



Housing Choice Communities Grant Program

Program Information and Guidelines FY2023

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Charles D. Baker, Governor | Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor | Mike Kennealy, Secretary

**Housing Choice Communities Grant Program
Supported by MassWorks
FY2023**

Introduction

The Baker-Polito administration is pleased to provide a grant program to provide designated Housing Choice Communities funding for infrastructure improvements and meet community planning needs.

The Housing Choice Initiative provides incentives, rewards, technical assistance and targeted legislative reform to encourage and empower municipalities to plan and build the diverse housing stock that the Commonwealth needs to continue to thrive. The Housing Choice Community Grant Program rewards municipalities that have produced a significant number of housing units in the last five years and that have adopted or established Best Practices that encourage housing production. Activities may include capital projects such as construction, modernization, or major repair of physical infrastructure, acquisition of property or interests in property; long-lived equipment; or feasibility, engineering or schematic designs for capital projects. Planning and zoning projects may also be funded by this program. For FY2023, approximately \$4 Million is available in grants for qualifying municipalities.

Grants in this category will likely be \$25,000-\$250,000.

Examples of these projects include:

- Create engineering designs to replace an existing sewer pump station that may increase capacity to build additional housing.
- Build pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure near public transit stations that connect residential and commercial areas to each other through alternative transportation modes.
- Conduct permitting, and construction to existing water, sewer and stormwater.
- Improve an intersection near newly built or permitted mixed-use project that will yield new affordable housing.
- Create a housing production plan to better understand housing needs of the community and identify strategies to reduce gaps in existing housing relative to identified needs.
- Create a multi-family zoning district near a transit station to comply with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A “draft guidelines”.
- Review zoning ordinances and create a plan to update zoning rules to unlock potential housing production and economic development growth.

MassWorks Authorization: The Housing Choice Community grant program for FY2023 will operate in accordance with the MassWorks statute (M.G.L. c.23A, §63), which states that the primary purpose of the program is: *to issue grants to municipalities and other public instrumentalities for design, construction, building, land acquisition, rehabilitation, repair and other improvements to publicly-owned infrastructure including, but not limited to, sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking, water treatment systems, telecommunications*

systems, transit improvements, public parks and spaces within urban renewal districts, and pedestrian and bicycle ways.

- **Expenditures allowed under this statute may differ from what has been allowed in Housing Choice guidelines issued for earlier funding rounds that had a different funding source.** Please read the Eligibility and Criteria section below for details.

Eligibility and Criteria

Eligible Applicants: Only Massachusetts municipalities and municipal entities such as Redevelopment Authorities with the following attributes are eligible for consideration of an FY2023 Housing Choice Community grant:

- **Designated as a Housing Choice Community** through the Designation application process. A Housing Choice Community designation lasts for 5 years. See our website for a complete and up-to-date list of Housing Choice Communities [here](#).
- Has conducted an ADA Self Evaluation or Transition Plan or is willing to commit to conduct such planning by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with DHCD and Mass Office of Disability.
- Certifies that no housing moratoria are in effect. Housing moratoria will make a community ineligible for this grant.
- If a community has housing restriction bylaws (such as “growth limitations”) these must allow for at least a 5% increase in housing units over a single year and are reviewed on a case by case basis. Contact chris.kluchman@mass.gov with questions about this eligibility factor.
- Two or more municipalities may apply jointly, with one municipality acting as fiscal agent. Municipalities may “pass through” funding to a local Housing Authority or non-profit Community development corporation or other entity as long as the project supports/creates Affordable deed restricted housing.

Use of Funds: Funding is available through “Planning and Zoning,” and “Infrastructure (horizontal)” categories of the One Stop development continuum. Grants will fund capital projects such as construction, modernization, or major repair of physical infrastructure, acquisition of property or interests in property; long-lived equipment; or feasibility, engineering or schematic designs for capital projects. Funding may also be used for planning and zoning projects for a variety of activities related to land use, such as the development of a Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Zoning revisions including for MBTA Communities seeking to comply with “draft guidelines” for M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A, Urban Renewal Plan, Land Use Plan, Downtown Plan, Parking Management Plan, District Improvement Financing (DIF) Plan, Municipal Surplus Property Disposition Plan, or Other Strategic Plan.

Timing: FY23 grants are expected to be awarded in the fall of 2022 and **must be completed no later than June 30, 2024.**

Public Land Ownership: A proposed **CAPITAL** project for construction work on land and/or infrastructure must be on land that is already **publicly owned or will be acquired through**

public leasehold, right-of-way or easement. Projects for public infrastructure provided by this section, shall be procured by the municipality in accordance with chapter 7, section 39M of chapter 30, chapter 30B and chapter 149. Program investments will be targeted to projects that require the infrastructure improvements or expansion to support and/or facilitate new growth or address safety issues.

Funding will not be available for CAPITAL projects that are not on publicly owned/controlled lands. For example:

- A sewer upgrade in a public right-of-way that would accommodate several multi-family, mixed-use or smart growth development projects **WOULD** be eligible. However, an on-site septic system for an affordable housing project owned by a non-profit entity would **NOT** be eligible.
- Funding for a project to convert offices to public housing units at a local Housing Authority-owned and operated building **WOULD** be eligible, but a similar conversion in a privately owned and operated building would **NOT** be eligible. (Note: creation of new public housing units remains subject to Federal and/or state limits as applicable.)
- Capital equipment purchases and improvements to municipal buildings are **NOT** eligible unless there is a clear connection to economic development, housing rehabilitation or production or local transportation options. For example, repaving a Town Hall parking lot would **NOT** be eligible, but building a municipal parking garage near a transit station to serve residents and businesses of a smart-growth district **WOULD** be eligible.

Maximum Award Amount: \$250,000 is the maximum grant award for projects that fall under the “Infrastructure (horizontal)” One Stop development continuum category. Projects that fall under the “Planning and Zoning” One Stop development continuum category will be typically capped at \$75,000 and may exceed that amount only if proof of need demonstrates the need for additional funding. DHCD reserves the right to reduce the amount of the award from the original request, and to deny award to communities who owe funds to DHCD. Funding availability is subject to approval of state budgets.

Community One Stop for Growth Application

The Community One Stop for Growth is a single online application portal designed to allow applicants to apply for consideration of multiple sources of funding to support multiple phases and facets of a project. To help guide applicants, the One Stop uses a Development Continuum or lifecycle that describes how a typical economic development project moves from concept to reality within diverse communities. The One Stop encourages applicants to think about their economic development priorities in the context of the Development Continuum, both to guide applicants towards best practices and strategies and to help applicants identify the types of projects that will help achieve their economic development priorities. Applicants should consider this spectrum of activities as it prepares to submit applications to the One Stop, thinking fully about the steps necessary for progress in the development of a project.



Programs	Community Capacity Building	Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Buildings (vertical)	Infrastructure (horizontal)
Commonwealth Places	✓				
Urban Agenda	✓				
Mass Downtown	✓	✓			
Real Estate Services	✓	✓			
Community Planning		✓			
Brownfields			✓		
Site Readiness			✓		
Collaborative Workspace				✓	
Under Utilized Properties				✓	
MassWorks					✓
Housing Choice		✓			✓
Rural Development		✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 1: One Stop for Growth Development Continuum.

The application is organized into the following sections:

- Core Questions (Sections 1 and 2), plus site information, if applicable,
- Additional Questions (Sections 3 through 7), based on the development continuum and the project components selected by the applicant,
- Additional Questions for Housing Choice Communities (Sections 8), only for communities designated as Housing Choice,
- Certification of Application Submission Authority (Section 9),
- Other Attachments (Section 10), for attachments related to special projects.

A full proposal packet for consideration of Housing Choice Communities funding must include complete responses to all applicable questions in the following sections:

Core Questions (Sections 1 and 2), plus site information, if applicable,

- **Section 1 - Applicant Information/Background:** Identifying information of the applicant, and partners, if applicable.
- **Section 2 - Project Information:** In this section, applicants will provide general project information, such as the project name, description, leadership and the ability to execute the project, timeline and anticipated outcomes. Applicant will indicate the category of funding for which they would like the project to be considered in question 2.1, which will drive additional questions. Those applying to the Site Preparation, Buildings and

Infrastructure categories must complete the Site Information questions, which include identification of the specific site, ownership, and zoning.

Additional Questions (Sections 3 through 8), based on the development continuum and the project components selected by the applicant in Section 2, Question 2.1,

- **Section 4 – Planning and Zoning Additional Questions:** This section is where applicants will provide detail about the proposed planning project, outcomes, leadership and implementation.
- **Section 7 - Infrastructure (Horizontal Construction) Additional Questions:** This section is where applicants will provide detail about the specific public infrastructure project for which funding is requested. Includes detailed scope(s) of work, budget, design and permitting status, and for non-Small Town Road Assistance Program (STRAP) requests, questions about the specific private development being leveraged.
- **Section 8 - Housing Choice General Questions:** This section includes questions specific to the Housing Choice Community Grant Program. Eligible applicants must complete this section to be considered for funding by the Housing Choice Community Grant Program.

Certification of Application Submission Authority (Section 9),

- **Section 9 - Certification of Application Submission Authority:** Signature page certifying the authority to submit the application on behalf of the applying entity and attesting that all responses are true and accurate.

Other/Optional Attachments (Section 10),

- **Section 10 - Other/Optional Attachments:** This section allows submit other attachments to support the application, including other site images, partner letters or support letters. Please note that these items will generally not be scored or assessed as part of the formal evaluation of the proposal.

IMPORTANT: The sections outlined above relate only to the “Planning and Zoning,” “Infrastructure (Horizontal Construction),” and “Housing Choice” categories. Applicants may be required to complete other sections of the Community One Stop application, depending on the other categories they may have selected. Please review the instructions for the One Stop carefully.

- 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. *(See Appendix 2 for additional guidance on accessing online application.)*

- The application form template and link to the portal will also be available on the EOHED webpage. Applicants will have at least 12 weeks to review the application questions and prepare their project proposal.
- Eligible applicants may submit funding requests for more than one project in the same round. However, a separate application, and completed Section 11, 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.
- DHCD reserves the right to solicit additional information from applicants in order to confirm or clarify factual or procedural responses to application requirements such as copies of legal advertisements, minutes, survey instruments, letters, etc. Acceptance of these materials is subject to DHCD's satisfaction that the omitted material was in existence at the time of application and submission of the requested documents is made within a specified timeframe.



As part of the One Stop for Growth Continuum *(see figure 1 above)*, if your community is designated as a Rural and Small Town community, you are eligible to apply for consideration by that grant program. If you choose to do so, please review the Rural and Small Town Grant Program guidelines.

Housing Choice Communities Evaluation Criteria

Grant proposals will be scored for the responsiveness to the following criteria. See Appendix 1 for full Evaluation Criteria and Scoring:

- **Project Need:** What community needs are met by the project? Preference will be given to projects that lead to or support housing production; create economic development; respond to COVID-19 related need; respond to clearly defined local priority; address a need identified in another community based or identified plan; address local transportation needs; address local infrastructure needs; lead to, support, or aim to identify other needs.
- **Project Readiness:** Is the project reasonable and achievable within proposed timeline; led by appropriate leadership with the requisite experience and ability to execute the project; ready to implement or be executed; feasible and achievable?
- **Project Financial Feasibility:** Is the project's budget reasonable? Preference will be given to projects that leverage funding outside of the requested grant funds but is not required. Projects with a cash match over 10% will receive special consideration. In-kind contributions are not match eligible.
- **Progress & Commitment to Date:** Does the applicant show commitment to the project through past activity and investment?

- **Project Outcomes & Impact:** What are the projected outcomes of this project and the impact this project may have on the community? How is equity included in your project? **(See appendix 4 for equity information and definitions)**
- **Housing Choice Best Practices:** How many housing and other best practices has the applicant municipality implemented?
- **Housing Choice Best Practices Implementation:** How well are housing and other best practices implemented by the applicant municipality?

Grant Award Process

Contract with DHCD and Award of Funds: Successful applicants must be ready to enter into a contract with DHCD within 30 days after receiving contract documents. Funding is subject to approval of the DHCD operating and capital budgets. Grant projects may begin as of the execution of the contract. If selected, the grantee will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, filled out and signed by the Respondent.
- Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form (available from DHCD).
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form.

Grant Distribution and Invoicing: 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: HOUSING CHOICE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Applications to the Housing Choice Communities grant program will be eligible to receive a **maximum of 211 points** through a panel review process.

Core Housing Choice Scoring Criteria (maximum 120 points)**Project Need (maximum total 30 points)**

Project need is scored based on demonstration of one or more of the following:

- Project responds to recent 40A reforms (MBTA Communities or simple majority zoning votes), results in net new increase in housing units, directly supports an approved housing project, or one built within the last 5 years, or ADA accessibility for housing and/or clearly relates to a COVID-19 capital need. **(25 points)**
- Project responds to pressing local priorities that address a need from COVID-19, or is included in or related to an adopted capital improvements plan, capital expenditures plan or ADA self-evaluation and transition plan or project included in strategic plan (housing, economic development, local transportation options) or other adopted method of identifying the particular project as a priority for the applicant community. **(20 Points)**
- Project responds to other municipally identified and documented need supporting housing, economic development, or local transportation options. **(15 points)**
- Project responds to other municipally identified need supporting housing, economic development, or local transportation options. **(10 points)**
- **BONUS:** The community does not have a full-time planner/project related municipal staff and requires consultant/non-municipal staff assistance to complete this project and unlock further housing or economic development potential. This bonus point will be awarded to communities that describe this need in project background. **(5 Points)**

Project Readiness (maximum total 20 points):

Readiness will be scored based on demonstration of the following:

- **Scope and Timeline:**
 - Project scope and timeline are feasible and within the grant timeline. **(5 points)**
 - Project may face scope and timeline challenges. **(3 points)**
 - Project is not achievable within proposed timeline or goes beyond allowed timeline. **(0 points)**
- **Leadership:**
 - Project leadership has requisite experience and ability to execute the project. **(5 points)**
 - Project leadership has some experience to lead the project. **(3 points)**
 - Project leadership has little to no experience leading a similar project. **(0 points)**
- **Timely project implementation:**
 - Project is ready to start and has identified a consultant that provided a cost estimate. **(5 points)**
 - Project is ready to release an RFP upon award. **(3 points)**

- Project is not ready to bid upon award. **(0 points)**
- **Construction readiness (for infrastructure only):**
 - Project is eligible for feasibility, design and/or engineering, or construction services by a contractor already under contract with the applicant. **(5 points)**
 - Project can start within 2 months of award using established purchasing consortia, municipal material and equipment bid results or other immediately available sources for capital items and the project has complete design and/or specifications and will proceed to bid upon grant 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)**
- **Community engagement (for planning and zoning only):**
 - Project includes a comprehensive public engagement plan. **(5 points)**
 - Project includes a limited public engagement plan. **(3 points)**
 - Project is missing a public engagement plan. **(0 points)**

Project Financial Feasibility (maximum 20 points):

Financial Feasibility will be scored based on demonstration of one or more of the following:

- The project request fully funds the project or fills the last funding gap in an otherwise fully funded project **(15 points)**
- Project 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 grant deadline. **(10 points)**
- The project requests a portion of the funds necessary to complete the project and evidence of other grant applications and potential award schedule is provided **(5 points)**
- **BONUS:** The project includes more than 10% local funding match. Note that only cash counts as a match, staff time does not count as a match. **(5 points)**

Progress & Commitment to Date (maximum 15 points):

Commitment to Date will be scored based on demonstration of one or more of the following:

- Project is the result of either another previously identified planning document or community-based initiative that accomplishes a previously set community goal or is an update to a previously completed project that has met some or all its goals. **(15 Points)**
- Project responds to a community need that requires further evaluation and planning. **(10 Points)**
- Project is a new community, housing, or economic development tool being used by the community. **(5 points)**

Project Outcomes & Impact (maximum 35 points):

Outcomes & Impact will be scored based on demonstration of one or more of the following:

- Project will result in or directly support increased housing production, economic development, or infrastructure improvements that allow for housing, economic development, or transportation improvements including multi-modal access. **(15 Points)**
- Project will affect a single property or site. **(10 Points)**

- Project will not result in clear and direct improvement to increased housing production, economic development, infrastructure improvements, parking, transportation, or multimodal access but will improve the quality of life and wellbeing of current residents. **(5 Points)**
- **BONUS:** Project will develop materials for compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A “draft guidelines”. **(10 Points)**
- **BONUS:** Project demonstrates a strong equity focus and addresses the Sustainable Development Principle to “Advance Equity.” **(5 Points)**
- **BONUS:** Project will impact at least 1 census block group of an Environmental Justice Population in Massachusetts. **(5 Points)**

Housing Choice Bonus Point Scoring Criteria (maximum 91 points)

Housing Choice Best Practices (maximum 21 points):

Best Practices will be scored based on how many the following fourteen (14) best practices are implemented. Best practices related to affordable housing are worth 2 points and other best practices are worth 1 point. Best practices are organized as zoning best practices and other best practices. This is a Yes/No scoring (have achieved the Best Practice or not).

Zoning best practices (maximum 8 points):

1. **Multi-Family allowed by right:** Have at least one zoning district that allows multifamily by right (in addition to 40R districts) where there is capacity to add units and that allows for family housing that is not age restricted and does not restrict units with more than 2 bedrooms (or have a pattern of approving such developments over the last 5 years). **(1 Point)**
2. **Inclusionary Zoning, with density bonus:** Have Inclusionary Zoning that provides for reasonable density increases so that housing is not unreasonable precluded. **(2 Point)**
3. **40R or Starter Home District:** Have an approved 40R Smart Growth or Starter Homes district that remains in compliance with the 40R regulations. Please note, that if your community repealed its only 40R district, it no longer qualifies for this best practice. **(2 Points)**
4. **Mixed-Use or Cluster Development:** Have zoning that allows mixed use or cluster / Open Space Residential development by right that is not part of a 40R district (or have a pattern of approving such developments over the last 5 years). **(1 Point)**
5. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU):** Have zoning that allows for accessory dwelling units by right (or have a pattern of approving ADUs over the last 5 years). **(1 Points)**
6. **Multi-Family Parking Requirement:** Reduced parking requirement for Multi-Family units within the last 5 years or require no more than 1 parking space per unit for multifamily units. **(1 Point)**

Other best practices (maximum 13 points):

7. **Local funding sources that support housing:** Designated local resources for housing such as established an Affordable Housing Trust, donated land, or spent substantial Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for community housing over the last 5 years. **(2 Points)**
8. **Land Use Board Training:** Provide evidence of education and training for a majority of members on a land use board (Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Select Board and/or

City Council) from Citizen Planner Training Collaborative, Massachusetts Housing Partnership's Housing Institute, Community Development Partnership's Lower Cape Housing Institute, or Urban Land Institute's (ULI's) Urban Plan Public Leadership Institute over the last 5 years. **(1 Point)**

9. **SHI at or above 10%:** Have units currently eligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that equal or exceed 10% of total year round housing stock according to the DHCD subsidized housing inventory, where such 10% was not reached after local comprehensive permit(s) were denied or conditioned and had the denial or condition overturned by the Housing Appeals Court (HAC). **(2 Points)**
10. **SHI increased at least 2.5%:** Have increased your community's SHI by at least 2.5% points in the last 5 years where such increase was not reached after local comprehensive permit(s) were denied or conditioned and had the denial or conditions overturned by HAC. **(2 Points)**
11. **Community Compact, Housing Best Practices:** Selected a housing best practice as part of a Community Compact. **(1 Point)**
12. **Locally adopted programs that support housing:** Participate in the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP), have adopted an Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing district, approved District Improvement Financing (DIF) related to housing, have adopted an Urban Renewal Plan that includes a significant Housing element. **(1 Points)**
13. **Property tax relief/Community Impact Fee:** Have adopted local option property tax relief programs for income eligible seniors either as provided for by statute (MGL c. 59 section 5) or through a home rule petition; OR have adopted a Community Impact Fee for short term rentals (MGL c. 64G, section 3D) where your community has committed in writing to using a portion of such revenues for affordable housing. **(2 Points)**
14. **Housing Production Plan:** Have a CERTIFIED Housing Production Plan which means that you have an DHCD approved Housing Production Plan and have subsequently seen an increase of 0.5% or 1% in your year round housing units (see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/chapter-40-b-housing-production-plan> for more information). **(2 Points)**

Housing Choice Best Practices Implementation (maximum 70 points):

Additional points will be awarded for implementation of the Housing Choice Best Practices. This is qualitative scoring that will be based on the evidence submitted in response to each of the best practices above. Up to 5 points for each Best Practice:

Zoning best practices (maximum 30 points):

1. **Multi-Family allowed by right**
2. **Inclusionary Zoning, with density bonus**
3. **40R or Starter Home District**
4. **Mixed-Use or Cluster Development**
5. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)**
6. **Multi-Family Parking Requirement**

Other best practices (maximum 40 points):

7. **Local funding sources that support housing**

8. **Land Use Board training**
9. **SHI at or above 10%**
10. **SHI increased at least 2.5%**
11. **Community Compact, Housing Best Practices**
12. **Locally adopted programs that support housing**
13. **Property tax relief/Community Impact Fee**
14. **Housing Production Plan**

BONUS POINT NOTE: If an applicant claims a Best Practice and its bonus points but is unable to provide sufficient evidence to support their claim, the Housing Choice Review Panel holds the right to give no score (0) if applicant's claims are unsubstantiated.

APPENDIX 2: ACCESSING THE ONLINE APPLICATION

All applications to the Housing Choice Communities Capital Grant 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, which is the upgraded version of IntelliGrants. The system can be accessed at <https://eohed.intelligrants.com>. A user account is required. Below are the steps for getting into the system. **This is the same system that the MassWorks grant program has used since 2018.**

The municipality should activate a primary account with the municipal CEO and/or designee(s) as a “Grant Administrator”. This person(s) can then add other users, as necessary. Please refer to the IGX Grantee User Manual for technical instructions.

Current Admin Users – Municipal CEOs and/or designees who have used the IntelliGrants system in past rounds may be able to use their existing usernames to access the new application as a Grant Administrator in the IGX system. However, you must use the "Forgot Username/Password" function to reset your password when you first login and/or if you do not remember your username.

New Admin Users – If your community, or public entity, has not accessed the system in the past, a new registration is required. Similarly, this should be done by the municipal CEO and/or a designee. Click the “New User? Register Here” link to complete and submit a registration request. When that account is approved by EOHED, 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 EOHED. 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.

Other Users – 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.

Starting an application – Once accounts are registered and/or approved, a Grant Administrator will be able to start an application(s), from the “My Opportunities” 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. However, only a Grant Administrator will be able to formally submit the 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, the “Application Submitted” option will become available (**to Grant Administrators only**), 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 prior to being finished, the applicant may contact EOHED 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. DHCD is not responsible for delays or missed deadlines due to applicant errors.

APPENDIX 3: EQUITY IN HOUSING CHOICE GRANT PROGRAM**Sustainable Development Principle: Advance Equity**

The Commonwealth's [Sustainable Development Principles](#) define advancing equity as:

Advance Equity: Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning and decision making to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. Ensure that the interests of future generations are not compromised by today's decisions.

Environmental Justice Population

The Commonwealth defines a neighborhood as an [Environmental Justice Population](#) if one or more of the following four criteria are true:

1. the annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income;
2. minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population;
3. 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
4. minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income.

To assess whether at least 1 census tract in your project area is an EJ community you may use the following map and community list:

- [Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#)
- [List of Massachusetts Cities & Towns with Environmental Justice Populations](#)