model: Successful applicants will show that they are working as part of an active coalition or collaboration – that is, that they have at least one partner in the community (and preferably several) all working together on the project. Ideally, coalitions will include partners from the private and public sectors as well as community groups; operational collaboration with municipal government can be a strong demonstration that a project reflects community goals. Other potential partners include educational institutions, Chambers of Commerce, local businesses, and more. Active and collaborative coalitions that receive support from this program are deeper and broader than a mere referral or financial relationship between partners.

It is important to note that this grant is intended to support the work being done by a community, not by any individual agency that happens to be working in the community. The idea is for projects to be developed and agreed upon by a community coalition or consortium. It is not meant to support or expand the reach of any one organization.

Target Population: Successful applicants will identify a discrete target population that their project is intended to serve and who have also played a role in shaping the project. In addition to being part of the geographic community identified in the application, defining traits of a target population might include affiliation with particular demographic groups (like age, gender identity, language spoken, cultural affinity, disability), educational milestones (like high school completion), interests and strengths (people who want to learn a new language or pursue a particular career) or life experiences (like parenthood or history of incarceration). Please note that this is far from an exhaustive list of the defining features of a target population – the key is that the target population served reflects the community the project takes place in and solves an economic problem or takes advantage of an economic opportunity in that municipality.

Workforce Development Focus: All successful applications will be centered on a workforce development initiative. Project categories include job skill training, literacy and language skills, and small business worker skill development, apprenticeship, recruitment and retention.

Alignment with the Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations Economic Development Plan: This program incorporates several insights from the 2023 Economic Development Plan, including a focus on economic fundamentals for communities experiencing economic inequality. Particularly, this grant program evaluation prioritizes applicants whose project incorporates childcare, transportation, housing stability, and/or access to healthcare, because these are critical to creating a foundation for economic mobility which allows all people to thrive.

4. Scope of Work

Project Description: Funded projects will propose a community-led response to a workforce need or opportunity in a single Massachusetts municipality. Successful projects will utilize a partnership or collaborative model to achieve the SMART goals listed on the application during the 2026 calendar year.

Project Types:

- Job skill training, including education and hands on skills
 - Youth focus, or
 - Adult focus, or
 - All ages/mixed ages
- Literacy and language skills
 - Adult literacy, or
 - English language learning with workforce focus
- Small business employee skill development, apprenticeship, recruitment and retention

Timeline:

- a. Applications are due May 2, 2025.
- b. Award notifications will be made in September 2025.
- c. The grant period for this program will run from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026. All grant funds must be utilized during this time period and all grant activities must take place during this period.

SMART Goals: Funded proposals will be able to identify specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) outcomes to be achieved by the project within the one-year grant period. These outcomes, which will become part of the grant contract if awarded, must be deeply tied to the identified economic need or opportunity and demonstrate the impact of the interventions funded.

5. Grant Payment Information

- a. **Grant Type:** Cost reimbursement. Grantees must submit quarterly documentation, in a format provided by EOED, of all grant dollars expended.
- b. **Maximum Grant:** \$150,000
- c. **Eligible Grant Expenses:** Operating costs related to grant project, including but not limited to staff salaries, project materials, partner sub-grants, event supplies, and necessary consultants. Expenses may include supportive services for participants such as childcare, participation-related stipends, transportation, CORI sealing, student technology, and other costs associated with facilitating a holistically supportive learning environment. Small business development, to the

extent it reflects demonstrable workforce development goals for small business employees and apprentices, is also a permissible use of funds.

- d. **Ineligible Grant Expenses:** Capital expenditures (real estate purchase, construction/renovation, durable goods over \$5,000), vehicles, gift cards, Cash App or Venmo transactions, legal fees incurred by the organization, alcohol, fundraising costs including but not limited to galas and other events. EOED reserves the right to determine other grant expenses to be ineligible at the time of application review or contracting.
- e. **Overhead/Admin Costs:** Overhead/Admin costs of up to 10% of the total grant award are permissible.
- f. **Payment Schedule:** Fifty percent of the total grant award will be paid at the time of contract execution. A second payment of 25% of the total grant award will be paid following the quarterly report when the grantee demonstrates that the first 50% of the grant has been spent. The final 25% payment (or the remaining documented spending, whichever is less) is eligible for payment following the final report of the grant period.

6. Proposal Requirements

Submittable Eligibility and Application forms must be submitted by the deadline.

Within the Submittable form, there must be a complete budget. Using the budget form and questions provided, provide a comprehensive budget that aligns with the project scope and includes detailed cost estimates for each category (e.g., personnel, stipends, supplies, etc).

In addition to the Submittable eligibility form and application, there are item(s) that need to be uploaded into the application:

- **Partnership Support Letter:** Include letters of support from collaborators and partners detailing their role in the project. *Letters must be uploaded into Submittable and will not be accepted via email or postal mail.*

7. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Evaluation Factors:

- Geography/Target Population (25 points)
 - Project is focused on a municipality where more than 20% of the population was in poverty per the census
 - Well-defined target population that will benefit from the project.

- Members of the target population have been engaged in developing and/or carrying out the project.
- Long-Term Impacts (25 points)
 - Project's capacity to expand workforce services over long term
 - Project incorporates direct support from the lead grantee or a named partner to support participants (financially, logistically, etc) with least two of the following:
 - Housing
 - Childcare
 - Transportation
 - Healthcare, including insurance access, mental health and substance addiction services
 - CORI sealing/criminal record expungement
 - Partnership
 - History of successful collaboration
 - Focus on multi-sector partnerships
 - Active and ongoing coalition participation in project planning and implementation. ("Co-Steering")
- Innovation (5 points)
 - Project responds to the community's workforce need in a unique or innovative way
 - Project is meaningfully distinct from any project(s) with the same collaborators that receive Community Empowerment & Reinvestment Grant funding
- Demonstration of Need (10 points)
 - Articulation of the identified workforce need/opportunity that the project will address.
 - Description of how the project's activities directly respond to the need or opportunity.
 - Evidence that project has deep and broad ties to community and project's goals reflect the community's priorities.
- Outcomes and Impacts (15 points)
 - Specific and measurable outcomes tied to the community-identified economic need or opportunity.
 - Prior grant performance of grantee (if applicable)
 - Impacts are reasonable given the scope of the project and the size of the grant request.
- Capacity to Succeed (10 points)
 - Logical progression from scope of work described to the outcomes and impacts anticipated.
 - Evidence of strategic, timely and economic justice-oriented project planning and/or implementation thus far.

- Including anticipating barrier(s) to target population participation and description of how applicant intends to overcome these barriers.
 - Clear and appropriate project timeline outlining key activities and milestones on a monthly basis.
 - Detailed budget, including total project budget, allocation of the requested grant funds, and reasonable overhead costs.
- Equity and Opportunity (10 points)
 - Providing culturally relevant services and facilities based on target populations
 - Economic equity/justice is part of program design
 - Clear articulation of how the project will advance equitable opportunities in the community.
- Bonus: Geographic Community and Foundations for Economic Mobility (up to 10 points). *Please note that the bonus points for this section are determined based on the community the project takes place in and the direct support services described in the application (specifically in the “Long Term Impacts” section). Applicants do not need to write where their community falls in these various data sets as this will be calculated automatically.*
 - Providing direct childcare financial assistance or support for early educators in a low or very low [child opportunity community](#)
 - Providing CORI sealing/criminal record assistance in community with an above-average rate of prison admissions (based on EOPSS data)
 - Directly assisting clients with obtaining health insurance in a community has over 3% uninsured rate (per US census)
 - Providing housing stabilization services in a [municipality with an eviction filing rate above the state average of 17.39 per 1000 \(based on MHP data\)](#)

8. Reporting and Accountability

- **Reporting:** All grantees must submit quarterly reports during the 2026 calendar year, documenting both financial expenses incurred and project milestones. A report form will be available in Submittable.
- **Report due dates:**
 - Q1 (1/1/2026 - 3/31/2026): Report Due April 15, 2026
 - Q2 (4/1/2026 - 6/30/2026): Report Due July 15, 2026
 - Q3 (7/1/2026 - 9/30/2026): Report Due October 15, 2026
 - Q4 (10/1/2026 - 12/31/2026)/Final Report: Report Due January 15, 2027
- **Performance Metrics:** Successful grantees will submit timely, complete, and accurate financial reports and will achieve at least 3 of the outcomes proposed on the grant application.

9. Application Submission Instructions

Submission Deadline: All applications must be submitted by 11:59pm on May 2, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submission Format: Applications must be submitted digitally via the Submittable form. Documents submitted via postal mail, email, or any other format besides Submittable will not be accepted. The EOED Submittable page is linked above; the URL is <https://eoedcommunityprograms.submittable.com/submit>

- **Required Components:**
 - Submittable Eligibility Form
 - Submittable Application Form, including complete budget
 - Partner Letter(s) of Support (upload)

Notification of Award: Notification of award decisions and grant amount is expected in September 2025, with contracting to follow. Applicants who are not recommended for funding will also be notified in writing. Projects will begin in January 2026.

10. Additional Information

Informational Webinars for Applicants: Two informational webinars will be held online via Zoom to share information about the grant program and answer questions from prospective applicants. Informational webinars will be recorded and posted on Mass.gov.

- a. **Informational Webinar Session 1: April 2, 2025 at 10am**
 - a. [Registration is required via Zoom \(please use embedded link\)](#)
- b. **Informational Webinar Session 2: April 16, 2025 at 10am**
 - a. [Registration is required via Zoom \(please use embedded link\)](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): FAQs will be made available on Mass.gov and will be updated following each live webinar.

Contact Information: EOED staff will be unable to answer any individual questions while the application period is open. Questions will be aggregated, and responses will be periodically posted on the EOED webpage. Applicants may contact EOHEDGrants@Mass.gov with questions to be added to the FAQ.

Technical Support: Applicants are encouraged to utilize the Submittable technical assistance at submittable.com/help. EOED staff is also available until 4pm on May 2 via email at EOHEDGrants@Mass.gov.

11. Terms and Conditions

It is the responsibility of the applicant to be aware of all requirements and deadlines, and to ensure that their application is complete and submitted on time. All applications will be logged as to date and time received and kept on file as public record. Late submissions will not be considered.

The Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant or external sources as may be necessary in order to complete the application review. EOED also reserves the right to recommend partial grant awards, as deemed appropriate.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development complies with all Commonwealth of Massachusetts' procurement laws and regulations set forth and overseen by the Commonwealth's Operational Services Division when awarding contracts as well as the state's award requirements as mandated and overseen by the Office of the State Comptroller when dispersing these funds. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFP are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c.66, s.1, and to c.4, s.7, ss.26.

Successful applicants, upon notification of award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the applicant is already enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

During the term of a contract agreement and for a period up to seven years thereafter, if the Executive Office of Economic Development is audited, the grantee will be required to make all records relating to this grant available.

Addendum 1: Application Template

Eligibility Form

- Is the applicant a Massachusetts non-profit organization in good standing? Verification of nonprofit status (federal EIN required).
- What was the lead applicant organization's annual operating budget for the last fiscal year?
- Does the lead applicant have experience providing workforce development services?
- Is the lead applicant applying on behalf of a partnership, coalition or collaboration involving at least one other active organization?
- If the project coalition employs participants (for example, as trainees or in a transitional workforce program) does the employer pay all trainees/employees at least the Massachusetts minimum hourly wage, and certify that they will continue to do so?
- Certification that the answers above are true and correct.

Applicant

Lead Applicant Organization Name: (Please enter the name of the organization applying for the grant.)

Lead Applicant Organization - Annual Operating Budget for Last Fiscal Year

End Date of Fiscal Year for Budget Above

Provide a brief description of the organization, its mission and history. (Limit 150 words)

Organization CEO: (Name, Title, Mailing Address, Phone Number, Email)

Contact Person, if different: (Name, Title, Mailing Address, Phone Number, Email)

Application Overview

Project Name (What is the name of your workforce development project? Limit 15 words)

Grant Request Amount

Project Type (select one):

- Job skill training, including education and hands on skills
 - Youth focus (specify age range), or
 - Adult focus, or
 - All ages/mixed ages
- Literacy and language skills
 - Adult literacy, or
 - English language learning with workforce focus
- Small business employee skill development, apprenticeship, recruitment and retention

Project Summary (Briefly describe your project, focusing on its goals, targeted population, and how it will address economic needs or opportunities. Limit 150 words.)

Geography and Target Population

Which municipality will your project focus on? (Drop down)

Neighborhood (City of Boston only, optional)

Address where workforce development services will be provided

Who are the primary individuals your project aims to serve?

(Describe the target population. Limit 150 words.)

How have you involved members of the target population in planning and/or carrying out the project? (Explain the involvement process. Be specific. Limit 200 words.)

Provide a concrete example of how your organization or partnership has adapted its workforce development strategies based on feedback from participants or the community. (Limit 200 words)

Demonstration of Need

What specific economic need or opportunity will your project address?

(Clearly explain the problem your project seeks to solve. Limit 250 words.)

Long-Term Impacts

What is your project's long-term impact?

(Describe how your project aims to scale or create lasting impacts. How will you measure that impact? Limit 250 words.)

How will you provide direct foundational support for economic mobility (e.g., CORI sealing, childcare funds, case management) to participants?

(Specify support services, such as housing stabilization, CORI sealing, childcare, and/or healthcare access, that will be provided directly to participants by the project partnership. Do not include services that will be provided through referral, unless the referral is within the partnership leading the project. Limit 300 words)

Innovation

How does your project address community workforce needs in a unique or innovative way? (Provide a description of the innovative elements of your approach. Limit 200 words)

Partnerships and Collaboration

Table: What partners and collaborators are involved in this project?

(Provide the names and roles of partner organizations.)

	Partner Name	Partner Organization Type (Non-Profit, For-Profit, Government, or Community Group)	Partner Role
1			
2			
3			

4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Upload: Attach a letter of support from each partner describing their role in the project.
(PDF format only)

Have you collaborated with these partners in the past? Yes/No

If Yes:

Provide example(s) of past collaborative project(s) and the results (use bullets). Then, share an example of a time when a partner organization's input or feedback significantly shaped the direction of a project you've worked on together. How did you incorporate their perspective? Limit 500 words.

Outcomes and Impacts

Table: What are the 3-5 specific and measurable outcomes of your project?

(Describe the interventions, outputs and expected outcomes and be specific how they will be measured. Be sure to utilize SMART outcomes. For a helpful reference about grant outcomes, [you may also read this article.](#))

Note that, if funded, these outcomes would become part of your grant contract.

	Target Population Served (for example, 50 unemployed Worcester youth age 16-24)	Interventions/Services Provided (for example, 12 week foodservice training program)	Outputs (for example, 90% of participating youth will pass ServSafe food handler assessment)	Outcomes (for example, employment rates for participating youth will increase to 75% by the end of 2026).
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

How will you evaluate the success of the project during and after the grant period?

(Explain whether you will use an evidence-based model or conduct an external evaluation. If evaluating, be specific about who will be conducting the evaluation and how it will be carried out. Limit 250 words.)

Capacity to Succeed

What is your project timeline and what key milestones will you meet?

(Provide a month-by-month project timeline.)

Month	Activities to be carried out and milestones to be achieved
January 2026	
February 2026	
March 2026	
April 2026	
May 2026	
June 2026	
July 2026	
August 2026	
September 2026	
October 2026	
November 2026	
December 2026	

Budget:

Spending Category	2026 Grant Amount
Personnel:	
Stipends for participants/trainees:	
Consultants / Professional Fees:	
Partner Subcontracts:	
Events / Meeting Expenses:	
Project Supplies/Materials:	
Equipment (non-Capital):	
Other/Miscellaneous:	
General Admin. / Overhead (maximum 10%):	
Total Grant Request:	\$0.00

Budget Detail:

- Personnel: Using the table provided, list personnel on this project, their FTEs, and the approximate cost for each person.

	Name and Title	FTE	Cost
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1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
	TOTAL		\$-

- Stipends: describe who will be paid a stipend, how many people are expected to receive stipends, and how much they will each receive (total or range). Please note the stipend line is intended to pay participants in a job skill training or educational program or similar, not to provide compensation to organization staff.
- Consultants/Professional Fees: Using bullets, name all consultants or professionals to be paid through the grant, describe their role and expertise, and list how much they will be paid.
- Partner Subcontracts: List the partners to be paid and the total amount to be paid to each.
- Provide detail for Events/Meeting Expenses, Project Supplies/Materials, and Equipment.
- Describe the other/miscellaneous expenses and list the cost for each. Ensure expenses are not indirect costs, which belong in the general admin/overhead line, or disallowed expenses (listed in the RFP).

Equity and Opportunity

How will your project advance equitable opportunities in the community?

(Describe how your project incorporates principles of equity, including cultural relevance, fairness, and economic justice. Limit 300 words.)