Application for Grant Funds (AGF) - Massachusetts Geospatial Framework Grant

Introduction and Background

The Massachusetts Geospatial Framework grant program offers matching funds to advance the geospatial framework for the Massachusetts Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI). The MSDI is administered by MassGIS on behalf of the enterprise of Commonwealth public bodies and for the benefit and use of all organizations and residents in Massachusetts.

The Framework grant funds should assist in creating, revising, stewarding, or making Framework data more accessible. The intent of this grant program is to enhance and improve the infrastructure necessary to provide Framework data for use by all. Infrastructure in this context includes Framework data and the resources, technology, and processes required to develop and maintain those data.

The focus of the program will be government organizations that have struggled to develop and/or maintain that infrastructure. It is hoped that this program can provide seed capital for those organizations that will enable them to stand up the infrastructure, then maintain it on their own going forward, either individually or in collaboration with other organizations. While these grants are intended to be limited to an organization for a single fiscal year, future funding may be considered on a case-by-case basis. The deliverables for a grant award will be Framework data in one of two categories described in this document.

Foundational Framework data themes are the major building blocks of other data elements in other data themes. The primary Foundational Framework data themes are geodetic and other survey control, elevation data, orthoimagery, and bathymetry. There is also a group of secondary Foundational Framework data themes. They are defined as entirely dependent on one of the primary Foundational Framework themes and are the reference base for eight or more other Framework data themes. Primary and secondary Foundational Framework data themes are indicated as such in the diagram below.
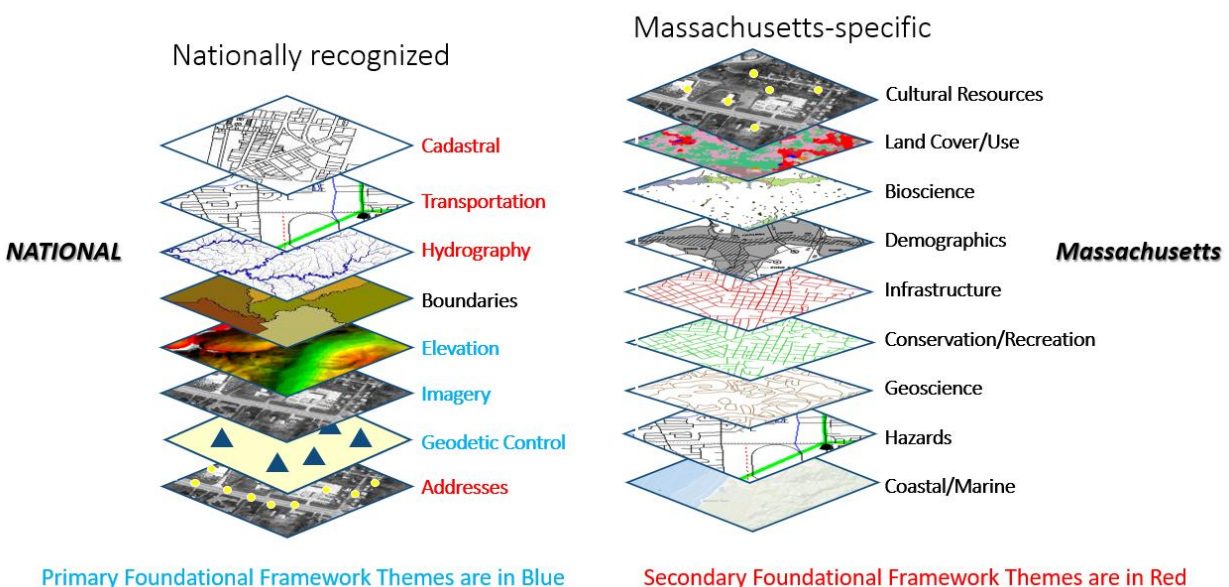
All funding in this first year will be for Foundational Framework data projects in the following secondary Foundational Framework data themes:

1) Parcels
2) Address Points

MSDI Theme	Data Element
Addresses	Master Address Data
Addresses	ZIP Codes
Cadastral	Property Tax Parcels

Applications for either of these data themes should address one or more of the following:

1. Filling in gaps in state coverage for municipalities that have not been able to provide regular updates to MassGIS.
2. Improvement of existing processes used to create the data in order to streamline the processes and/or improve them in some demonstrable way.
3. Improvement in the quality of some of the attributes MassGIS receives from municipalities, e.g. consistency and uniqueness of addresses, accurate ZIP Codes, use codes, ownership, etc.

The program is competitive, so grant applications will be evaluated on specific criteria, discussed later in this document.

Eligibility

1. Regional planning agencies and municipalities are eligible to apply. All other organizations may be subcontractors in the grant applications.
2. Grant applications submitted in collaboration with a university partner will receive higher consideration. Collaboration among several stakeholders is also strongly encouraged.
3. Applications with a high ratio of in-kind contributions (at least $3 of in-kind to $1 grant funds is desired) will be more likely to be successful.
4. Indirect or administrative costs may not be included in the proposed budget. All other related costs will be considered as appropriate.
5. The receipt of grant funds is contingent upon the grantee being able to certify that it will comply with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities Act. Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is determined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

We expect grant awards will be in the range of $10,000 to $50,000 each. The intent is to provide 50% of the grant award at the beginning of the project and the remaining 50% upon successful completion. A draft deliverable of the data will be required at the midpoint of the grant period.

Timeline

August 25, 2025 – AGF released
September 22, 2025 – Applications Due
October 7, 2025 – Grants Awarded
December 1, 2026 – Progress Report 1 Due
February 1, 2026 – Progress Report 2 Due

April 1, 2026 – Progress Report 3 Due
May 1, 2026 – Final Project Completed and Submitted.

Application Evaluations

In addition to an initial review of each application to ensure all required deadlines, formatting and templates have been adhered to, the following content criteria will be evaluated:

Content Review

a. Does the application cover a Framework theme/element, and is the theme/element in the appropriate spatial extent?
b. Foundational data-element project criteria
    i. Data Need
        - What is the need for the foundational data element to be developed for a particular theme? Or
        - What is the need for the foundational data element to be completed or updated for a particular theme?
    ii. Metadata
        - Will the foundational data element's metadata be in the proper Massachusetts metadata format?
    iii. Stewardship
        - Who will be the steward, and is there a plan in place for successful stewardship, including regular maintenance? Please define the steps of this plan.
    iv. Data Integration
        - What relation is there with other themes and data elements, including the path for horizontal and vertical integration?
    v. Other considerations
        - Does the application focus externally on MSDI/NSDI? For example, a related non-foundational data element can be completed by completing this foundational data element.
        - Are there existing matching funds currently available?
        - Is that data element tied to an established data exchange standard?
c. Technically Sound
    i. Are the proper resources requested to complete the project?
    ii. Is the project cost-effective?
    iii. Have all the technical issues been adequately analyzed and resolved?
    iv. Is the timeframe and work plan realistic?
    v. Is the plan for distribution, access, and storage realistic?
d. Data Integration and Accessibility
    i. What are the plans for integration with the Framework program, relevant data themes, or data elements
    ii. Will the data be public domain and publishable on the MassGIS website?
    iii. Are the attributes clearly defined and/or described?

   iv. Does the project adhere to appropriate standards?
- MassGIS Parcel Standard
- MassGIS Address Standard

 e. Policy and Funding Considerations
   i. Are all the appropriate stakeholders and partners involved?
   ii. Is the project connected to relevant, appropriate business lines? This can occur within an agency, across multiple agencies or jurisdictions.

 f. Funding and cost questions
   i. Does the project leverage other funding sources from partners?
   ii. Will the project incur additional costs down the road if it is not funded during this grant period?

 g. Other considerations
   i. Can the project be completed within the funding cycle?
   ii. How relevant is the project for improving services to Massachusetts residents?
   iii. Does this project align with the Governor's priorities?

Application Template

Instructions - Use this template as a style and content guide for your application, including Headings and Subheadings. Applications not conforming to this template or missing information may be returned without review. Page and word limitations are indicated where relevant. Please use a 12-point font size. Adequate font size enhances the readability of applications for reviewers.

Application Cover Page (1 page)

Project Title

Contact Information for Primary Project Staff

Please include an agency or organization affiliation for team members and a single point of contact for the project.

Project Duration and End Date

The project must be completed by 5/1/2026

Geographic Extent of the Project

Please provide a map or description of the geographic extent of the project.

Requested Amount

The total amount requested for funding should equal the amount on the budget sheet.

Project Abstract (250 words maximum)

Please provide a short description of the project. The abstract will be posted on the MassGIS website.

Project Narrative (8 pages maximum)

The project narrative will be used to develop the Statement of Work for successful application agreements.

Project Scope

Please briefly describe your proposed project. This section may include an introduction, background, or any other information that is not found in the application.

Relationship with the MSDI Framework

Please describe how your project fits within the MSDI Framework by highlighting relevant themes and/or data elements, and/or past or future Framework activities.

Benefits of the Project and Commitments

Please discuss how the project will benefit the MSDI Framework and the geospatial community. The discussion should also include the organization's commitment to the project. It could include the organization's mission and how the project fits within it.
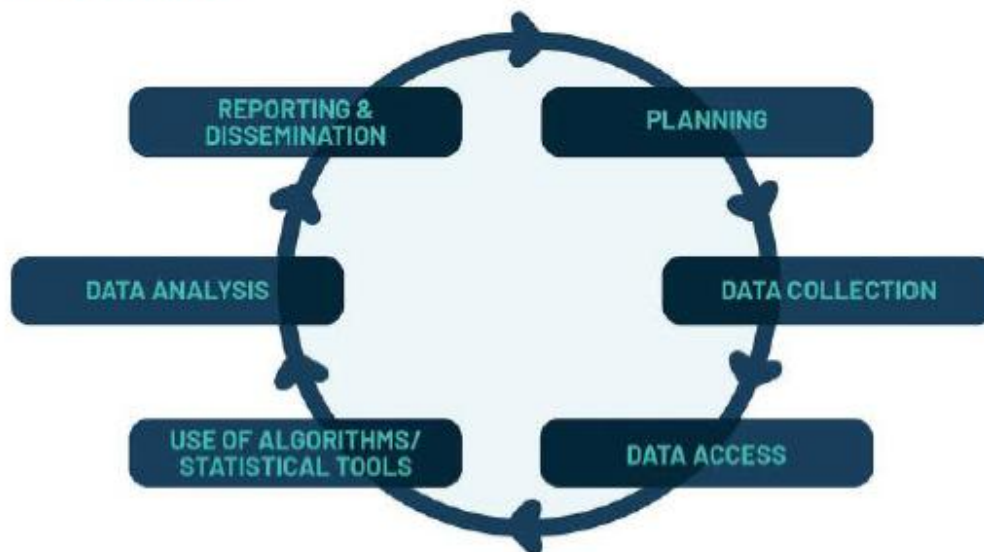
Methodology

Please explain the process used to create the project deliverables and meet the necessary outcomes in detail.

Project Deliverables

Please describe the project deliverables and outcomes, including a successful stewardship plan. If the project goes beyond the data collection part of the data life cycle, there needs to be a discussion on the reasoning.

https://aisp.upenn.edu/resource-article/applying-a-race-equity-lens-to-build-thriving-communities-centering-racial-equity-across-the-data-lifecycle/

Project Timeline

Please provide a timeline that details the timing of milestones for the project. There are many ways to properly illustrate a project timeline, e.g., a Gantt chart.

Stewardship Overview

Please describe the agency that will be the project's steward and a detailed plan for successful implementation.

Data Storage and Distribution Plan

Please describe how the data will be stored and distributed to the public. Most data will be stored and distributed by MassGIS. Please explain if an alternative plan is needed and give reasons for this plan. Please also discuss any privacy or security issues with the data.

Commitment to effort

Describe actions and opportunities that indicate commitment by your organization or your application team for the project deliverables and outcomes. Information may include, but is not limited to, your organization's requirement for the project deliverables and activities related to the proposed project or its deliverables/outcomes.

Project Team's Experience to Complete the Project

Please explain the project team's skills and knowledge and how it relates to completing the project.

Budget Justification Statement (1 page)
Explain the need for each line item in the budget. Successful statements will convey why the costs are necessary for project success. Please note that MassGIS will reimburse only the direct project costs; indirect costs cannot be reimbursed.

Budget (1 page)
1) Identify funds from partners, other project related funds, matching funds, etc.
2) Estimate of in-kind match
3) Identify any unfunded activities
4) Include information about any planned contracting
5) Example budget formats are provided below.

Optional Information (No Limit)
Letters of support or participation
Résumés or CVs

Sample Budget Templates

	FTE	Monthly Salary	Project Months	Salary Cost	Benefits Rate	Benefits Cost	Other Cost	Total Cost	In-Kind Cost	Grant Cost
SALARIES	%									
							N/A			
							N/A			
							N/A			
	per hr.						N/A			
							N/A			
							N/A			
							N/A			
Total Salaries							N/A			
SUBCONTRACTS										
Subcontractor 1							N/A			
Total Subcontracts							N/A			
Other Direct Costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
TOTAL COST										

Applications with a high ratio of in-kind contributions (at least $3 of in-kind to $1 grant funds is desired) will be more likely to be successful.

Reporting Template

Month	Percent of Work Completed	Description of Work Completed
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		

Please submit your complete grant applications to Tom Mueller at Thomas.R.Mueller@mass.gov