



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Economic Development

Rural Development Fund Guidance Webinar

Community One Stop for Growth



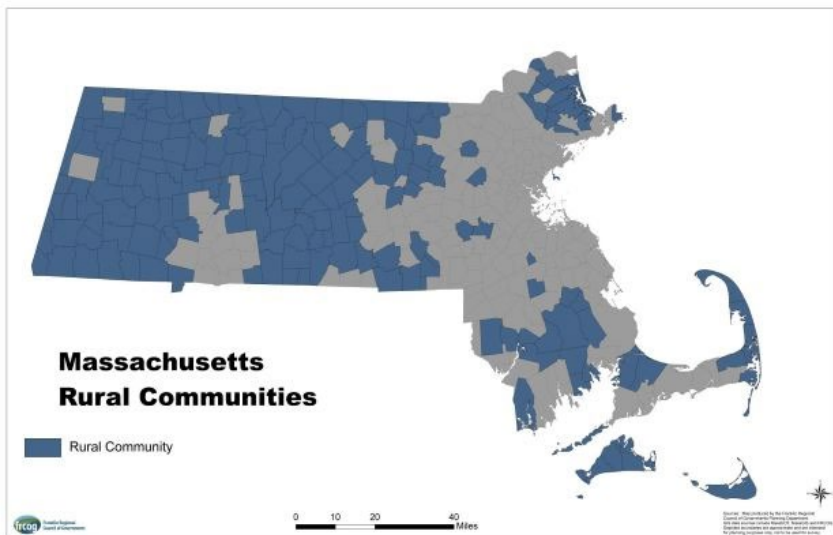
Road Map



1. Program Overview
2. Where does the Program Fit in the One Stop?
3. Application Instructions
4. Important Program Parameters
5. How to Be Competitive
6. Examples of Successful Applications
7. Key Dates and Opportunities to Get Guidance



Rural Development Fund Overview



Description: The RDF provides financial support for the unique economic and community development needs in rural communities and small towns throughout the Commonwealth, which sometimes face difficulty competing against larger cities/towns for grant resources. The goal of the program is to support projects that will help communities increase their capacity to leverage local assets and partake in the state's growing economy.

Eligibility: A municipal government or other public entity from any MA town that meets the definition of a Rural Community (having 500 or fewer persons per square mile) and/or a Small Town (having a total population of 7,000 or fewer persons). Other public entities may include a Public Housing Authority, Redevelopment Authority, Water/Sewer District, Economic Development Industrial Corporation, or Regional Planning Agency.

The Rural Development Fund is administered through the **Community One Stop for Growth** - a single application portal and collaborative review process designed to streamline the experience for the applicant and better coordinate economic development programs and staff on engagement and grant making.





Where Does RDF Fit in the One Stop?

Preparing for Growth			Catalyzing Specific Projects	
Community Activation & Placemaking	Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Building	Infrastructure
<p>Technical Assistance for Downtowns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Design Consultant Services • Downtown Mobility/Parking Consultant Services • Downtown Wayfinding/Branding Consultant Services • Economics of Downtown Consultant Services • Pedestrian Orientation/Placemaking Consultant Services • Small Business Support/E-commerce Consultant Services • Forming a Downtown Management District: Feasibility • Forming a Downtown Management District: Implementation <p>Incentivize Business in Vacant Downtown Storefronts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Tax Credits for Business to Occupy Vacant Storefronts 	<p>Community Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Plan • Neighborhood/Downtown/Corridor Plan • Urban Renewal Plan • Housing Production Plan • Housing Plan Alignment with State Housing Plan/Regional Goals • Regional Plan • Other Community Plan <p>Zoning Revision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning Revision to Comply with Section 3A of MGL c.40A • Zoning Revision related to Accessory Dwelling Unit to comply with revisions to MGL c40A section 3 • Zoning Revision to adopt pro-housing revisions that qualify for simple majority voting threshold • Comprehensive Zoning Review & Revision • Other Zoning Revision <p>Planning for Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Feasibility Plan • Housing Site Master Plan • Housing Infrastructure Plan • Housing Site Design Plan <p>District Redevelopment Technical Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for Growth in a Commercial/Industrial District 	<p>Site Improvements to Unlock Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Readiness Pre-Construction • Site Readiness Construction <p>Municipal Surplus Property Disposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Surplus Property <p>Brownfield Site Clean Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfields Site Assessment • Brownfields Remediation • Disposition Study 	<p>Underutilized Property Rehabilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underutilized Property Pre-Construction • Underutilized Property Construction <p>Housing Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Housing Production • Support Housing Rehabilitation • Support Housing Preservation <p>Revitalize Commercial Space in a TDI District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of Underperforming Commercial Space 	<p>Infrastructure to Support Residential Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-construction - Design / Engineering Documents Only • Construction <p>Public Infrastructure to Support Mixed-Use Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-construction - Design / Engineering Documents Only • Construction <p>Public Infrastructure to Support Commercial/Industrial Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-construction - Design / Engineering Documents Only • Construction <p>Small Town Road Improvements to Enhance Public Safety (STRAP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of Road Improvements to Enhance Public Safety



Application Instructions

In Section 2 of the Full Application, applicants are asked to indicate the Project Category. To be reviewed by Rural Development Fund applicants should make one of the following selections in question 2.4:

The image displays two screenshots of the application form. The left screenshot shows the 'Development Continuum Category' dropdown menu set to 'Planning & Zoning'. The 'Project Type' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Community Plan', 'Zoning Revision', 'Planning for Housing', and 'District Redevelopment Technical Assistance'. The right screenshot shows the 'Development Continuum Category' dropdown menu set to 'Site Preparation'. The 'Project Type' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Brownfield Site Clean Up', 'Site Improvements to Unlock Development', and 'Municipal Surplus Property Disposition'. In both screenshots, the selected category and the 'Site Improvements to Unlock Development' option are highlighted with yellow boxes.

For more information on completing the Full Application, visit www.mass.gov/onestop to view *One Stop Webinar 2: Application Guidance*



Application Instructions

In Section 2 of the Full Application, applicants are asked to indicate the Project Category. To be reviewed by Rural Development Fund applicants should make one of the following selections in question 2.4:

The image displays two screenshots of the application form. The left screenshot shows the 'Development Continuum Category' dropdown menu with 'Building' selected. The 'Project Type' dropdown menu is open, showing 'Underutilized Property Rehabilitation' and 'Housing Production' as options. The right screenshot shows the 'Development Continuum Category' dropdown menu with 'Infrastructure' selected. The 'Project Type' dropdown menu is open, showing four options: 'Infrastructure to Support Housing Growth (Residential Only)', 'Public Infrastructure to Support Mixed-Use Development', 'Public Infrastructure to Support Commercial/Industrial Development', and 'Small Town Road Improvements to Enhance Public Safety (aka STRAP)'. In both screenshots, the selected category and the visible project type options are highlighted with yellow boxes.

For more information on completing the Full Application, visit www.mass.gov/onestop to view *One Stop Webinar 2: Application Guidance*



Important Project Parameters

Project Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The maximum Rural Development Fund grant amount is \$500,000 for Site Preparation, Building, and Infrastructure Projects. For Planning & Zoning projects, the maximum award is \$100,000.• Projects that include a 10% or greater cash match of secured funds will receive additional points in the application review.
Project Timeline Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The contract duration for the Rural Development Fund is approximately 18 months. All contracts will expire on 6/30/27.
Eligible Use of Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The program will consider a variety of projects for funding support under the Planning & Zoning, Site Preparation, Building, and Infrastructure Development Continuum categories.
Ineligible Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projects submitted as pass-through applications on behalf of a non-public entity, in which the non-public entity would be the presumptive grantee.• Joint applications that include ineligible non-rural/small town applicant(s).• Projects on buildings with primary municipal use (except for projects related to ADA improvements).



How To Be Competitive

- Key information that program reviewers take into consideration
 - Project Plan and Need
 - Leadership and Capacity to Succeed
 - Project Readiness
 - Budget
 - Rural Focus Areas
- Important Questions
 - Question 2.5 – Project Narrative
 - Question 2.6 – Scope of Work
 - Question 2.7 – Progress to Date
 - Question 2.8 – Anticipated Outcomes and Impacts
- Attachments
 - Cost Estimate
 - Development Continuum-specific attachments (such as site plans, engineering documents, or *selected* pages from existing plans that show the project is a local priority)



Successful Application Example

Applicant:

Town of Cheshire

Project

Description:

The North State Water Project addressed the requirements of a DEP consent order. The project included replacement of 3,000 feet of undersized water line and a temporary pump station. As a result of the upgrade, water users have consistent water pressure, and the makeshift pump station has been removed.

What Made the Project Successful:

- Project plan and need
 - The project was identified as a priority in two existing plans.
 - A clear explanation of how a failure of existing infrastructure would impact residents was provided.
 - Upgrades could lead to future business development in a commercially-zoned area.
- Project readiness
 - Phase 2 of a two-part project.
 - Project was ready to proceed, with permitting completed prior to grant contracting.





Successful Application Example

Applicant:

Town of Berkley

Project

Description:

The Town of Berkley seeks to develop a town-wide Economic Development Plan to achieve the town's greater economic development goals. The town believes a reassessment of economic development priorities, identification of key sites, and challenges associated with their development will assist in the further managed build-out of the town.

What Made the Project Successful:

- Leadership and Capacity to Succeed
 - Applicant noted intent to work with regional planning agency, a qualified and experienced entity.
- Budget
 - Budget was under \$100,000, the maximum for Planning grants.
 - A match was provided in the form of DLTA.
- Rural Focus areas
 - Application emphasized research into locally-relevant industries, including agriculture.





FY26 Round Timeline

Jan.

- **Full Application and Expression of Interest Open (January)** – The Full Application is the official form for submitting all funding requests. Applicants may now begin to work on applications in the IGX system, however applications will only be accepted during the submission period.
- **One Stop Guidance Phase (January – April)** – A series of webinars will be hosted by both the One Stop Team and staff from each program within the One Stop. In addition, office hours will be hosted to answer applicant questions. Visit www.mass.gov/onestop for the full schedule of webinars and office hours.
- **Full Application Submission Period (May-June)** – Applicants may submit their Full Application(s) beginning May 5, 2025. All applications must be submitted by the **Full Application deadline of 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, June 4.**
- **Review and Evaluation (July – September)** – All complete and eligible Full Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed and evaluated by the corresponding program managers at each state agency. The One Stop team will also conduct joint application reviews across agencies. Based on the program’s criteria, each program will prepare its list of applications recommended for funding, to be further reviewed and approved by agency and Secretariat leadership.
- **Notification of Grant Decisions (October)** – Once final recommendations have been approved, applicants will be notified of grant decisions in writing, and announcement events will be scheduled.

Oct.



Opportunities for Guidance

Visit www.mass.gov/onestop for more information on:

- **Expression of Interest**
 - Complete an Expression of Interest form to see if your project(s) is eligible for funding through the One Stop and get tips for preparing your application
- **One Stop and Program Webinars**
 - Recordings of all One Stop webinars are now available on the One Stop website
- **Office Hours**
 - **One Stop General Guidance Office Hours** – One Stop staff will hold office hours to discuss general One Stop process and technology questions
 - **Program Office Hours** – Staff from each program will hold an office hour to answer applicant questions related to the program
 - Rural Development Fund's office hours will be held on April 15, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.