FY2022 COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Date Posted: February 12, 2021
Dates of Questions: January 21 – February 5, 2021

GENERAL PROCESS QUESTIONS

Q: Where do I find the deadline dates?

A: Please reference the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Section I.

Expressions of Interest Accepting Applications	February 8 – April 2, 2021
Full Application Accepting Applications	May 3, 2021 – June 4, 2021
Review & Evaluation	June-September, 2021
Notification of Award	October/November 2021
Anticipated Contracting	November/December 2021

Q: Does this timeline change the deadline of all programs in the One Stop? For example, instead of the July/August MassWorks deadline, will it now be June under One Stop?

A: Yes, the application deadlines are changed for all the programs within the One Stop. They will now have a single deadline date for submission each year, which for this year's round is June 4th, 2021.

Q: Does the online process allow an applicant to start the application and save work in progress?

A: Yes, up until the posted deadlines, users will be able to log in and out of the system at any time to work, and save the progress, on their application(s). Applicants are encouraged to save their work often, as the system will generate alerts indicating any errors on a form that may need to be addressed before each section can be marked as complete.

Q: You mentioned that part of the application requires the same information from the Expression of Interest (optional) application. Can that information be transferred without having to manually enter the data twice?

A: Yes, the system will auto-fill the information from the Expression of Interest into any Full Application, without the applicant having to re-enter the information. The applicant will have the ability to edit that information in the Full Application if needed.

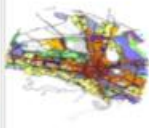**Q: What if an opportunity presents itself outside of the One Stop cycle?**

A: No. Applicants that are not awarded and/or that seek funding support after the round has closed will have the opportunity to resubmit their project or any new project in the next round. Applicants are encouraged to consult individual program guidelines or talk to program staff in advance of the next funding round. The Secretary of EOHED retains discretion to invite applications for "out of round" MassWorks funding when the Secretary determines a project must be expedited.

Q: If an applicant has already submitted grants this year for some of the programs in the One Stop, do they have to be submitted again?

A: No, any applications submitted this past year to individual programs have been reviewed or will be reviewed/processed as planned by the administering agency. The One Stop will be accepting applications for grant consideration with funding from Fiscal Year 2022 going forward. However, applications that were unsuccessful in other programs this past year, that would like to submit the same project to the One Stop, will be required to submit a new application.

Q: If awarded a grant, do funds need to be expended by the end of FY2022 or can they cross additional fiscal years as needed?

A: The length of contract terms and/or spending requirements will vary by program. Applicants are advised to consult the guidelines of the programs within the categories of funding. The links to all program guidelines are included in the appendix of the Notice of Funding Availability (available here). Please see chart below to note which programs are associated with each category of the One Stop.

Programs	Community Capacity Building	Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Predevelopment & Permitting	Buildings (vertical)	Infrastructure (horizontal)
Urban Agenda	✓					
Mass Downtown	✓	✓				
NEW Community Planning		✓				
Brownfields			✓			
Site Readiness			✓	✓		
NEW Under Utilized Properties				✓	✓	
MassWorks				✓		✓
Housing Choice		✓	✓	✓		✓
NEW Rural Development		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Q: Will proposed projects within a community be required to have a letter of support from city/town leadership in order to qualify for funding?

A: Applicants will be required to attach a letter of acknowledgement from the municipal CEO with each Full Application or to provide a brief explanation if they are unable to attain a letter. However, the letter is intended to demonstrate knowledge of and support of the project by local officials and is not a requirement for receiving a grant.

Q: For Towns that do not have a fulltime Town Planner or Director of Community and Economic Development to guide them, how can we utilize the One Stop for Growth offerings? Does One Stop offer the services of any of its representatives to serve as a guide/advisor to small towns that do not have a fulltime Planner?

A: The Community One Stop for Growth was designed to be a streamlined experience, accessible to every municipality in the Commonwealth, large and small. While the One Stop does not offer individualized advising services, the Expression of Interest process is intended to provide direct advice and feedback to applicants about their prospective projects and how to best approach the Full Application. For small towns that do not have staff capacity, and no specific project, the Expression is also an opportunity to outline their need for capacity building support. In this case, applicants are advised to be clear about their specific development goals and obstacles to growth. Applicants that are new to economic development should consider submitting proposals in the earlier "Preparing for Growth" part of the continuum, for activities to get the applicant more ready, such as creating a consortium to guide economic development or developing a plan.

Q: **Does the referral process get my project any special consideration or process for programs outside of the One Stop?**

A: No, a One Stop referral does not give the project any special consideration or guarantee of funding from other sources. The One Stop team will provide information about the other program(s) and alert the program staff of the referral. However, it will be up to the applicant to follow and comply with the application process and guidelines provided by the grant programs outside of the One Stop.

USING THE IGX ONLINE PLATFORM

Q: **The One Stop instructions say, "Applicants who used IGX in the 2020 MassWorks Round, or the Intelligrants system in any of the past three rounds (2017-2019) are able to use their existing log-in credentials to access this FY2022 opportunity." I did use the Intelligrants system for a 2020 round, should those credentials work?**

A: Yes, but only for past applicants of the MassWorks program. Please note the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) uses the Intelligrants system for its programs, including CDBG and the Housing One Stop, and those credentials are separate and will not work in the Community One Stop for Growth.

Q: **What does DUNS mean? Is the DUNS number a required field?**

A: The Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun & Bradstreet. It is commonly used for government funding tracking purposes. The DUNS number is optional in the One Stop. This is not a required field in IGX.

Q: **Who should be the Grant Administrator?**

A: The Grant Administrator(s) for each organization should be the lead person(s) in the organization that is/are authorized to submit applications on behalf of the organization, and if awarded, is in a position to manage the contracting. At least one of the Grant Administrators should be the authorized signatory of the organization or a designee acting on behalf of the authorized signatory.

Q: **How do you become a new user in IGX?**

A: The online application system, IGX can be accessed by navigating to eohed.intelligrants.com. New users should select the "New User? Register Here" button, as noted below, and complete the form. Please note that it will take 24-48 hours for your account to be verified and activated, before you can log in. You will receive a confirmation email when your account is ready.

Q: Can multiple people have logins to the same municipal organization? Can they have access, view and edit a draft Expression of Interest or a draft Full Application?

A: Yes, the members of an organization may be added under the user profile found by clicking the box in the top right of the screen, then selecting "Profile". The members may be added under "Organization Members", see red box below in Group Organization Image 1. Then once an application is initiated in the "Tools" section on the left navigation bar, select "Add/Edit People", see red box in Group Organization Image 2. Here you may add those people to the application, either Expression of Interest or Full Application.

Group Organization Image 1

Group Organization Image 2

Q: Where can we get the manual?

A: The manual is posted in the "Training Materials" section, which can be found on the top right of Dashboard, to the left of the profile, please see red box below.

Q: Where would the email to add a grant administrator originate from?

A: Once a new user registration is submitted, it will take 24-48 hours for your account to be verified and activated. You will receive a confirmation email, from eohed@intelligrants.com, when the credentials are ready. Once the account is validated, a Grant Administrator will be able to start an application(s), from the

"My Opportunities" panel, as well as create and/or approve additional accounts for municipal staff and/or consultants, such as grant writers, engineers, etc. Users are advised to review the manual available in the Training Materials section at the top right of the Dashboard for information about adding/deleting users.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Q: Who can submit an Expressions of Interest? Is it only allowed to be submitted by municipalities or can a developer submit? Can a municipality delineate possible private projects?

A: Any entity, including a private developer, may submit an Expression of Interest. Generally, it should be submitted by the entity that is the project proponent. That said, a municipality may submit project applications that delineate related and/or directly leveraged private projects in their town. In this case, it is expected that the municipal applicants will coordinate with its partners for the submission.

Q: If we're submitting an Expression of Interest for a project(s) that touches on three sections of the continuum in a single location. Is that considered 3 projects or 1 project?

A: That would be considered one project in the Expression of Interest.

Q: Why is there a limit of five (5) projects for the Expressions of Interest, but no limit on full applications?

A: The Expression of Interest is intended to provide guidance on priority projects only. We are limiting the number of projects that can be included in an Expression of Interest to ensure we are able to respond to all applicants in a timely fashion. Applicants may have more than 5 competitive projects and may submit an unlimited number of Full Applications for funding. All applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis.

Q: How do I submit the Expression of Interest?

A: The Expression of Interest is submitted in the online application portal, which is available here. All of the partner agencies all have access to the Expression of Interest upon submission.

Q: If an Expression of Interest is submitted earlier than the April 2 deadline, will the review start earlier? How quickly will we receive feedback? Will feedback and guidance be a collaborative response or separately from each reviewer?

A: Expressions of Interest will be reviewed on a weekly basis, in the order they are received, starting the week of February 8th. Applicants will receive a single response representing the input from all agencies. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit Expressions of Interest prior to the April 2 deadline.

Q: Some of the programs are open to applicants other than municipalities. Since projects should be based on community economic development priorities, do you have suggestions for how municipalities might include other eligible entities in the Expression of Interest process?

A: The Expression of Interest is a way to get guidance on a specific project or project. It should reflect an applicant's goals and priorities, not the community's. When a non-municipal applicant submits an Expression of Interest, we recommend that the applicant coordinate with the municipality to ensure it is consistent with any Expression of Interest the municipality may submit.

Q: Once the application window opens for the Full Application, can I still get guidance on my project?

A: We suggest that you focus all the feedback on your projects during the Expression of Interest phase prior to May 3.We cannot provide the same level of guidance once the application window opens. That said, if you have questions or concerns about the platform for submitting the application or other technical questions, those questions are welcome anytime. Additionally, program staff may answer questions specific to their programs anytime. Again, we recommend seeking guidance about your projects early, during the Expression of Interest.

FULL APPLICATION AND PROJECTS

Q: Is the application considered more competitive if you select more than one category for each project?

A: No. Each part of a project will be considered independently by the programs that fall within each category selected in the Full Application. Staff across agencies will discuss how the various elements of the project fit together, but more categories does not make an application more competitive.

Q: Does every unique address in a larger plan need to be submitted as a separate application or can it all go under one application if all the projects are related?

A: In the case of a project that includes multiple parcels, with different addresses, these may be considered in the same application if they are contiguous and are all part of a single infrastructure and/or development project. However, if the "larger plan" is community plan such as an urban renewal area or zoning district involving multiple parcels with different developments, this application will be submitted under Planning and Zoning and will not require an address and will likely be a separate application. Capacity Building and Planning and Zoning applications do not require a specific address. Applications to the Site Preparation, Predevelopment and Permitting, Buildings, and/or Infrastructure categories, will require one application with a specific address and Parcel ID. Depending on the project, the application will then require specific details about that site, such as current and planned uses, percent design complete, utilities and other characteristics, locus map of development, etc., as applicable. We strongly suggest this type of project be included in an applicant's Expression of Interest to get further guidance.

Q: A community wants assistance first, developing a mixed-use overlay zoning district for its downtown and second, developing a town-wide workforce housing bylaw. Are these 2 projects or 1?

A: This would be two projects and would require two separate Full Applications.

Q: We have projects that are in early stages and need funding for design plans and cost estimates. Does the One Stop have programs to help municipalities prepare for infrastructure projects?

A: Yes, that is the purpose of the Predevelopment and Permitting category on the continuum.

Q: If a regional planning agency wanted to undertake a planning project working with a number of municipalities, how would these partners approach the One Stop application process?

A: Yes this is possible in the One Stop process. Projects like this would likely fit into the Community Capacity Building or Planning categories in the continuum. A lead applicant should submit an Expression of Interest on behalf of itself and the other partners participating in the project.

Q: Should municipalities seeking regional planning agency assistance with planning and zoning projects apply singly or in partnership with their RPA?

A: This decision is up to the applicant.

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DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

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<u>Community Capacity Building</u>

Q: Can you give an example of how the Community Capacity Building grant fits into the One Stop continuum? Most of the other grants in the continuum grants deal with infrastructure / structural projects. Does the Community Capacity Building have to be tied to physical structures?

A: Community Capacity Building projects are not tied to physical structures, but they may support and/or facilitate particular development projects. The focus these projects is more likely on the work of coalitions and consortiums that support the broader community goals. Please reference the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Section B, part 1. Examples of these projects include:

- A request by a business association representing a consortium of building owners to explore the feasibility of developing a Business Improvement District
- A request from a community coalition to fund English language training and other prerequisite trainings, including coverage for child care and transportation, to prepare low income residents for new jobs available in the region due to the expansion of a major employer.

<u>Planning and Zoning</u>

Q: Is Planning and Zoning for non-CDBG entitlement communities only, or could cities that receive annual CDBG funding apply as well?

A: All communities may submit Full Applications under the Planning and Zoning category, regardless of CDBG designation.

Q: How does this Planning and Zoning relate to the MDI Local Rapid COVID19 Recovery Planning Assistance Program (applications were due 12/18/2020)?

A: This new funding is separate from the MDI Local Rapid COVID 19 Recovery Planning, which is for FY2021 and focused solely on recovery from the impact of COVID 19. Please reference the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Section B, part 2. All Planning and Zoning funding in the One Stop will start in Fiscal Year 2022 and the focus of the plans may be broader in scope including: Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Zoning Review and Updates, Urban Renewal Plan, Land Use Plan, Downtown Plan, Parking Management Plan, Feasibility Study, or Other Strategic Plan.

Q: "Developments of a Master Plan" is identified under the Planning and Zoning Continuum Detail. Are these restricted to master plans of specific sites or can a town apply to get funds to hire someone to complete a master plan for the whole town?

A: The applicant may request support for a Master Plan for the whole town.

Q: Our town voted to fund a master plan effort at our last town meeting. Could we submit for a grant to augment the approved funds and add scope to the project if the master plan contractor is selected and the project starts prior to November 2021?

A: Yes, a community may submit an application to Planning and Zoning for the expanded scope of an approved master planning process, even if the main process has started. However, please note that funding decisions will not be announced until late fall, and if awarded, the grantee will only be able to use these funds for expenses that occur after a contract has been fully executed. Please note the review criteria for Planning and Zoning programs noted in the One Stop Notice of Funding Availability.

Buildings

Q: If an applicant has one major underutilized property targeted and approved for affordable housing, will this new program offer help for this type of project?

A: If there are other state programs that are a better fit for the project, the project may be referred to other programs outside of the One Stop. We suggest submitting an Expression of Interest outlining the overall goals and including the specific proposed scope of the housing project.

Q: What building types qualify for vertical construction - just housing, or other types?

A: All types of projects are welcome in this category. Please note that for housing projects there may be funding available from other sources outside of the One Stop. If that is the case, the project may be referred to another funding source. We suggest submitting an Expression of Interest outlining the specifics of your project.

Infrastructure

Q: How does the horizontal infrastructure evaluation consider a downtown business district that may not have a direct economic development or housing project in the wings but the improvement will enhance the downtown including increased value and tax revenues?

A: A project that does not lead to private development or housing is unlikely to be competitive in the Infrastructure category. Please see program guidelines for MassWorks for additional information.

Q: Will STRAP grants fall under Infrastructure in the One Stop or will it stand separately?

A: Yes, STRAP will be part of the One Stop, as it is a component of the MassWorks program. It will be administered in the Infrastructure category of the One Stop.

Q: Can two communities submit as a regional application for a shared infrastructure project? Are "small towns" (former STRAP) now defined by populations under 7,000 or density under 500 per sq mile?

A: Yes, regional applications for shared infrastructure projects are encouraged in the One Stop in the Infrastructure category. We recommend having a lead applicant for submission. The definition for small town, in relation to small town road projects (formerly STRAP), remains the same, communities with populations under 7,000.

Q: Can projects that have individual applications be combined in bidding and construction?

A: All grants awarded in the Infrastructure category, will be capital funds and subject to requirements of the MassWorks statute. As such, grantees will be required to adhere to all applicable rules, regulations, and laws pertaining to procurement. Grantees are advised to consult with the local legal counsel for what may be allowed in terms of bidding projects together.

Special Consideration for Housing Choice and Rural and Small Towns

Q: What is a "Housing Choice Community"?

A: Housing Choice Community is a designation given to municipalities that have produced certain rates or amounts of new housing units in the last five years and that adopted best practices related to housing production that will sustain a 21st century workforce and increase access to opportunity for Massachusetts residents. Communities that achieve the Housing Choice designation have exclusive access to apply for the Housing Choice Capital Grant Program and receive bonus points or other considerations to certain state grant programs. Learn more about the process here.

Q: As a Housing Choice Community, may I submit to any category in the Continuum and be considered for the Housing Choice Funding?

A: A Housing Choice Community may apply to any category in the Continuum, and be considered for any funding source in the category, including Housing Choice capital grants, where applicable. The Housing Choice Capital Grant Program will consider making grants to projects in all categories except Community Capacity Building and Buildings.

Q: Please confirm that the "rural" designation is, either population less than 7,000, or density of under 500 per square mile?

A: This designation is for both Rural and Small Towns. Please reference the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Section B, part 8: Eligible municipalities must have populations of less than 7,000 for a small town or a population density of less than 500 persons per square mile for a rural town, (based on the 2010 US Census). Please see program guidelines for additional details.

Q: Will towns that qualify as rural towns and have housing choice designation receive more consideration than towns that qualify under only one of the two categories?

A: There are a few levels of benefit for communities in both categories. First, yes all programs will consider these designations as decisions are made for funding sources within the One Stop. Second, municipalities that qualify for both categories will be reviewed for additional funding sources in both categories, Housing Choice and Rural and Small Towns.

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Are there expressed guiding principles for how One Stop applications will be reviewed - like smart growth approaches, etc?

A: Please reference the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Section E for review criteria.

Q: Will recent changes to the Zoning Act affect the eligibility of MBTA communities to apply for funding?

A: For purposes of EOHED and DHCD grant programs, MBTA communities will be deemed to be in compliance with section 3A of Chapter 40A (as added by section 18 of Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020) until more detailed compliance criteria have been established. All communities are eligible to apply for MassWorks or the Housing Choice Capital Grants Program in the upcoming FY2022 grant cycle.

Q: Will <u>Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC)</u> & <u>Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND)</u> grants will be treated outside the One Stop program? How about other grant programs in other departments i.e. MassDOT or Department of Environmental Protection?

A: All other programs within state government, particularly the ones listed in the questions above, will be referral programs. These programs will continue to be administered outside of the One Stop, but an applicant may be referred to these programs if applicable to project goals.

Q: Does the One Stop change the process for seeking state approval of a <u>Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreement or Special Tax Assessment (STA)</u>?

A: No. State approval of TIFs and STAs is not part of the One Stop, but an applicant may be referred to these programs if applicable to project goals.

Q: How is Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) programs/funding related to One Stop?

A: MAPC is a Regional Planning Agency. MAPC funding programs are not part of the One Stop.