



Community Planning Grant Program

Program Information and Guidelines FY2022

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

Community Planning Grant Program FY 2022

Introduction

The Baker-Polito administration is pleased to provide a new grant program to provide communities funding for technical assistance for Community Planning projects.

Community Planning grants may be used for a variety of activities related to land use, such as 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. These are planning grants, and projects must use the funds to produce a planning document.

Grants in this category will likely be \$25,000-\$75,000. Please see program guidelines, linked in appendix for more details.

Examples of these projects include:

- 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.
- 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

Community Planning Grant Evaluation Criteria FY 2022

Grant proposals will be scored for the responsiveness to the following 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 is not required.
- **Outcomes and Impact:** Does the project promote housing production or address fair housing issues? 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.
- **Ability to Implement.** Does the applicant show the planning project is sustainable and can implement recommendations?
- **Responsiveness to the project's support of the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles.** See Appendix 1 for a description of these principles.

Eligible Applicants: All Massachusetts municipalities are eligible for consideration of an FY 2022 Planning and Zoning grant.

Use of Funds: Grants will fund professional services to complete Planning or Zoning projects. **Projects must be completed by June 30, 2022.**

Maximum Award Amount: \$75,000 is the maximum grant award. DHCD reserves the right to reduce the amount of the award from the original request. Funding availability is subject to approval of state budgets.

Community One Stop for Growth Application

This new program will be accepting proposals through a new application process – The **Community One Stop for Growth** – which is a single application portal and collaborative review process for several state grant programs that make targeted investments based on a housing and economic development continuum.

The Community One Stop for Growth application has been created through a partnership among the Executive Office of Housing and Community Development (EOHED), Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) and MassDevelopment. The funding round will open in January 2021 with a series of informational webinars. Prospective applicants will be able to submit an **Expression of Interest**, through April 2, 2021, outlining priority projects to receive feedback and suggestions on the best path for submitting proposals through a **Full Application** for funding consideration. Full Applications will be due by June 4, 2021.

The new Community One Stop for Growth application 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. The application is organized into the following sections:

- Core Questions (Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4), plus site information, if applicable,
- Additional Questions (Sections 5 through 10), based on the development continuum and the project components selected by the applicant,
- Additional Questions for Special Projects (Sections 11 and 12). only for communities designated as Housing Choice, Rural, and/or Small Town,
- Certification of Application Submission Authority (Section 13),
- Required Attachments (Section 14), primary repository for required attachments, and
- Other Attachments (Section 15), for attachments related to special projects.

A full proposal packet for consideration for **Planning and Zoning** funding must include complete responses to all applicable questions in the following sections:

Section 1 - Applicant Information: Identifying information of the applicant, and partners, if applicable.

Section 2 - Applicant / Community Background: Information about the applicant main goals, challenges, and past projects. Section seeks information about the community's engagement in state initiatives and includes a checklist of various economic and housing development tools and strategies.

Section 3 - Project Summary: Identification of all the categories for which the applicant seeks funding support.

Section 4 - Project Details / Core Information: Main project narrative and questions about leadership and ability to execute the project as well as progress to date. Includes questions related to the project timeline and anticipated outcomes. Applicants to the Infrastructure category must complete the Site Information questions, which include identification of the specific site, ownership, zoning, as well as responses to the climate resiliency questions.

Section 6 - Community Planning Additional Questions: This section is where applicants will provide detail about the proposed project, outcomes, leadership and implementation.

Section 13 - Certification of Application Submission Authority: Signature page certifying the authority to submit the application on behalf of the entity and attesting that all responses are true and accurate.

Section 14 - Attachments: This section is for uploading attachments. Planning and Zoning Grant applicants will need to upload files as follows:

Section - Attachment Name	Referenced Question #	Description
Summary: Municipal CEO Letter	3.16	Letter from the municipal CEO outlining support for the applicant and/or proposed project.
Community Planning: Project Description	6.3	Map, concept drawing illustrating the project area
Community Planning: Budget	6.7	Cost estimates from professional service providers

Applicants may also submit optional attachments such as, other site photos or illustrations and general support letters. However, these will 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 category. 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.

Grant Distribution and Invoicing: Granted funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursement requests should be submitted at least quarterly. 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.

Contract with DHCD and Award of Funds: Successful applicants must 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 date of the grant award announcement. If selected, the municipality 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.

A link to these forms can be found [here](#).

APPENDIX 1: MASSACHUSETTS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Concentrate Development and Mix Uses – Support the revitalization of city and town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that is compact, conserves land, protects historic resources, and integrates uses. Encourage remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure rather than new construction in undeveloped areas. Create pedestrian friendly districts and neighborhoods that mix commercial, civic, cultural, educational, and recreational activities with open spaces and homes.

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.

Make Efficient Decisions – Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, predictable, coordinated, and timely in accordance with smart growth and environmental stewardship.

Protect Land and Ecosystems – Protect and restore environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, agricultural lands, critical habitats, wetlands and water resources, and cultural and historic landscapes. Increase the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces and recreational opportunities.

Use Natural Resources Wisely – Construct and promote developments, buildings, and infrastructure that conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, and materials.

Expand Housing Opportunities – Support the construction and rehabilitation of homes to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types. Build homes near jobs, transit, and where services are available. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily and smaller single-family homes, in a way that is compatible with a community's character and vision and with providing new housing choices for people of all means.

Provide Transportation Choice – Maintain and expand transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality. Prioritize rail, bus, boat, rapid and surface transit, shared-vehicle and shared-ride services, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in existing and new passenger and freight transportation infrastructure that supports sound economic development consistent with smart growth objectives.

Increase Job and Business Opportunities – Attract businesses and jobs to locations near housing, infrastructure, and transportation options. Promote economic development in industry clusters. Expand access to education, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of local businesses, including sustainable natural resource-based businesses, such as agriculture, forestry, clean energy technology, and fisheries.

Promote Clean Energy – Maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. Support energy conservation strategies, local clean power generation, distributed generation technologies, and innovative industries. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consumption of fossil fuels.

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 new 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 any of the past three MassWorks rounds (2018-2020) 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 IntelliGrants system in the past three years, 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.