



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

FY2026 Social Enterprise Capital Grant Program

Request for Proposals (RFP) Program Guidelines and Application Template

Open Date: **Wednesday, April 2, 2025**

Information Session: **[Wednesday, April 9, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.](#)**

Application Deadline: **[Monday, May 5, 2025 @ 11:59 p.m.](#)**

Questions: **eoheadgrants@mass.gov**

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is pleased to open the FY2026 round of the Social Enterprise Capital Grant Program, which invests in employment social enterprises that contribute to economic growth in low-income communities throughout the Commonwealth. Capital grants are available to non-profit organizations seeking to develop eligible facilities for social enterprises that target individuals facing significant barriers to employment.

The program is administered by the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), in consultation with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. Grant funds are intended to be used for acquisition and/or renovation costs for a property that is both owned by the nonprofit and utilized for the social enterprise.

For the purposes of this program, an employment social enterprise is defined as a discrete or embedded business venture operated by a mission-driven nonprofit organization focused on hiring and assisting people who face barriers to employment.

The organization must offer paid employment opportunities to low-income individuals, with priority to socially and economically disadvantaged populations who experience complex needs and barriers to employment that require intensive interventions.

Specifically, this grant is designed to support employment social enterprises that sell goods and services while providing supportive services for individuals who might not otherwise be participating in the workforce.

The line item calls for grants to be awarded in a manner that promotes geographic, social, racial, and economic equity.

B. ELIGIBILITY

To be considered for funding, the applicant organization must be:

- a Massachusetts non-profit organization in good standing, and
- conforming to this RFP's definition of an employment social enterprise, and
- successfully operating an employment social enterprise for at least 12 continuous months prior to the time of application, and
- the current or imminent owner of the real estate to be purchased, repaired, rehabilitated, and/or renovated, and
- offering paid employment opportunities to low-income individuals, with priority to socially and economically disadvantaged populations who experience complex needs and barriers to employment that require intensive interventions, and
- paying participants in the social enterprise no less than the Massachusetts minimum hourly wage for their employment.

Applicant will also be required to affirm and demonstrate that it currently provides all of the following services to social enterprise participants, and plans to provide them to future participants:

- Outreach to targeted populations.
- On-the-job training and skill development, including worksite supervision and performance coaching.
- Comprehensive supportive services for at least 1 year (including, but not limited to, case management, aimed at helping to overcome barriers to employment).
- Assistance to obtain external employment.
- Job retention services, which include follow up with beneficiaries for at least 1 year and employers to support job retention and advancement.

C. RFP SCOPE AND DETAILS

Grant Request Amount

Up to \$250,000

Contract Payment Terms

At the time of award, EOED will work with grantee to develop a final scope and budget for the grant.
All grant funds will be disbursed on a **cost reimbursement basis**.

Grant use

Reimbursement of capital costs related to the development of eligible facilities owned (or to be owned) and operated by and for non-profit social enterprise organizations, in the following categories:

Acquisition of Real Estate, and/or

Repair, Rehabilitation, and/or Renovation of Real Estate (may include purchase and installation of necessary industrial equipment)

Performance Period

Grants will be awarded to support projects that can be completed between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

D. ANTICIPATED PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

RFP Open

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Information Session

Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 11:00 AM (Virtual)
[Zoom registration required](#)

Application deadline

May 5, 2025, 11:59pm

Notification of Award Decisions and Contracting

July 2025

Anticipated Contract Start

July 2025

E. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Only organizations that meet the eligibility requirements, as listed above, will be considered. Applications will be reviewed and scored (110 points max.) based on the following criteria:

Target Population (20 points)

- Clear description of how initiative and goals fit in the broader community context.
- Clear description of the specific target population(s) served by the social enterprise, and applicant provides data demonstrating that the target population faces significant barriers to employment.
- Well-developed, culturally competent outreach plan to reach target population(s).
- Demonstration that members of target population are meaningfully engaged in program planning and outreach.

Organization Capacity and Purpose (up to 30 points)

- Organization targets low-income communities, serves a high-risk population, and can demonstrate a significant social return on investment.
- Organization provides the required training, skill development and supportive services to facilitate participant success both at and after the social enterprise;
- Organization staff are representative of the community they serve and there is sufficient staffing to provide the services.

Programmatic Impact (30 points)

- Organization demonstrates a positive community or environmental impact created through its goods and services.
- Applicant provides data regarding number of annual participants, their average length of engagement, and the type of employment opportunities available.
- Organization targets low-income communities, specifically aimed at reducing social and economic inequities, including, but not limited to, inequities affecting individuals who have faced racial or ethnic prejudice.

Track Record & Capacity to Succeed (20 points)

- Evidence of the applicant's experience in running a nonprofit employment social enterprise and that a significant portion of applicant's organizational time and budget is devoted to social enterprise operations.
- Applicant demonstrates that grant funding would enable the social enterprise to increase the number of people served annually and/or the increase the type of employment activities.
- Clear and appropriate project timeline outlining key activities and benchmarks.
- Detailed budget, including total project budget, allocation of the requested grant funds, and match funds from other sources, if any. (While match funds are not required, proposals that include other funding will be more competitive.)

Advancing Equitable Opportunities (BONUS 10 points)

- Clearly articulates how project will advance equity in the community.
- Demonstration that operationalization of organization's equity goals is effective.

F. APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDANCE

1. Program materials, including a copy of the RFP and the online application are available online on the program's webpage at www.mass.gov/eoed.
2. The application template in this RFP is provided for reference purposes only. The summary may be used to make notes and prepare draft responses.
3. However, the formal application must be completed, and submitted by the deadline, through Submittable, the online platform linked on the EOED website. Email, USPS or fax submissions 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. 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 Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.** EOED will post event details on its webpage. Participation is not required, and a recording will be posted within a week of the information session.
6. **Proposals are due by 11:59 PM on May 5, 2025. Please note that EOED technical support will only be available until 4pm on that day. Submittable.com/help will remain available after that time.**
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. 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.
9. 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. All documents must be submitted through the online application form at one time:

- **Eligibility Screen**
- **Submittable Application Form**
- **Budget Form**
- **Proof of Current or Imminent Property Ownership**

Other/Optional Attachments, such as program materials and/or support letters from community partners that will be actively involved in the project, may be submitted. These must be in a separate document (as one PDF). Please note that while these additional attachments may be viewed and filed with the application, they will not be scored or otherwise counted as part of the evaluation of the proposal. Additional attachments sent via email or postal mail will not be considered.

G. 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.

Once contracted, Grantee shall prepare and submit to EOED, on a quarterly basis and in a format provided by EOED, a progress and financial report outlining the status of the Project. Such report shall include, at minimum: Project milestones and goals achieved to date. Grantee shall supplement each report with additional information as may be requested by EOED. As part of the final report, Grantee shall furnish in a template provided by EOED, a memo certifying Project completion.

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.

APPENDIX 1: Application Template

ELIGIBILITY SCREEN

- ☐ Is the applicant a Massachusetts non-profit organization in good standing? Verification of nonprofit status (federal EIN required).
- ☐ Is the applicant organization an employment social enterprise, defined as a business venture operated by a mission-driven nonprofit organization that offers paid work and employment-related supportive services to people who might not otherwise be in the workforce?
- ☐ Has the applicant organization been continuously operating an employment social enterprise for at least 12 months as of April 1, 2025?
- ☐ Is the applicant organization the current or imminent owner of the real estate to be purchased, renovated, repaired or rehabilitated?
- ☐ Is the applicant operating an employment social enterprise that targets individuals facing significant barriers to employment?
- ☐ Does the applicant organization pay all social enterprise participants at least the Massachusetts minimum hourly wage, and certify that they will continue to do so?
- ☐ Does the applicant organization have experience delivering and plan to continue to provide the following services:
 - 1) on-the-job training and skill development;
 - 2) comprehensive supportive services for at least 1 year;
 - 3) assistance to obtain external employment; and
 - 4) job retention services?
- ☐ Certification that the answers above are true and correct.

APPLICATION

- Project City/Town
- Organization name
- Organization legal address
- Organization CEO
- Project Contact (if different)
- Organization Mission, History and Goals
- Formal Certifications Held by Organization
 - Women-Owned Business Enterprise or Nonprofit Organization
 - Minority-Owned Business Enterprise or Nonprofit Organization
 - Veteran Business Enterprise
 - LGBTQ Business Enterprise
 - Disability-Owned Business Enterprise
- Grant Proposal Summary
 - Amount of Grant Request
 - Total Project Budget
 - Brief description of the grant request, including the proposed use of funds and the projected impact. (Limit 250 words)
 - Purpose of the Request for Funds (check all that apply)
 - ☐ Acquire real estate to be owned and operated for the social enterprise.
 - ☐ Repair, rehabilitate, and/or renovate real estate owned and operated for the social enterprise (may include the purchase and installation of industrial equipment).
 - Address of the property to be acquired, repaired, renovated and/or rehabilitated

- Proof of current or imminent ownership of property (upload required)

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Target Population Questions (each response is limited to 250 words)

1. Describe the neighborhood, economic, and social context in which this project operates. What issue(s) and/or circumstance(s) led to the development of the social enterprise?
2. Describe the specific target population(s) that the social enterprise is designed to benefit. Are members of the target population high risk? If so, why? What barriers to employment does this population face? Provide statistics that specifically speak to this target population's experiences.
3. How does the social enterprise conduct outreach to target populations? What methods and strategies are utilized?
4. What role do members of the target population play in program planning and outreach?

Organizational Experience and Purpose Questions (each response is limited to 500 words)

5. Describe the organization's employment social enterprise, including its development and past successes, what makes it innovative and/or effective in delivering social benefit, and how the organization demonstrates the social return on investment from the social enterprise.
6. Describe the organization's experience with and capacity to deliver each of the following service components:
 - on-the-job training and skills development (including supervision and coaching),
 - comprehensive support services,
 - assistance with obtaining external employment, and
 - job retention services.
- 7a. Describe how equity considerations impact the social enterprise's target population, outreach, and operations.
- 7b. Provide a list of the current staffing that is operating the social enterprise and delivering the services outlined above. Include the title of each position, number of hours worked per week, a brief job description, and whether the position is currently filled or not. (limit 2000 words)
- 7c. Describe how the organization's staffing reflects the community it serves, including which position(s), if any, are filled by people who are part of the social enterprise's target population.

Programmatic Impact Questions (each response is limited to 500 words)

8. Describe the operations of the social enterprise, the goods and services that are produced, and the positive community and/or environmental impact that is created. Provide relevant data.
9. What type of employment opportunities does the program offer and how many participants does it employ annually? Include a breakdown of how many participants are employed in each function, the entry-level wage for each, and their average length of engagement with the social enterprise.
10. Describe the interventions/services that will be provided by the program and outline the specific outcomes for participants that this social enterprise intends to achieve. Indicate what program components will be directly supported by this grant. Provide relevant data.

Track Record and Capacity to Succeed Questions (each response is limited to 250 words)

- 11a. What is the total annual operating budget for the organization?

- 11b. What percentage of time and budget is dedicated to the operation of the social enterprise?
- 12a. At present, how many people are served/employed by the social enterprise annually?
- 12b. Would this grant enable the social enterprise to increase the number of people served and/or increase the type of employment opportunities?
1. If yes, explain what type of new or additional opportunities would be added due to this grant.
 2. How many additional people would be employed annually by this social enterprise if this grant request was funded? (If none, enter 0)
13. Provide a project timeline with key activities and benchmarks that would be supported by this grant during the July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 time period.

Month	Key Activities and Benchmarks Achieved
Jul-25	
Aug-25	
Sep-25	
Oct-25	
Nov-25	
Dec-25	
Jan-26	
Feb-26	
Mar-26	
Apr-26	
May-26	
Jun-26	

14. Project Budget Form (upload required)

BONUS: Advancement of Equitable Opportunities Questions (limited to 500 words)

15. BONUS: Advancing Equitable Opportunities. If applicable, describe how the project seeks to advance equitable opportunities in the community. Be specific about the organization's goals and the steps taken to achieve these goals.

OTHER/OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

CERTIFICATION OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION AUTHORIZATION

APPENDIX 2: Funding Source

The Social Enterprise Grant Program is authorized in the Mass. Capital Investment Plan as Plan Item D042, and was created to make grants to projects that meet the goals described by line item 7002-8033 in Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020, as highlighted below:

“For an employment social enterprise capital grant program... for the development of eligible facilities for non-profit employment social enterprises that sell goods and services and enhance economic development; provided, that eligible applicants shall be non-profit organizations operating employment social enterprises targeting individuals facing significant barriers to employment; provided further, that grants to non-profits shall support costs associated with the acquisition of real property, the design, construction, repair, rehabilitation or renovation of an eligible facility and soft costs directly related to the development of an eligible facility; provided further, that eligible employment social enterprises shall offer paid employment opportunities to low-income individuals, with priority to socially and economically disadvantaged populations who experience complex needs and barriers to employment that require intensive interventions;...”

The line item states that *“...eligible organizations shall provide the following services for targeted individuals as an integrated part of their paid employment in a social enterprise:*

- (i) outreach to targeted populations;*
- (ii) on-the-job training and skill development, including worksite supervision and performance coaching;*
- (iii) comprehensive supportive services for at least 1 year, including, but not limited to, case management, aimed at helping to overcome barriers to employment;*
- (iv) assistance to obtain external employment; and*
- (v) job retention services which includes follow up with beneficiaries for at least 1 year and employers to support job retention and advancement...”*

And that *“...prioritization for grant awards shall be given to organizations:*

- (a) targeting low-income communities specifically aimed at reducing social and economic inequities, including, but not limited to, inequities affecting individuals who have faced racial or ethnic prejudice;*
- (b) serving high-risk populations that can demonstrate a significant social return on investment; and*
- (c) providing goods and services that can demonstrate a positive community or environmental impact...”*

The line item further states that *“...grants shall be awarded in a manner that promotes geographic, social, racial, and economic equity...”*.