HousingWorks Infrastructure Program

Program Information and Guidelines FY2026

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HousingWorks Infrastructure Program – FY2026

Introduction

The HousingWorks Infrastructure Program (HWIP) is a new program of the Healey-Driscoll administration and supports its efforts to increase housing production in the Commonwealth. Grant funds may be used for a variety of activities related to infrastructure projects associated with housing development.

Program Information and these Guidelines have been developed for HWIP grant applicants. EOHLC may issue additional guidance, clarification, or revisions which shall be incorporated by reference into these Guidelines. This document is intended to clarify, interpret, and explain existing program requirements, and to provide guidance on EOHLC's applicant selection process. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

Maximum Award

There is no set minimum or maximum amount that an eligible applicant may request. Historically, past pre-construction awards have ranged from $100,000 to $500,000 and past construction awards have ranged from about $1M to $5M. An applicant should request funding to support a complete project or complete phase(s) and must provide clear justification for the requested amount. Applicants are encouraged to conduct due diligence to determine accurate estimates of project costs to better understand actual costs of the proposed project.

Projects that have secured funding from other government and/or private sources will be more competitive. While a cash match is not required, a match may factor into EOHLC's applicant selection process. Projects that include at least a 10% local cash match will receive bonus points in application review. To be considered, any match funds must contribute to the direct costs of the infrastructure work. Please note that staff time is not considered a "cash match."

EOHLC reserves the right to make partial awards for amounts less than the original request and to deny an award to applicants with existing or past violations of EOHLC contractual obligations. Funding availability is subject to the final state budget.

Project Examples

Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:
1. Improvements to physical infrastructure near a permitted housing project that will support and yield new and/or additional affordable housing units.
2. Engineering designs for water and sewer infrastructure improvements that will increase capacity for new housing production.
3. Physical infrastructure improvements near public transit stations and residential areas to increase safety, mobility, accessibility, increase alternative modes of transportation, and further support housing.

4. Improvements to sidewalks, roads, or other multi-modal infrastructure to increase safety, mobility, and accessibility in the area surrounding housing and adjacent neighborhood(s).
5. Critical upgrades to outdated water, sewer, and other infrastructure to support housing.

Eligible Applicants

All Massachusetts municipalities and related municipal entities (Public Housing Authority, Redevelopment Authority, and Water/Sewer or Service District) are eligible for consideration of a FY26 HWIP grant.

Applicants with adopted housing moratoria or other restrictive bylaws that do not allow for at least a 5% increase in housing production over a single year are ineligible. Contact mckenzie.bell@mass.gov with questions about this eligibility factor.

MBTA Community Compliance:
Applicants that are MBTA Communities determined to be non-compliant under Section 3A of the Zoning Act (MGL c.40A) and corresponding regulations for Multi-Family Zoning Districts (760 CMR 72.00) are ineligible for this grant program.

Use of Funds

Funding is available through the "Infrastructure" category of the Community One Stop for Growth development continuum. Grants will fund a variety of activities related to horizontal infrastructure projects associated with imminent housing development in public or private land. Eligible activities include but are not limited to design, construction, repair, and other improvements to infrastructure to advance projects that support housing development, preservation, or rehabilitation, and leverage or rehabilitate transit-oriented housing, such as:
- Sewer lines, septic systems, and other sanitary waste disposal systems, water lines, wells and water treatment systems;
- Utility extensions;
- Streets, roads, curb cuts, and other transit improvements such as, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, pedestrian and bicycle ways; and
- Other related horizontal infrastructure work adjacent to planned or imminent housing improvements.

Grant funds shall not be used to support:
1. Any activities related to assertion of the General Land Area Minimum (GLAM) (1.5% of total land area) safe harbor under 760 CMR 56.03(b)(Chapter 40B); or
2. Routine administrative tasks of municipal staff including, but not limited to, grant application preparation.

Timeline of Use of Funds

FY26 grants are expected to be awarded in the fall of 2025, and funded projects **must be completed by June 30, 2029**.

Special Considerations

- **Rural and Small Towns** (towns with populations less than 7,000 or density of less than 500 persons per square mile): At EOHLC's discretion, up to 10% of HousingWorks Infrastructure Program funds will be set aside for Rural and Small Towns, depending on the number of applications received and competitiveness of the application round.
- **Gateway Cities:** At EOHLC's discretion, up to 10% of HousingWorks Infrastructure Program funds will be set aside for Gateway Cities, depending on the number of applications received and competitiveness of the application round.
- **Seasonal Communities:** At EOHLC's discretion, up to 10% of HousingWorks Infrastructure Program funds will be set aside for Seasonal Communities, depending on the number of applications received and competitiveness of the application round.

Community One Stop for Growth Application

The HousingWorks Infrastructure Program is part of the Community One Stop for Growth, a single application portal and collaborative review process of community and economic development grant programs that make targeted investments based on a Development Continuum. For more information, including key dates, frequently asked questions, and instructions on submitting an Expression of Interest and Full Application, please visit www.mass.gov/onestop.

The One Stop Full Application is organized into the following sections:
- Form 1 – Applicant Information
- Form 2 – Project Information
- Form 3 – Certification of Application Submission Authority

In order to be considered for the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program funding, applicants must include complete responses to all required questions.

Additional Information
- For information on the One Stop, including key dates, frequently asked questions, and instructions on submitting an Expression of Interest and Full Application, please visit www.mass.gov/onestop.
- The Expression of Interest is an optional, but highly recommended form that allows an applicant to seek guidance from the One Stop partner agencies. Applicants are encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest prior to starting their Full Application(s).

Visit the [One Stop Expression of Interest webpage](#) for more information and access to the Expression of Interest form.

- All applications must be submitted electronically. The online application portal, IGX, can be accessed at https://eohed.intelligrants.com. An online webinar outlining the use of the system will be available on the site. The application form template and link to the portal will also be available on the [One Stop webpage](#).

- Eligible applicants may submit funding requests for more than one Infrastructure category project in the same round. However, a separate application is required for each project. Each proposal will be evaluated independently against the criteria and will be competing directly with all other proposals.

- 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.

EOHLC reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant or external sources as may be necessary in order to complete the application review. EOHLC also reserves the right to recommend partial grant awards, as deemed appropriate.

HousingWorks Infrastructure Program Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be scored for the responsiveness to the following criteria. At the discretion of EOED and EOHLC, scoring criteria for infrastructure projects may be shared between MassWorks Infrastructure Program and HWIP to review eligible projects accordingly. Full Evaluation Criteria and Scoring is available in Appendix 1:

- **Project Need:** What community and housing needs are met by the project? Evaluation will consider factors such as impact on housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation and other municipally identified and community specific documented needs.

- **Project Readiness:** Is the project scope achievable within the proposed timeline? Evaluation will consider planning to date with factors such as due diligence, stakeholder/public engagement, site readiness, pre-filing meetings with permitting agencies, and design completeness.

- **Project Financial Feasibility:** Is the project's budget reasonable? Evaluation will consider factors such as whether the project is fully or partially funded with grant request, match funding, and reasonableness of cost estimates.

- **Progress & Commitment to Date:** Does the applicant show commitment to the project through past activity and investment? Evaluation will consider factors such as progress to date; prior state/federal funding; and zoning or local by-law changes related to the project.

- **Project Outcomes & Impact:** What are the projected housing outcomes of this project and the impact this project may have on the community? Evaluation will consider factors such as creating new housing units, addressing identified needs, climate

adaptation, impact on future housing development, and alignment with the goals of the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program.

Grant Award Process

<u>Contract with EOHLC and Award of Funds</u>:
Successful applicants must be ready to enter into a contract with EOHLC within 30 days after receiving contract documents. Funding is subject to the approval of the EOHLC operating and capital budgets. Grant projects may begin as of the execution of the contract. <u>If selected, an awardee will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract</u>:
- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, filled out and signed by the Respondent.
- Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form (available from EOHLC).
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signature Listing Form.
- Completed Fiscal Exercise Form (available from EOHLC).

<u>Grant Distribution and Invoicing</u>:
Granted funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Only work completed during the period of the executed contract will be eligible for reimbursement. Upon receipt of all required deliverables the community will be reimbursed for the balance of any outstanding grant funds

APPENDIX 1: HOUSINGWORKS EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Applications to the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program will be eligible to receive a maximum of **100 points** through a panel review process.

HousingWorks Infrastructure Program Scoring Criteria (maximum 100 points)

Overall Project Need (maximum 20 points)
Overall Project Need will be scored based on demonstration of one or more of the following:
Local Need (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project is a clear result of documented needs specific to the community, and details how community engagement efforts have informed the project, as applicable. **(3 points)**
- Project reasonably describes how it responds to a need related to housing and/or community development, but lacks details regarding documented needs specific to the community. **(1 point)**
- Project responds to needs not clearly defined or lacks documented evidence of support. **(0 points)**

Housing Nexus (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project directly leverages new housing units. **(10 points)**
- Project supports the preservation or rehab of existing housing units and/or may pave the way for future development of new housing units. **(7 points)**
- Project supports a more livable community, economic development, and/or local transportation options. **(3 points)**
- Project responds to another municipally identified need(s) that is not clearly associated with housing and/or project lacks documented evidence of support. **(1 point)**

Priority Project Need (projects that meet the following criteria will receive bonus points)
- **BONUS:** Application is submitted by two or more eligible entities (joint or regional application). **(2 points)**
- **BONUS:** Project is located within an Environmental Justice census block group. **(2 points)**
- **BONUS:** Project will advance opportunities for community members who have been socially and economically disadvantaged, and/or historically underrepresented. **(3 points)**

Project Implementation (maximum 28 points)
Project Implementation will be scored based on demonstration of one or more of the following:
Project Scope (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project scope is clearly defined and reasonably describes a phase or complete project that fits within the grant timeline (6/30/29). **(5 points)**
- Project scope may be feasible within grant timeline (6/30/29), but may face challenges in implementation and/or outlined activities mismatch with stated goals and budget. **(2 points)**

- Project scope is not clearly defined and/or is not reasonable within grant timeline (6/30/29). **(0 points)**

Ability to Execute (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project leadership is clearly identified and has requisite experience and ability to effectively manage and execute the project. **(5 points)**
- Project leadership may have experience to manage and execute the project, but may face some challenges with capacity and/or unclear leadership structure. **(2 points)**
- Project leadership is not identified and/or has little to no experience leading a similar project. **(0 points)**

Infrastructure Project Readiness (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project is either A) ready to bid and execute contract within 3 months of award for feasibility, design and/or engineering services by an identified contractor, or B) is ready to start within 3 months of contracting or in the most immediate construction season for construction. **(5 points)**
- Project may be able to start within 3 to 6 months of award or within two most immediate construction seasons and, if needing procurement, is ready to go out to bid within 3 to 6 months of award. **(3 points)**
- Project is not ready to commence as steps outside of the scope of this project are needed to be completed prior to start. **(0 points)**

Priority Infrastructure Project Readiness (projects that meet the following criteria will receive points)
- **Cost Estimate:** Project includes a detailed cost estimate that is reasonable and clearly justifies the grant request. **(2 points)**

Leveraged Housing Development Readiness (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project leverages new housing units that will be constructed within 2 years. The associated private development has secured financing and/or has a clear plan to full financing. **(5 points)**
- Project leverages new housing units that may not be constructed for at least 3 years and/or the associated private development doesn't have a clear or convincing plan of financing. **(2 points)**
- Project does not leverage new housing units, leverages units that will not be constructed for at least 5 years, and/or associated private development does not have a plan for financing. **(0 points)**

Best Practices (projects that meet the following criteria will receive points)
- **Environmental sustainability:** Project reasonably and realistically takes climate change and environmental sustainability into consideration. **(3 points)**
- **40R/Y:** Project site includes 40R Smart Growth District or 40Y Starter Home District. **(1 point)**
- **43D:** Project site includes 43D Expedited Permitting District. **(1 point)**
- **DIF/TIF:** Project site includes DIF/TIF incentives. **(1 point)**

Project Financial Feasibility (maximum 12 points)

Project Financial Feasibility (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Funding request is clearly justified and either A) fully funds the proposed scope (phase or complete project) or B) fills a reasonable funding gap for an otherwise fully funded project. As applicable, funding request unlocks public/private/partner spending match. **(6 points)**
- Funding request includes a draft warrant article or other recommended community funds request to pursue remaining funding with a funding award schedule that allows for project completion by the grant deadline (6/30/29). **(4 points)**
- Funding request is a portion of necessary funds to complete the proposed scope and evidence of other grant applications and potential award schedule is provided. **(2 points)**
- Funding request is an unreasonable amount of funding or more funding than is available to the entire grant. **(0 points)**

Priority Financial Feasibility (projects that meet the following criteria will receive bonus points)
- **BONUS:** Project includes at least a 10% public funding match.Note that only cash (including DLTA, ARPA, and other municipal/organizational appropriations) counts as a match; staff time does not count as a match. **(3 points)**
- **BONUS:** Project includes additional funding from outside parties to support the project (i.e. partner organizations, developer contributions, other state/federal grants, etc.). Note that staff time does not count as a match. **(3 points)**

Project Progress & Commitment to Date (maximum 12 points)
Project Progress & Commitment to Date (projects that meet the following criteria will receive points)
- Project is the result of another previously identified plan or community-based initiative/project that accomplished a previously set community goal. **(4 points)**
- Project has evidence of prior EOHLC support and/or project will follow up on an ongoing commitment from state/federal agencies and/or grants. **(4 points)**
- Project addresses a long-known need that has not been tackled due to lack of resources. **(4 points)**

Project Outcomes & Impact (maximum 28 points)
Project Outcomes & Impact (project will receive one of the following scores below)
- Project leverages new housing units, and imminent development includes at least 25% affordable housing units. **(25 points)**
- Project leverages new housing units, and imminent development includes at 10% - 24.9% affordable housing units. **(22 points)**
- Project leverages new housing units, and imminent development includes .01% - 9.9% affordable housing units. **(19 points)**
- Project supports critical infrastructure needs that will preserve and/or rehab existing housing units and/or pave the way for future new units, and clearly solves the identified project need. **(12 Points)**

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- Project may result in or create opportunities for future infrastructure improvements that will advance housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation, but may face challenges due to scope, financial feasibility, timeline, etc. Project may improve the quality of life and wellbeing of current residents. **(7 Points)**
- Project proposal may not be achievable or it is unclear that it would result in tangible infrastructure improvements that advance housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation. **(0 Points)**

Priority Outcomes & Impact (projects that meet the following criteria will receive bonus points)

- **BONUS:** Project site is located within an MBTA Communities multi-family district which EOHLC has determined to be compliant. Application MUST include the EOHLC letter that affirms district compliance. **(1 point)**
- **BONUS:** Project site is located within 0.5 miles of a subway, light rail, ferry, bus, or commuter rail station. **(2 points)**

APPENDIX 2: ACCESSING THE ONLINE APPLICATION

All applications to the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program must be submitted electronically through the Community One Stop for Growth application process. The application will be available and accepted through the IGX Platform, accessed at https://eohed.intelligrants.com. A user account is required. Below are the steps for getting into the system.

The entity should activate a primary account with the CEO and/or designee(s) as a "Grant Administrator." This person(s) can then add other users, as necessary.

Current Admin Users – Municipal CEOs and/or designees who have used the IGX system in past rounds may use their existing usernames to access the system. Applicants that have forgotten their username and/or password must use the "Forgot Username/Password" function on the IGX login page.

New Organizations – If your organization has not accessed the system in the past, a new registration is required. This should be done by the municipal CEO and/or a designee. Click the "New Organization? Register Here" link to complete and submit a registration request. When that account is approved by EOED, an email notification will be sent from the system confirming designation as a Grant Administrator.

> **NOTE**: All new requests for Grant Administrator must be approved by EOED. These will be reviewed as they are received. Applicants will get an email notification from the system confirming the approval. If confirmation not received after 48 hours, please contact onestop@mass.gov to request assistance.

New User in Existing Organizations – Once a Grant Administrator is established for your organization, that user(s) may then create and/or approve additional accounts for municipal staff and/or consultants, such as grant writers, engineers, etc. Requests for access to IGX should be made directly to your community's Grant Administrator

Creating a new Full Application – Once accounts are registered and/or approved, a Grant Administrator can create a Full Application(s) from the "Start New Document" panel, and following the prompts in the portal. Any designated user may access, edit, and/or save an application on behalf of their organization, and are encouraged to save their work often, particularly after completing each section. Only a Grant Administrator will be able to create and submit the Full Application(s).

Submitting an application – Applications may be edited in IGX at any time up until the deadline. Official submissions to the Community One Stop for Growth will only be accepted during the posted dates. During that timeframe, Grant Administrators may submit the Full Application by selection the "Submit Full Application" option at the bottom of the left side menu to officially submit an application. Applicants will receive an email confirming receipt within 24 hours. If an email is not received after 24 hours, please contact onestop@mass.gov for assistance.

> **NOTE**: If an application is erroneously submitted, the applicant may contact onestop@mass.gov to reopen the application for further editing and completion, as long as it is before the deadline. Staff will try to accommodate these requests as they are received but may not be able to respond to all requests immediately. Once reopened, it is the responsibility of the applicant to resubmit prior to the deadline.

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