Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH

Overview Webinar

January 28, 2021

Webinar 1

Roadmap

- Overview – Community One Stop for Growth
- Development Continuum
- What to Expect: One Stop Process Phases and Timeline
- Summary – One Stop Process Benefits

Presenters:

Ashley Stolba, Undersecretary for Community Development

Juan Vega, Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs

Helena Fruscio Altsman, Assistant Secretary for Program and Performance Management

Background

During the regional listening sessions for the Economic Development Plan *Partnerships for Growth*, municipalities and community development leaders continually noted the challenge of securing state funding. This feedback led to an internal review and exploration of ways to improve access to various programs and streamline grant processes. The result is the creation of the Community One Stop for Growth, a single application portal to apply for certain housing and community development funding programs, aligning with the Build Vibrant Communities pillar and the Accessible Government principle of *Partnerships for Growth.*

What We Heard

1. **Knowledge of and Access to Funds:** First, it was challenging to identify and understand the purposes and requirements of various funding sources that were available.

2. **Time Consuming and Complicated Processes:** Second, it was challenging to apply to multiple programs with different application timelines, all with unique processes and guidelines.

What We Did

1. **Developed Single Application Portal** to streamline access to multiple grant programs on a single timeline.

2. **Built Referral, Guidance, and Collaborative Review** processes into the grant round, to allow the state to better coordinate and strategize in funding housing and economic development projects in communities.

Background: Building Upon the Community Compact and Economic Recovery Efforts

- **The Community Compact Connector,** launched by the Lieutenant Governor, addressed the concern around access to funds and knowledge of programs with an online, centralized grant finder and calendar.

- **Building upon that success,** EOHED and agencies have developed a **one stop model** to streamline the grant process for programs related to community economic development, in coordination with the Community Compact.

- It is **more important than ever to coordinate** across programs to best support communities as they **recover from the pandemic**. With simplified application processes, communities will have easier access to the administration's recovery tools, including funding and program staff expertise, as they develop holistic community economic development goals.

Overview – Community One Stop for Growth

The Community One Stop for Growth is **a single application portal** and **collaborative review process** of grant programs that make targeted investments based on a Development Continuum.

This process will **streamline the experience** for the applicant and **better coordinate** economic development programs and staff on engagement and grant making.

The process will also reorient the State from a passive reviewer of funding requests to **an active partner in economic development strategy, priorities, and investment**.

The Community One Stop for Growth represents a **major shift** in how the State and its partner agencies do business, not in the way you do business. This shift will allow us to better understand and support your community's goals.

Example Application: Old Process

HYPOTHETICAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

A downtown revitalization effort in a Housing Choice Community, that contains a site that needs demolition of a structure and a brownfield clean up, a plan to create a businesses improvement district, and the crafting of a proforma to determine the feasibility of developing 300 units of market-rate housing. The applicant filled out the Expression of Interest to get guidance on the project.

Example Application: New Process

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One Door to Many Funding Programs

Applicants may have experience with two existing approaches to simplifying administration of grant programs; this experience may be helpful in conceptualizing and onboarding to the Community One Stop for Growth. These include:

1. **MassWorks Infrastructure Program:** In 2011, six funding programs were statutorily combined into a single program and a single capital line item, allowing communities to use a single application to access grant funding.

2. **Rental Round: Housing One-Stop:** Over a decade ago, DHCD began administering fourteen programs together through a single funding application round, though the programs remain separate line items.

The Community One Stop for Growth will emulate the consolidated purpose of both examples by using one application, while most directly replicating the coordinated internal administration of the Rental Round: Housing One-Stop Model.

Programs in the Community One Stop for Growth

Beginning in January 2021, ten programs will be administered through the Community One Stop for Growth – one application door to access programs offered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Department of Housing and Community Development, and MassDevelopment.

COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH PROGRAMS

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

- MassWorks
- Urban Agenda
- 43D Expedited Permitting

Department of Housing and Community Development

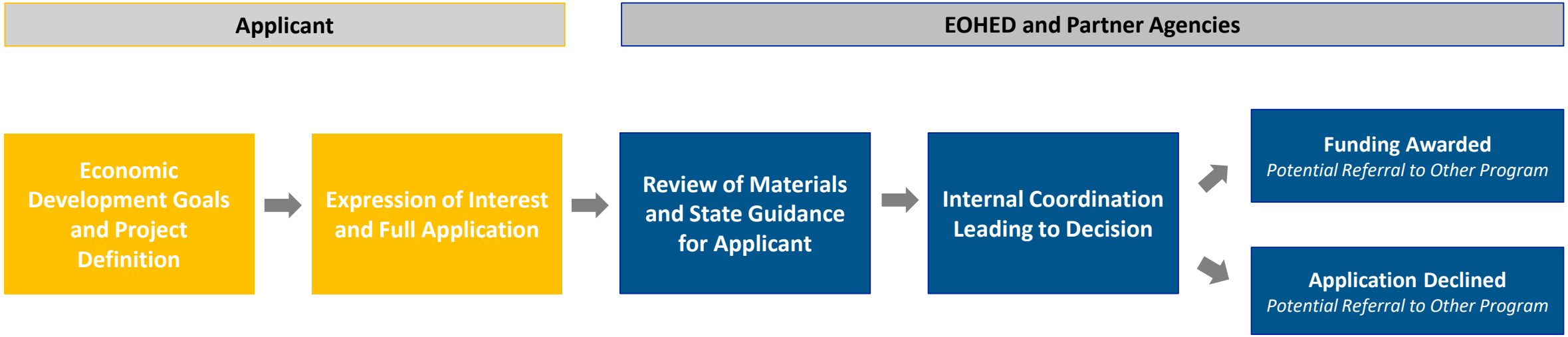
- Housing Choice Capital Grants
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- (NEW) Community Planning Grants
- (NEW) Rural Development Fund

MassDevelopment

- Brownfields
- Site Readiness
- (NEW) Underutilized Properties

Program Integration and Coordination

The Community One Stop for Growth review process **integrates and coordinates with other state resources**, including Community Compact Connector and other EOHED or agency programs. The review **considers alignment with the Community Compact** in the past and **creates a path to referral programs, if more suitable to the request** than the funding available via Community One Stop for Growth programs.



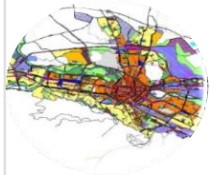
Development Continuum

All grant programs within the Community One Stop for Growth will fall into the Continuum. The following are allowable uses of funds within each category:

Preparing for Growth Grants to support activities and initial steps by community-based actors to attract and guide private investment in a community.			Catalyzing Specific Projects Grants to support private, commercial, industrial, and residential investment projects that further the community vision.		
Community Capacity Building	**Planning & Zoning**	**Site Preparation**	**Predevelopment & Permitting**	**Buildings (Vertical)**	**Infrastructure (Horizontal)**
Technical Assistance for Improving a Downtown or Commercial Center Early Stage Strategy Development Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortium or Coalition	Master Plan Urban Renewal Plan Land Use Plan Downtown Plan Parking Management Plan Housing Production Plans Market Feasibility Studies Zoning Review & Updates Other Strategic Plans	Site Concept Plan Site Market Study Site Acquisition, related tasks Demolition Construction of site related upgrades Brownfields Site Assessment Brownfields Remediation	**Buildings:** Building Condition Study Structural Engineering Reports Code Compliance Studies Development Feasibility Studies Indoor Survey Seismic Code Assessments **Site/Infrastructure:** Engineering Documents Pre-Permitting and Permitting Pro-Forma Development Due Diligence	Capital Improvements	Design, Engineering, Permitting Bidding Construction Construction Admin

Program Overlay onto Continuum

The **FY22 funding rounds for existing programs will be implemented through the Community One Stop for Growth**. There are also new programs, authorized by the 2020 Economic Development Bill, incorporated into the One Stop. The table below **overlays existing and new programs with the new Continuum framework** (for guidance purposes only).

Programs	Community Capacity Building	 Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Predevelopment & Permitting	Buildings (vertical)	Infrastructure (horizontal)
Urban Agenda	✓					
Mass Downtown	✓	✓				
NEW Community Planning		✓				
Brownfields			✓			
Site Readiness			✓	✓		
NEW Under Utilized Properties				✓	✓	
MassWorks				✓		✓
Housing Choice		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NEW Rural Development		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Continuum Detail – Community Capacity Building

Projects may focus on a geographic area (district, community, or region) or a target population. Preference for projects that demonstrate a clear vision and a leadership group that is effective and stable. For projects with a target population, preference for those with involvement of, or impact on, Black and Latino populations. Projects may fund consultants or, in certain cases, staff time.

Projects in the Community Capacity Building section of the Development Continuum include:

- Technical Assistance for Improving a Downtown or Commercial Center
- Early Stage Strategy Development
- Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortiums or Coalition

Grant Type: Technical assistance or Implementation Grants. Projects may fund consultants or staff.

Grant Sizes: Potential for $25,000 to $100,000 awards. Downtown technical assistance grants will not exceed $25,000.

Programs: Urban Agenda and Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI)

Example Projects:

- Request by a business association representing a consortium of building owners to explore the feasibility of developing a Business Improvement District.
- A request from a community coalition to fund English language training and other prerequisite trainings, including coverage for child care and transportation, to prepare low-income residents for new jobs available in the region due to the expansion of a major employer.

Continuum Detail – Planning and Zoning

Planning and Zoning grants may be used for a variety of activities related to land use, but not limited to development. Activities may include the development of a Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Zoning Review and Updates, Urban Renewal Plan, Land Use Plan, Downtown Plan, Parking Management Plan, Feasibility Study, or Other Strategic Plan.

Applications for projects in the Planning and Zoning bucket represent an early-stage project that requires a guiding plan, study, or assessment of project needs, prior to any construction or site preparation. These are planning grants and projects must produce a planning document with the funds.

Grant Type: Planning Grants

Grant Size: Potential for $25,000 - $75,000 awards

Programs Included: Planning and Zoning Grants, Mass Downtown Initiative

Example Projects:

- 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.
- Study the area with a ½ mile of a commuter rail station and create strategies to intensify development in that area.
- Prepare a corridor study of a commercial area that runs through multiple towns and seeks land use alternatives to promote multi-modal access, introduce mixed-use and achieve more compact commercial development.
- Review current zoning to identify and remove language that excludes certain housing types.
- Develop 40R Smart Growth or Starter Home zoning districts.

Continuum Detail – Site Preparation

This category includes funding for an applicant working to progress a key site toward development; a final developer or end use is not necessarily identified at this phase. Projects must have an identified site. All applicantions in the category can indicate their desire to have a site considered for expedited permitting from the state through M.G.L. c. 43D.

Projects in the Site Preparation section of the Development Continuum include:

- Site Concept Plan
- Site Market Study
- Site Acquisition, related tasks
- Demolition & Construction of Site-Related Upgrades
- Brownfields Site Assessment
- Brownfields Remediation

Grant Type: Planning or Implementation Grants.

Grant Sizes: Potential for $50,000 to $1,000,000 awards

Programs: Brownfields, Site Readiness

Example Projects:

- The acquisition of land in an industrial zone to allow for business expansion.
- The remediation of a brownfield site to prepare it for the development of a new industrial complex for businesses.

Continuum Detail – Pre-Development and Permitting

These grants are for projects that result in studies or reports that help to progress a project. Private development does not need to be identified at the time of application. However, the project must have an identified site. Grants will prioritize projects with clear envisioned end use of the site and the impact of that end use, as well as community support.

Projects in the Pre-Development and Permitting section of the Development Continuum include:

Pre-Development - Buildings:

- Building Condition Study
- Structural Engineering Reports
- Code Compliance Studies
- Development Feasibility Studies
- Indoor Survey
- Seismic Code Assessments

Pre-Development - Site/Infrastructure:

- Engineering Documents
- Pre-Permitting and Permitting
- Pro-Forma Development
- Due Diligence

Grant Type: Grants must produce studies or reports.

Grant Sizes: Potential for $25,000 to $100,000 awards

Programs: MassWorks, Site Readiness, Underutilized Properties

Example Projects:

- Pre-permitting a large industrial site through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process.
- A request to produce a site specific market study to determine the viability of a proposed development.
- A request to develop architectural drawings for a new facility on a cleaned up former brownfield site.

Continuum Detail – Buildings (Vertical)

Funding is available for capital improvements that are essential to the occupancy of a blighted, abandoned, vacant or underutilized property. Funding in this category is limited to projects with a strong public purpose and benefit. These are capital grants for construction ready projects.

Projects in this category must be ready for construction, and have the building secured with building and/or site control, an identified end use, and a clear public purpose.

Grant Type: Implementation grants for shovel-ready projects.
Grant Size: Potential for $250,000 - $2,000,000 awards
Programs: Underutilized Properties

Example Projects:

- A request to fit-out an incubator within a property that was previously vacant.
- A request to install an elevator in a city-owned property to open up second floor space for space for a new housing development

Continuum Detail – Infrastructure (Horizontal)

Funding to support improvements to public land and infrastructure that leverages and supports private investment in the community. These are implementation grants for shovel ready projects that propose to improve public infrastructure such as roadways, streets, bridges, culverts, water/sewer, other public utilities, etc. and are at least 75% designed. Investments will be targeted to projects that require the infrastructure improvements or expansion to support and/or facilitate new growth or address road safety issues. (If a project does not have 75% design completed, we encourage applicants to submit under the **Predevelopment and Permitting** section, which focuses on getting projects shovel ready.)

Projects in the Infrastructure (Horizontal) section of the Development Continuum may include:

- Design, Engineering, Permitting
- Bidding
- Construction/Construction Admin

Grant Type: Implementation grants for shovel-ready projects.

Grant Size: Potential for $500,000 - $5,000,000 awards

Programs: MassWorks

Example Projects:

- A request for water and sewer upgrades to a previously used site that will now be made into market rate housing.
- A request to update a culvert under a road way leading to new private development for mixed use that creates new industrial space and rental housing.
- A request to repair at-risk municipal bridges that affect evacuation routes and/or access to commercial centers or transportation nodes.

Continuum Detail – Housing Choice and Rural/Small Town

Addressing the housing crisis in Massachusetts is one of the explicit focuses of the Baker-Polito Administration. The Administration also understands that many of our Rural and Small Towns in Massachusetts work at a smaller scale for economic development. Therefore, the One Stop provides additional opportunities only for Housing Choice Communities and Rural and/or Small Towns.

- All Housing Choice and Rural and/or Small Town Communities are encouraged to submit projects through any of the appropriate categories in the Development Continuum, and will continue to receive priority consideration, including for set-aside capital funds and already established bonus points in various grant programs.
- Any Housing Choice Community or Rural and/or Small Town Community that has a capital project need that may not fall within one of the categories outlined in the One Stop is allowed to submit a project proposal for special consideration. Eligible communities are invited to complete the related "Other: Special Project" section of the full application to outline the proposed scope of work and answer the required additional questions.

Grant Type: Implementation grants.

Grant Size: Potential for $50,000 - $400,000 awards

Programs: Housing Choice Capital Grants; Rural and Small Town Development Fund

Eligible Applicants: Housing Choice Designated Communities; Rural and Small Towns with populations less than 7,000 or with a population density of less than 500 persons per square mile (measured by the latest US Census population count).

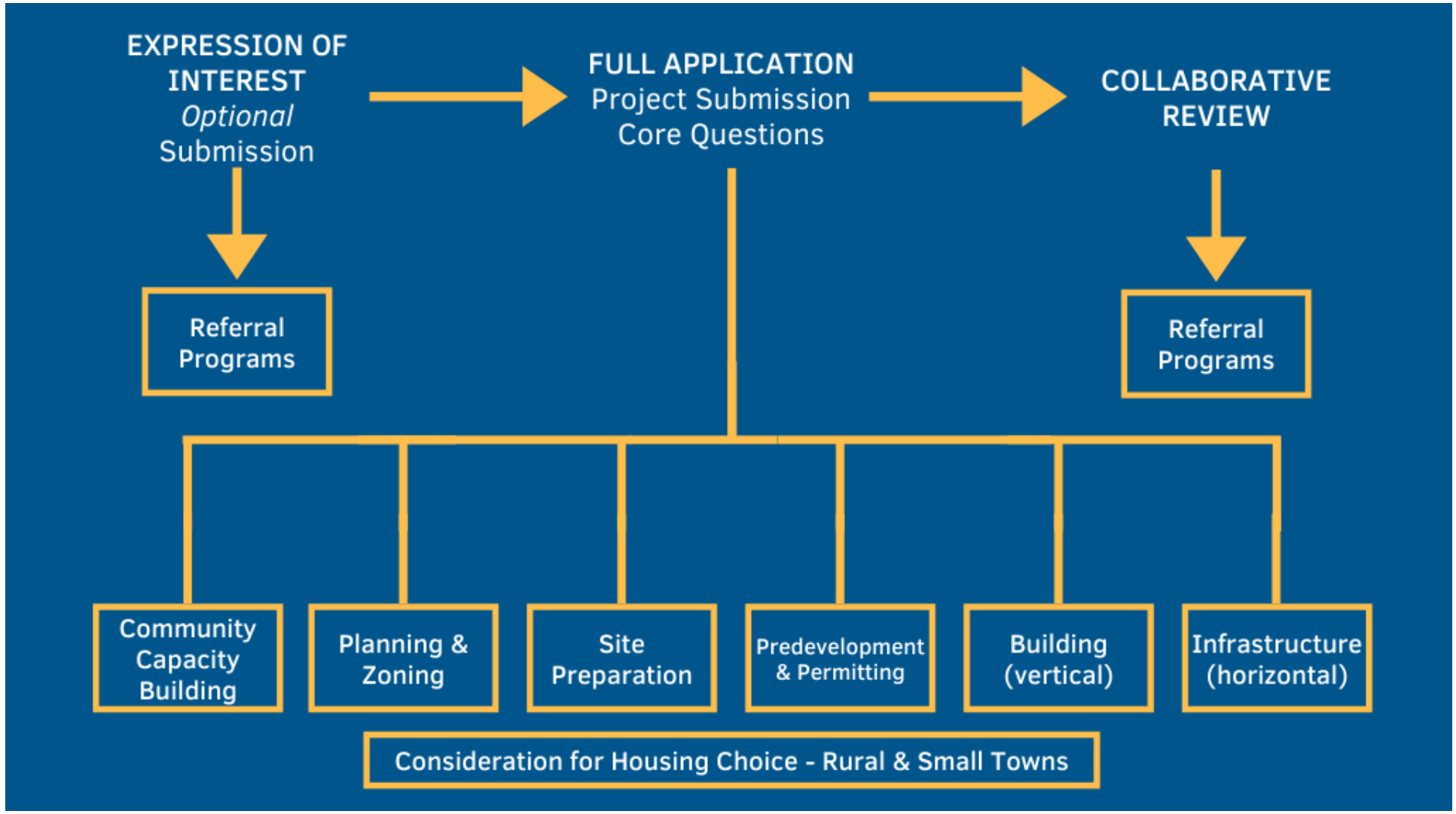
Example Projects - Housing Choice Capital Grant Communities:

- Design of sidewalks connecting residential development to commercial activities to promote walkability.
- Funding an innovative septic system for a small-scale residential project on municipal land that may be a model for other communities.

Example Projects - Rural/Small Town:

- Rehabilitation of an underutilized property in a rural community to bring housing back onto the market.
- Design or construction of a new water line connection to an adjacent town for an area served only by wells.

Community One Stop for Growth Process Overview



Application Outline

1. **Expression of Interest** *(Optional – highly recommended)*
   a. Applicant Information
   b. Applicant Background and Economic Development Goals
   c. Applicant Priorities and Project Overview(s)

2. **Full Application**
   a. **Project Core Information**
      - Applicant Information
      - Applicant Background and Economic Development Goals
      - Project Summary
      - Project Details
      - Site Information (if applicable)

   b. **Additional Questions for Each Specific Funding Type**
      - Project Scope
      - Project Budget
      - Other Specific Funding-Type Questions

   c. **Certification of Application Submission Authorization**

   d. **Supporting Attachments**

REMINDER

Applicants are able to submit multiple projects for consideration, but must submit **one application per project**.

For each project, applicants will fill out a single Core Information Section. Based on responses to the types of funding sought for the project, applicants will be offered additional question sections as applicable. The combination of Core and Additional Questions constitutes a single application, provided the entire application references a single project with a single project location.

The number of project applications submitted is not limited, but it is recommended that communities prioritize their requests to reflect the goals submitted in the Expression of Interest phase.

Example: *A municipality is working with a developer to renovate a publicly-owned building for housing. This will require both site remediation and fit-out of the space. The applicant fills out* ***one application:*** *the Core based on the holistic vision of the project, and Additional Information sections for both Site Preparation and Buildings (Vertical) funding sources.*

Example: *A municipality is interested in developing a Downtown Plan as well as producing engineering documents for a publicly-owned site on the outskirts of downtown. The applicant fills out* ***two applications****, one for each project: (1) the Core and Additional Information section for Planning and Zoning; and (2) the Core and Additional Information section for Predevelopment and Permitting.*

Application Detail – Expression of Interest *(OPTIONAL)*

- The Expression of Interest is an optional, but highly recommended step. It gives applicants who are considering submitting a Full Application the opportunity to articulate their overall goals, objectives, and preparedness as it relates to housing and economic development.
  - **Applicant Information** asks for basic contact information.
  - **Applicant Background and Economic Development Goals** allows prospective applicants to outline the overall goals and economic development outlook for the organization and community; offers applicant opportunity to share priorities, goals, and challenges with their project and the project's public purpose.
  - **Applicant Priorities and Project Overview(s)** applicants can get guidance on up to five top priority projects or initiatives that the applicant intends to submit in a Full Application

Submitting an Expression of Interest gives applicants the opportunity to receive feedback and guidance from the state about their priority projects or initiatives and economic development goals, before submitting a Full Application. State reviewers will include EOHED, DHCD, MDFA, DLS, DOT, and EEA.

Full Application Detail – Core Questions

- The Core Questions in the Full Application are mandatory questions that all applicants must answer for every project in order to apply for funding.
  - **Applicant Information** asks for basic contact information. *(Autofill from Expression of Interest)*
  - **Applicant Background and Economic Development Goals** allows prospective applicants to outline the overall goals and economic development outlook for the organization and community; offers applicant opportunity to share priorities, goals, and challenges with their project and the project's public purpose. *(Autofill from Expression of Interest)*
  - **Project Summary** asks the applicant for high-level information about the project. Applicants will describe their project, the funding request and total budget, and provide additional information about the project.
  - **Project Details** asks for a project narrative, leadership and ability to execute, progress to date, timelines, total funding requests, and anticipated outcomes.
  - **Site Information** is required for projects in the Site Preparation, Predevelopment & Permitting, Building, and Infrastructure categories, including project address, parcel ID, site control, zoning, and questions about climate mitigation and resiliency.

Full Application Detail – Additional Questions

- The Additional Questions in the Full Application zero in on specific sections of the Development Continuum. Each section on the Continuum has its own unique set of questions, beyond those outlined in the mandatory Core.

  - **Project Scope** asks applicant to provide details about the goals and type of the specific project, as well as details on the specific project outcome to establish the project scope. It may ask for project designs, drawings, cost estimates and other documentation to support the stated scope.

  - **Project Budget** asks the applicant to provide a detailed breakdown of project costs, use of granting funding, and other committed funding, if applicable for funding type.

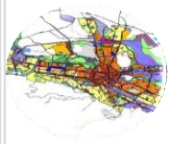
  - **Other Specific Funding-Type Questions** cover additional questions specific to the funding type, including project readiness, permitting or zoning, project leadership, need and other estimates.

Core Review Criteria

All applications submitted through the One Stop will be reviewed by program staff to determine which of the One Stop programs is best suited to achieve the applicant's objective. This review will include an initial screening based on statutory and regulatory eligibility requirements, and program guidance. All applications will then be evaluated based on the following core review criteria:

- **Achievable Project Scope:** Is the project feasible and achievable?
- **Ability to Execute & Leadership:** Does the project have appropriate leadership with the requisite experience and ability to execute the project?
- **Achievable Timeline:** Is the timeline of the project reasonable and achievable?
- **Reasonable Budget, Showing Commitment**: Is the project budget reasonable? Preference will be given to projects that leverage funding outside of the requested grant funds, but outside funding is not a prerequisite.
- **Outcomes and Impact:** What are the projected outcomes of this project and the impact this project may have on the community? Outcomes related to equitable opportunity and environmental impact will also be taken into consideration.
- **Progress to Date, Showing Commitment:** Does the applicant show commitment to the project through past activity and investment?

Eligibility in Continuum Funding Categories

Applicant Type	Community Capacity Building	 Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Predevelopment & Permitting	Buildings (vertical)	Infrastructure (horizontal)
Public Entity						
Municipal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other Public	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Non-Public Entity						
Non-Public Not-For-Profit	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Non-Public For-Profit				✓	✓	

Also, if eligible: Housing Choice and Rural and/or Small Towns

- **All types of public entities are welcome and encouraged to submit a Community One Stop for Growth application.** Municipalities and other municipal entities, such as redevelopment and housing authorities, will have access to all grants administered through the One Stop process.
- **Non-municipal public entities also are eligible to apply to the One Stop.** However, any non-municipal applicant is encouraged to open a discussion with their municipal leadership to ensure coordination and local support.
- **Non-public entities may submit a One Stop application jointly with a public entity**, but will be considered for funding only under those programs that allow for financial assistance to private entities.
- **All applications should include a letter of support from the municipal chief executive officer** or, if not available, a letter from the applicant explaining why the municipal letter was not forthcoming.

Community One Stop for Growth – Referral Process

Applicants will have **two opportunities** during the Community One Stop for Growth cycle to be referred to additional programs for funding consideration.

After submitting an Expression of Interest, applicants will be referred to relevant grant programs aligned with Community One Stop for Growth if a project or priority may be able to access those funds. Communities can also be referred to DOT or EEA programs, where appropriate.

After submitting a Full Application, applicants will also be referred to relevant grant programs, if the project(s) may be able to use additional funds.

REFERRAL PROGRAMS ALIGNED WITH COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
- Seaport Economic Council
- Massachusetts Dredging Program

Department of Housing and Community Development
- Community Development Block Grants (non-entitlement communities)
- Urban Renewal

MassDevelopment
- Transformative Development Initiative (TDI)
- Commonwealth Places
- Real Estate Services
- Collaborative Workspaces

Massachusetts Office of Business Development
- Regional Economic Development Organizations
- Economic Development Incentive Program, Vacant Storefronts Program
- Community Development Capital Program

Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC)
- Technical Assistance Grant Program

Community Compact

What to Expect: Community One Stop for Growth Phases and Timeline

JAN

- **Virtual Sessions (January – February)** – Three webinars will be available to applicants prior to submitting any application materials, covering an overview of the Community One Stop for Growth, One Stop application guidance, and using the Agate technology platform.
- **Expression of Interest and Guidance (February – April)** – An opportunity for the applicant to submit an overview of priorities and goals as well as highlight key projects. The Expression of Interest will be reviewed by EOHED, DHCD, MDFA, DLS, DOT, and EEA. Applicants can receive feedback and guidance from the State on how to strengthen an application and on a community's overall economic development strategy, as well as referrals to thirteen (13) aligned grant programs.
- **Full Application (May – June)** – Single application portal allowing access to ten (10) integrated grant programs that will accept the full application.
- **Review and Evaluation (June – September)** – State agencies review applications and also engage in joint review of grants among agencies and other key reviewers.
- **Notification of Awards and Referrals (October – November)** – Community One Stop for Growth partners will review all applications and make determinations of grant amounts based upon availability of funds and notify applicants. Applicants may be referred to other relevant grant programs aligned with the One Stop.
- **Contracting (November – December)** – State agencies work with successful applicants to execute a funding contract and issue awards.

NOV

- **Reporting (Annual, year following award)** – Awarded entities report on their activities in line with contracting terms.

In Summary: Community One Stop for Growth Process Benefits

The Community One Stop for Growth process benefits communities as they pursue state funding to realize their housing and economic development goals:

- **Ability to be considered for more than one grant program simultaneously**, saving time on research and applications to different agencies and programs.
- **Guidance and State partnerships,** allowing applicants to receive key feedback before completing a full application, and allowing the State to holistically and directly engage with local leadership.
- **Direct referrals to additional programs** that applicants may realize could support their priorities.
- **Removal of redundant legacy program processes and questions** to streamline the application experience.
- **A full view by program staff of community priorities**, allowing the state to understand community vision beyond four corners of a single, discrete application.
- **Collaborative review,** allowing for State funding coordination and enhanced State awareness and support for community development goals.

Webinar 2 is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2nd at 12 pm