



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

Request for Proposals (RFP)

FY2024-26 Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program

Program Guidelines

Open Date: **Thursday August 17, 2023**

Information Session: **Tuesday August 22, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.**

Application Deadline: **Friday September 15, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.**

Questions: eoheadgrants@mass.gov

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is pleased to announce the third round of the Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program. This program seeks to develop, strengthen, and invest in community-led efforts to bring positive economic outcomes to communities that face historically disproportionate challenges to economic growth. Specifically, the program was developed to support communities with high rates of criminal justice system involvement, widespread poverty, and large groups of disadvantaged and underrepresented populations.

The Community Empowerment and Reinvestment grant program is administered by the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) and offers flexible grant funding to support local partnerships. The program is designed to support projects in communities and neighborhoods across the Commonwealth that are led by these community-based coalitions, to carry out programming that meets the goals of the program as outlined in the state budget line item.

Like EOED’s Urban Agenda Grant Program, the initiative seeks proposals for projects and programming that entail community-driven responses to community-defined economic opportunities, and that build leadership, collaboration, and capacity at the local level. EOED recognizes that some communities face unique challenges, and that the path to success lies in tapping into and strengthening the unique local assets that they already possess.

The program will make general operating grants, on a competitive basis, primarily to projects proposing to mitigate the negative impacts of criminal justice involvement through education, training, and small business development, as well as recovery, prevention, and other social support services to individuals and families that help reduce justice system involvement. The program will not fund capital projects or purchases, including but not limited to real property purchase and/or renovation.

The Commonwealth’s economic development plan, *Partnerships for Growth*, highlights Equitable Opportunity as a guiding principle – noting that opportunity and growth to people and

places that have not fully benefitted from the state’s overall prosperity, will have significant positive effects on families and communities.

B. PROGRAM PURPOSE

To distribute grant funds to projects that meet the goals as outlined by the state budget line item 7002-2021: “...developing, strengthening and investing in communities: (i) that are disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system; (ii) where a high percentage of individuals' incomes fall below 250 per cent of the federal poverty level; and (iii) with a large population of socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups...” This RFP incorporates recommendations and feedback provided by the Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Board.

EOED will prioritize funding to applications that seek to advance equitable opportunities, particularly for individuals who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. Applicants are encouraged to build or enhance collaborations that include historically marginalized groups and to strive to strengthen neighborhoods, increase workforce participation, and expand opportunities in ways that drive diversity and inclusiveness.

C. NEW FOR FY2024 (HIGHLIGHTS)

- New Project Category: Community Organizing & Leadership Development
- Convert to a multi-year procurement cycle, allowing EOED to renew contracts in 1-year increments for projects in good standing, immediately upon the availability of funds in the following fiscal year.

Contracts will have a term ending June 30, 2024. Subject to annual state budget appropriations, EOED may elect to renew contracts for up to two 1-year contract periods, through June 30, 2026. In order to be considered for renewal in FY2025 or FY2026, grant recipients must 1) Submit a request for renewal at the conclusion of the preceding fiscal year, 2) Meet program performance goals by completing at least 75% of each of the outputs set out in the contract for the prior fiscal year, and 3) file complete, on-time reports (and amendment requests, if applicable) for all prior reporting intervals in the previous fiscal year.

Depending on the number of contract renewals and the amount of funding provided in the FY2025 and FY2026 budgets, EOED may elect not to issue an additional procurement for new Community Empowerment & Reinvestment grants made in FY2025 and FY2026.

Should the fiscal year budget appropriations for the Community Empowerment & Reinvestment Grant Program in FY2025 or FY2026 be more or less than the FY2024 funding level, EOED retains the option to determine whether to issue a new procurement or distribute available funding among the existing grantees under renewed contracts.

- Prioritization of Evidence-Based Program Models, Prior or Planned Program Evaluations

Additional points are awarded to coalitions which will operate a Community Empowerment and Reinvestment project that expressly utilize an evidence-based model or who have undergone

or plan to undergo a program evaluation for the project. Here, evaluation is defined as an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency.

D. RFP SCOPE AND DETAILS

Total Grant Funds Available **\$15,000,000 for FY2024 (Subsequent Years Subject to Appropriation)**

Minimum Grant Size (Per Year) **\$75,000**

Maximum Grant Size (Per Year) **\$500,000**

Renewal Grant Size Subject to appropriation; if appropriation remains level funded, EOED anticipates that all renewed grants will be level-funded as well, based on FY2024 awards.

Acquisition Method and Contract Payment Terms Cost reimbursement contracts.
For the first fiscal year awarded:
50% of grant will be paid at time of contract signing;
25% will be paid following a timely and complete first quarterly report;
remaining funds to be disbursed after the final report is submitted and approved, with documentation substantiating all project expenditures
EOED reserves the right to modify disbursements based on grantee performance to ensure grant funds are expended for permitted purposes

Grant use General operating support, including reasonable overhead costs.

Performance Period Grants will be awarded to support the operations of a project from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024 and may be renewable up to twice in one-year intervals, subject to grant performance and budget appropriations.
Contracts would be renewable on a fiscal year basis for FY2025 (July 1 2024 through June 30 2025) and FY2026 (July 1 2025 through June 30 2026).

Project Categories Community Based Workforce Development,
Small Business Development,
Housing Stabilization,
Community Health Improvement,
High School Dropout Prevention, and
Community Organizing and Leadership Development

Eligible Communities	<p>Any Massachusetts city or town (or neighborhood) that: is disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system, has a high percentage of individuals with an income below 250% of the federal poverty level, and Has a large population of socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups.</p>
Eligible Lead Applicant	<p>Non-profit community-based organization, or municipal government, applying as part of a local partnership or coalition</p>
Eligible Project Partners	<p>Municipality, Community-Based Organizations, Schools, Local Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Private Sector Partners, Neighborhood Associations, etc.</p>
Review criteria	<p>Community Profile and Goals Collaboration and Partnerships Target Population Anticipated Impact – Project Plan Proven Track Record Capacity to Succeed & Budget</p> <p>BONUS: Advancement of Equitable Opportunities</p>
Contract Renewal Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-time, complete request for renewal submitted by grantee. 2. Performance – Grantee has met program performance goals by completing at least 75% of each of the outputs set out in the contract for the prior fiscal year. 3. Reporting – Grantee has filed complete, on-time reports (and amendment requests, if applicable) for all prior reporting intervals in the previous fiscal year.

E. ANTICIPATED PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

RFP Open

August 17, 2023

Information Session

August 22, 2023 10:00 AM (Virtual)

Register below for webinar and/or call-in information
https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_09oZaDBdTFizROZdTkXGFA

Application deadline

September 15, 2023, 5:00pm

Notification of Award Decisions

November 2023

Anticipated Contract Start

January 2024 – *Exact timeline and project scope to be negotiated during contracting phase.*

F. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The program will consider applications from communities that have established partnerships, coalitions and/or collaborations that have a track record of working together on addressing community challenges. Organizations within the same community or neighborhood are encouraged to work together to collaborate on submitting a singular application.

Community Empowerment and Reinvestment is a competitive grant program. All applicants are evaluated using the same process, regardless of whether the applicant has received a grant in the past. While previous grant performance may be considered as a tie-breaking factor, previous grantees should not assume that receiving grant funds in the past has any bearing on their application for any future year.

Grant applications will be reviewed and scored (110 points max.) on the following criteria:

Community Profile and Goals (5 points)

- Description of the neighborhood, economic, and social context in which proposed programs will operate, placing the work within a broader community framework.

Collaboration and Partnerships (10 points)

- Description of existing community coalition or collaboration with thoughtful assembling of partners; strong partnerships include government, non-profits, businesses, community groups, and/or others.
- Partner roles demonstrate that project is occurring in collaboration (not all carried out by single organization).
- Evidence of the partnership's history, experience, and past successes.
- Innovation of the collaboration: leveraging existing strengths and developing new local capacity and leadership.

Target Population (30 points)

- Clear description of the specific target population that the project is designed to benefit. Clear and specific evidence that the community:
 - Is disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system,
 - Has a large population of socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups.
- Project primarily (based on number of people served) and directly serves people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.
- Prison admission rates in project community (based on Massachusetts DOC data)
- Arrest rates in project community (based on EOPSS data)
- Percentage of people living in poverty in project community (per US Census data)
- Median income for households in project community falls under 250% of federal poverty level (per US Census data)

Anticipated Impact – Project Plan (35 points)

- Outcomes are directly related to the needs of the identified target population(s), and to the overall community goals, particularly in supporting successful re-entry support, prevention of justice system involvement, and/or other relevant program objectives.
- Clear articulation of the vision and goals of the project in as they relate to the target population and the geographic community as a whole. Goals outline a direct impact on individuals that are at risk of justice system involvement, were formerly incarcerated, and/or their families and social contacts.
- Demonstration of how members of target population, such as community residents and/or those that have been formerly incarcerated have been engaged in the project.
- Project activities, outputs and anticipated outcomes seem reasonable and relevant to the project goals and in proportion to the funding request. Proposed services will directly benefit the target population.
- Project activities, outputs and outcomes are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- Empirically validated model. Project or program has undergone a successful program evaluation and/or project is closely based on an empirically validated model and/or applicant has clear plan to undergo program evaluation during the grant period and has integrated that into the budget, timeline and other plans.

Proven Track Record (5 points)

- Evidence of the lead applicant's experience in leading coalitions and completing projects for the target population, especially working with justice-impacted people.

Capacity to Succeed & Budget (15 points)

- Clear and feasible project timeline.
- Detailed budget, including total project budget, allocation of the requested grant funds, reasonable overhead costs, and inclusion of secured match funds from non-Commonwealth sources, if any.

- Lead applicant organization has filed timely reports with the Massachusetts Attorney General’s office, and applicant’s grant request is reasonable in proportion to prior year’s gross support and revenue.

Advancing Equitable Opportunities (BONUS 10 points)

- Clearly articulates how project will advance equitable opportunities in the community by intentionally serving community members who have been socially and economically disadvantaged, and/or historically underrepresented.

G. APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDANCE

1. Program materials, including a copy of the RFP and the application template are available online <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-economic-development>
2. The application template is provided for reference purposes only. The template may be used to make notes and prepare draft responses.
3. The formal application must be completed, and submitted by the deadline, through the Submittable link on the website. Email or fax submissions of applications or supporting documents will not be accepted.
4. EOED staff will be unable to answer any individual questions while the application period is open. Questions must be emailed to eoedgrants@mass.gov by August 25, 2023. They will be aggregated and responses will be posted on the EOED webpage.
5. EOED will host one information session for prospective applicants. **The virtual event will take place on Tuesday August 22, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.** Webinar and/or call in information is available [by registering here](#). Participation is not required. The session will be recorded and posted on the program’s EOED webpage.
6. **Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on September 15, 2023.**
7. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is received on time by EOED. All applications will be logged as to date and time received and kept on file as public record. Late submissions will not be considered.
8. Please note that if all awarded FY2024 grantees receive renewal and the budget line item does not receive additional funding beyond FY2024 levels, EOED does not plan to issue an additional procurement for new Community Empowerment & Reinvestment grants made in FY2025 and FY2026.
9. 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. In addition, EOED reserves the right to make partial awards as deemed necessary and appropriate to ensure equitable distribution of these resources.

A complete proposal packet includes the following components:

- **Cover Page**
- **Proposal Narrative**
- **Budget Form**

Other Attachments may be submitted to support the application. These must be in a separate document (as one PDF). Additional attachments could include support letters from community partners that will be actively involved in the project, such as agencies, businesses, and/or elected officials. In all cases, the letters should reference the role that the writer will be playing in the project.

H. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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.

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