



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**  
100 CAMBRIDGE STREET, SUITE 300  
BOSTON, MA 02114

## **MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund**

**Grant program available to MBTA Communities that have received  
a district compliance determination letter from EOHLC**

### **Notice of Funding Availability FY2025 - FY2027**

**Agency Document Number: EOHLC2024-79**  
**COMMBUYS Bid Number: BD-25-1076-OCDDE-OCD01-104930**  
**Division: Livable Communities**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE**

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (“EOHLC”) is pleased to announce the MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund (“Catalyst Fund”), a new grant program of the Healey-Driscoll Administration to support its efforts to increase housing production in the Commonwealth. The Catalyst Fund is intended to reward MBTA communities with an approved 3A district compliant with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A.

This competitive grant program accepts applications and makes awards on a rolling basis to fund a variety of activities related to housing development and infrastructure projects associated with housing production.

## **II. OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT**

### **A. Program Authorization**

The Catalyst Fund was created as part of the [FY25-Five Year Capital Investment Plan](#) as a continuation of the Healey-Driscoll Administration’s commitment to make historic investments in housing production and preservation.

### **B. Funding Availability**

Up to \$5M is available per fiscal year from FY25 through FY27 for the Catalyst Fund at the time of posting. Funding availability is subject to the final state budget and capital investment plan.

The Catalyst Fund accepts applications and will make awards on a rolling basis per deadlines outlined in Section F, below.

### **C. Eligible Applicants**

MBTA communities with a district compliance determination letter from EOHLC at the time of grant application are eligible to apply. Eligible MBTA communities must be the lead applicant and recipient of grant funds. MBTA communities may passthrough grant funds to another entity to execute the proposed project, at the discretion of EOHLC, such as but not limited to a home builder, a Community Development Corporation, or other non-profit or for-profit entity creating or promoting housing development, preservation, or rehabilitation.

### **D. Eligible Uses of Grant Funds**

Awarded grants will fund a variety of activities related to housing development and infrastructure associated with housing development that help produce, preserve, and/or rehabilitate housing units in eligible locations (as defined in “other requirements” below).

Permissible activities:

The Catalyst Fund will only award funds to A) infrastructure to support housing (“Infrastructure”), B) housing development (“Development”), and/or C) acquisition to support housing (“Acquisition”).

- Infrastructure: projects to support housing growth and mixed-used development to advance housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation including but not limited to:
  - Design, engineering, and site prep of infrastructure projects.
  - Construction of new or improved infrastructure, including roadway/streetscape improvements, water/sewer, public utilities (gas, electric, etc.), and bridge/culvert repair or replacement.
- Development: fund “shovel ready” or ongoing projects, including but not limited to passthrough of funds to eligible entities, new housing construction, preservation of existing units, and/or rehabilitation.
- Acquisition: purchase of land or other properties with the intent to develop housing units.

Other requirements:

- Infrastructure: projects must be located within or adjacent to the approved zoning district created to comply with MBTA Communities law, hereafter “3A district.” “Adjacent” for purposes of this grant program shall mean 1) a parcel that immediately abuts the approved 3A district; or 2) a parcel documented to be associated with the approved 3A district despite not being included in it.
- Development: projects must be located within the 3A district and must have been submitted to the municipality for approval after the adoption of the 3A district.
- Acquisition: projects must be located within .5 mile of the 3A district.

**E. Application Process**

At the time of posting, eligible applicants may submit either of the following within the rolling application deadlines outlined in Section F, below, for consideration of a Catalyst Fund award:

1. Completed MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund grant application with required attachments, or
2. A recently submitted Community One Stop for Growth (COSG) application in any of the eligible project categories.

The Catalyst Fund grant application is available online at [www.mass.gov/how-to/mbta-communities-catalyst-fund](http://www.mass.gov/how-to/mbta-communities-catalyst-fund).

Eligible applicants must submit by email a completed application as a **SINGLE PDF document** to [EOHLCCommCatalyst@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCCommCatalyst@mass.gov) per rolling application deadlines outlined in Section F, below. An application that includes multiple files, or multiple files with various formats, will be considered an incomplete application and will not be accepted.

EOHLC may, at its discretion, update the Catalyst Fund grant application and/or submission process.

## F. Application Deadlines

Applications may be submitted during the rolling deadlines outlined below for consideration of a Catalyst Fund award.

Deadlines for FY25 round awards	
Early Decision	10/1/2024 – 12/1/2024
Regular Decision	12/2/2024 – 1/15/2025

Deadlines for FY26 round awards	
Early Action	1/16/2025 – 10/1/2025
Early Decision	10/2/2025 – 12/1/2025
Regular Decision	12/2/2025 – 1/15/2026

Deadline for FY27 round awards	
Early Action	1/16/2026 – 12/1/2026

Application submission deadline is 11:59PM on the final day listed.

EOHLC may, at its discretion, update the Catalyst Fund grant application deadlines for FY26 and FY27 round of awards.

## G. Applicant Evaluation Criteria

Catalyst Fund grant applications will be evaluated on the following:

1. Project and location eligibility;
2. Project readiness;
3. Financial feasibility;
4. Outcomes and impact, including the number of housing units developed, the number of affordable units developed, and the level of affordability of said units;
5. Alignment with EOHLC priorities; and
6. Special consideration will be given to projects that: directly produce multi-family housing units; directly produce affordable multi-family housing units that are deed restricted in perpetuity; increase affordability levels below 80% Area Median Income (AMI); request funding for multi-family housing components of mixed-use projects.

## H. Additional Information

If you have questions about eligibility or the application process, please submit them in writing to [EOHLCCommCatalyst@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCCommCatalyst@mass.gov).

### **III. ABOUT M.G.L. c.40 §3A**

#### **A. Introduction**

Section 3A to the Zoning Act (Chapter 40A of the General Laws) requires each of the 177 MBTA communities to have a zoning district in which multifamily zoning is permitted as of right and that meets other requirements set forth in the statute. Read more about [section 3A here](#).

#### **B. Compliance with M.G.L. c.40 §3A**

District compliance is achieved when an MBTA community adopts a multi-family zoning district that meets all the requirements of the compliance guidelines and is certified by EOHLC. Only MBTA communities that have received a notification of district compliance at the time of a grant funding request are eligible for this grant program.



## MBTA COMMUNITIES CATALYST FUND APPLICATION

Municipalities are eligible to apply if they have received a District Compliance Determination Letter from EOHLC.

To be considered, eligible applicants must email a completed application form with required attachments (or a recently submitted Community One Stop for Growth application in any eligible categories) as a single PDF document to [EOHLCMBTACommCatalyst@mass.gov](mailto:EOHLCMBTACommCatalyst@mass.gov). An application checklist for guidance is included at the end of this template.

This application template is intended for draft purposes only. Find the MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund Application, a fillable PDF application, online at [www.mass.gov/how-to/mbta-communities-catalyst-fund](http://www.mass.gov/how-to/mbta-communities-catalyst-fund).

If you have recently applied for funds through the Community One Stop for Growth and the project was not funded, then you may utilize that application as a substitute for the MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund Application from the below list.

For a complete application, please make sure you have the following:

- ☐ Fully completed MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund Application (or recent Community One Stop for Growth application, if applicable)
- ☐ Copy of District Compliance Determination Letter from EOHLC
- ☐ If applicable: copy of housing restriction ordinance
- ☐ Project budget and/or cost estimate and/or pro forma
- ☐ Project location map
- ☐ If applicable: partner entity letter
- ☐ If applicable: certified copy of vote taken by relevant entity to certify application submission

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Information			
<b>Municipality:</b>			
<b>Municipality Legal Address:</b>			
<b>City/Town:</b>		<b>Zip Code:</b>	
<b>Municipality CEO</b>		<b>Project Contact (if different than CEO)</b>	
<b>Name &amp; Title:</b>		<b>Name &amp; Title:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>		<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Tel. #:</b>		<b>Tel. #:</b>	

**MBTA Communities Date of District Compliance Determination:** \_\_\_\_\_

*\*You must have received a district compliance determination letter at the time of application to be eligible for this fund and must attach a copy with your application.*

**Community Housing Restrictions** – Are there any active housing restrictions or other restrictive bylaws, such as phased growth zoning or an active housing moratorium?

☐ Yes\* ☐ No

*\*If yes, you must provide a copy of the restriction with your application.*

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

**Project Category** – Select the category and project type that best fits the proposed project.

- ☐ Acquisition of property/properties
  - ☐ Municipal acquisition of property
  - ☐ Private acquisition of property (passthrough funding)
- ☐ Housing Development
  - ☐ Housing production
  - ☐ Housing rehabilitation
  - ☐ Housing preservation
- ☐ Infrastructure
  - ☐ Pre-construction - Design / Engineering Documents Only
  - ☐ Construction



**DRAFT FOR GUIDANCE PURPOSES ONLY**

<b>Project Name:</b>	
<b>Project Abstract</b> – Provide a concise description of the project.	

**Location Eligibility** – Indicate the location of the project site in relation to the compliant 3A district\*:

☐ Within ☐ Adjacent to ☐ 0.5 miles or farther

*\*Refer to published guidelines regarding project location eligibility definitions and criteria.*

<b>Project Site:</b> Describe the location of proposed project site and where it is located within/in relation to the approved 3A district. Provide a map of the project site with your application.
<b>Project Address(es) &amp; Parcel ID(s):</b>

**Grant Funding Request** – In the table below, provide a breakdown by spending category of the total funding request for the proposed project. Include a copy of your project budget and/or cost estimate and/or pro forma with your application.

Grant Spending Description	Grant Request
Consultants/Prof. Fees	
Pre-Construction (Design, Engineering, Permitting, Bidding, etc.)	
Construction	
Construction Admin	
Contingency	
Other / Miscellaneous	
Total Grant Request	

<b>Justification of Request</b> – Provide line-item explanations, justifications, and/or notes for the funding requested. Include an explanation of the methods for estimating project costs.
<b>Applicant Match</b> – If applicable, indicate if you will provide a match to supplement any awarded grant funds. If yes, detail the amount, source, and status of matching funds. <i>Note: staff time does not count as match funds.</i>
<b>Additional Funding</b> – If applicable, indicate if there are any additional sources of funding provided by outside parties to support the project. provide a match to supplement any awarded grant funds. If yes, detail the indicate the amount, source, and status of additional funding.
<b>Scope of Work &amp; Project Implementation</b> – Detail the proposed work to be funded by the grant. Describe the steps and timeline to implement the project, as well as any tasks that need to be completed before expending grant funds (i.e., procurement, hiring contractors, issuing RFPs, etc.) and any notable dates and/or milestones. If applicable, identify any necessary review and/or approval entities such as Planning Board, Council or Selectboard and/or subcommittee Committee, town meeting, etc.

<b>Project Expenditure Timeline</b> – Detail the timeline of expending grant funds, if awarded.
<b>Anticipated Outcomes and Impacts</b> –Describe the project’s tangible outcomes on housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation.

Indicate characteristics of any planned and/or leveraged development, if applicable:

<b>General Information</b>	
Development Address (or Parcel ID)	
Lot area (acres) of the development site:	
<b>Housing Impacts</b>	
Number of NEW market-rate units to be created for rent/lease:	
Number of NEW market-rate units to be created for homeownership:	
Number of NEW affordable units to be created for rent/lease:	
Number of NEW affordable units to be created for homeownership:	
Number of EXISTING market-rate units to be preserved and/or rehabilitated:	
Number of EXISTING affordable units to be preserved and/or rehabilitated:	
If any affordable, specify lowest income limit used (65% AMI, 80% AMI, etc.):	

## ACQUISITION PROJECT QUESTIONS

<p><b>Site Description</b> – Describe the parcel or property to be acquired, including ownership history, conditions, square footage, unique challenges that may exist at this location, etc. Indicate whether you will acquire and maintain ownership or passthrough funds to an entity to acquire and maintain ownership and, if so, to which entity.</p>
<p><b>Planned Development</b> – Describe any planning or studies to date and/or what future planning or studies will be undertaken on the parcel or property that will advance housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation.</p>
<p><b>Letter from Partner Entity</b> – If applicable, include a letter from the partner entity to which you will passthrough funds for the acquisition project with your application.</p>

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT QUESTIONS

<p><b>Site Description</b> – Describe the parcel or property being developed, including ownership history, conditions, square footage, unique challenges that may exist at this location, etc. Indicate whether you will fund work directly or passthrough funds to an entity to execute the project.</p>
<p><b>Planned Development</b> – Describe any planning or studies to date and/or what future planning or studies will be undertaken on the parcel/property/development that will advance housing development, preservation, and/or rehabilitation.</p>

<b>Housing Development Information</b> – Date the development project was submitted to the municipality for approval:		
<b>Housing Developer Contact Information</b> – Provide the following information for the housing development project, including the entity name and contact information.		
Proponent Entity/Company:		
Project Name:		
Project Address:		
Contact Name/Title:		
Contact Email:		
Contact Phone:		
<b>Housing Development Overview</b> – Describe the housing development project, including the scope of the development, expected public benefits, project phasing, and approximate date of when housing units will be occupied.		
<b>Letter from Partner Entity</b> – If applicable, include a letter from the partner entity to which you will passthrough funds for the acquisition project with your application.		

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT QUESTIONS

<b>Site Ownership</b> – Indicate if the infrastructure project site is publicly owned. If yes, describe the type of public ownership (i.e., public land, right of way, etc.).	
Provide information related to the leveraged private development as a result of this public infrastructure project.	
<b>Developer Contact Information</b> – Provide the following for the primary private development project most directly leveraged by this infrastructure project.	
Proponent Entity/Company:	
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Contact Name/Title:	
Contact Email:	
Contact Phone:	

**Private Development Overview** – Describe the private development project(s), including the scope of the development, project phasing, status of financing and design/construction, and approximate date of when housing units will be occupied.

**Reliance on Public infrastructure Improvements** - Can the private development proceed independently without the public infrastructure project?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Letter from Private Development Proponent** - Include a letter from the private development proponent confirming and explaining this answer with your application.

## CERTIFICATION OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Does application submission require a formal vote of any board, commission, or other local entity? If yes, attachment required.

☐ Yes\* ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

*\*If yes, include a certified copy of the vote taken by the relevant entity with your application.*

If no or not applicable, are you authorized to submit this application on behalf of the applicant entity, by virtue of your administrative role (chief elected official, chief executive officer, city/town manager, authorized signatory, etc.) or as a designee of an administrator and/or authorized signatory?

☐ Yes ☐ No

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Submitter Name), hereby certify that I am duly authorized to submit this application on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Municipality Name). By entering my name in the space below, I further certify, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that the responses to the questions provided in this application, and the attached documentation, are true, accurate, and complete. I understand that the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) will rely on the information provided in this application to make decisions about whether to award a grant from their respective funding sources. Also, that the Commonwealth reserves the right to take action against me, the applicant organization, and/or any other beneficiary of a grant, if any of the information provided is determined to be false, inaccurate, or misleading. I also affirm that, if awarded, the applicant organization has the capacity to carry out the project in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_