

Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey



Request for Proposal (RFP)

**Abandoned Housing Initiative
Technology to Enrich Community Housing
(TECH) Grant
FY 2019-2020**

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Utilizing funds recovered by the Office of Massachusetts Attorney General (AGO) through a nationwide state-federal settlement resolving allegations that certain banks engaged in unlawful foreclosure practices on residential properties in Massachusetts, Attorney General Maura Healey is pleased to launch the **Abandoned Housing Initiative Technology to Enrich Community Housing (TECH) Grant**. In keeping with the mission of the Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI) to ensure safer neighborhoods through blight reduction and the creation of safe, habitable homes, grant awards made under TECH will provide assistance to communities that suffer from the negative health and economic impacts of severely blighted residential properties.

Program Priorities

Abandoned and blighted properties that exist in serious states of disrepair create community safety hazards, drag down surrounding property values, and often produce large municipal tax delinquencies. Municipalities often have an uphill battle when seeking to both prevent blight in distressed areas and marshal appropriate code enforcement responses to existing problems while operating with limited resources.

Specialized software products can assist municipalities in compiling and organizing relevant code enforcement data into streamlined databases. The value of this data is multiplied when databases are easily combined and shared with additional municipal departments, saving cities and towns time and money. The utilization of improved municipal datasets in combination with visualization tools, improved software-based workflow processes, and other publicly available datasets provides a concrete foundation from which municipalities can implement strategic preventative code enforcement measures while improving traditional remedial activities.

The TECH grant is designed to defray municipal expenses related to the initial adoption and implementation of code enforcement software. Additionally, TECH will allow for closer municipal collaboration and data sharing with the AGO on joint receivership cases through shared case management functionality.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for funding include:

- Massachusetts municipal government;
- Massachusetts regional code enforcement entity.

Applicants must have an active partnership with AHI to be considered eligible. Prospective partners to AHI may inquire about their eligibility status directly at AbandonedHousing@state.ma.us.

Funding

This call for proposals is subject to and contingent upon the availability of funds. A total of up to \$200,000 will be available through TECH for multiple applicants. Award amounts may vary between successful applicants and awards will not exceed \$25,000 per successful applicant for the entirety of the grant term. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis until available funds have been allocated. Individual grant awards to successful applicants will be determined at the sole discretion of the AGO.

TECH is designed to pay for a variable portion of the award recipient's financial liability for the approved software vendor's contracted services over two years and is not intended to cover the full cost of software implementation and utilization over the grant term or any usage beyond the grant term. The grant is restricted to funding the adoption or implementation of new software or new software capabilities. It is not intended to reimburse communities for established software usage or contracts.

Under TECH, grant awards may be spent on the following costs associated with software adoption and usage:

- Price of software purchase or software license for grant term;
- Vendor implementation costs;
- Reasonable vendor product support costs for grant term;
- Additional software adoption or usage costs approved in writing by the AGO.

Disbursement

Award disbursements will be structured as percentage payments of the award recipient's contracted financial liability to the software vendor for AGO-approved services. Payments will be disbursed in the following manner:

- Year 1 payment, after proof of purchase agreement or executed contract with the software vendor has been provided:
 - Up to 75% of approved costs for Year 1, not to exceed \$15,000;
- Year 2 payment:
 - Up to 50% of approved costs for Year 2, not to exceed \$10,000.
 - The second disbursement will be made one year after the first disbursement if the following three criteria have been met:
 - i. Award recipient has provided consistent proof of software implementation via mandatory quarterly reporting over the first year of the grant term;
 - ii. Award recipient confirms its continued intent to implement and/or utilize software per its implementation plan for the remainder of the grant term;
 - iii. Award recipient submits proof of one of the following:
 - 1. Prior purchase agreement or contract showing that the award recipient is licensed to use the software for the remainder of the grant term;
 - 2. New purchase agreement or executed contract showing that the

award recipient is licensed to use the software for the remainder of the grant term if the original agreement has expired or changed terms;

3. Executed contract extension showing that the award recipient is licensed to use the software for the remainder of the grant term.

Duration

Grants will be awarded for two years from either: (1) the formal contract start date between the award recipient and the approved software vendor; or (2) the award recipient's formal acceptance of award. After the formal award notification, the award recipient must enter into a contract with the software vendor for AGO-approved services within 60 days of the award date. If a contract has not been executed between the award recipient and software vendor within 60 days, the award may be canceled at the sole discretion of the AGO.

If, at any point during the grant term, the purchase agreement or contract is canceled, terminated, or otherwise voided, the award recipient must promptly notify the AGO and any unexpended grant funds must be returned to the AGO within 60 days. All unexpended grant funds remaining at the end of the grant term must be promptly returned to the AGO by the award recipient.

Responsibilities of Award Recipients

Award recipients are responsible for identifying a software product that will improve current operations or create new capacity in the following core areas:

- Traditional code enforcement efforts and remedial activities;
- Predictive analytics through mapping, reporting, and other relevant tools;
- Data sharing and integration between relevant municipal departments;
- Property-level case management and workflow efficiency;
- Joint municipal/AGO electronic case referral and management system for abandoned residential properties escalated to AHI for receivership action.

Award recipients will refer to the FY 2019-2020 Technology to Enrich Community Housing Grant Software Requirements Form for a detailed list of specific software requirements.

The award recipient will be obligated to maintain tight financial controls over, and account for the expenditure of, grant funds, including:

- Compiling all data relative to funded programming;
- Ongoing communications and quality control;
- Provision of quarterly program/fiscal reports to the AGO on a timely basis;
- Completion of end-of-grant program, fiscal, and utilization reports;
- Assurance that projects funded under this program are a part of a municipally-supported and AGO-approved code enforcement development program and community development plan.

Software vendor must be willing to implement a joint municipal/AGO electronic case referral and management system as part of any software agreement. The aforementioned case referral and management system must be included in the executed contract between the award recipient and vendor, and this case referral and management system cannot be charged at additional expense to the AGO under the grant term.

Submission Instructions

- Proposals must be delivered electronically through the AGO's online grant application process.
- Interested applicants may access the application here: <https://www.mass.gov/grant-opportunities>.
- Applications will not be accepted in any other format.
- New applicants will be asked to create a free online account. Any applicant that has applied for any grant using the online grant management system may log into its existing account.
- Once applicants have started an application, the application may be saved and returned to later.
- Confirmation of Receipt: Applicants typically receive an email confirmation within 48 business hours; if one is not received please call 617-963-2291 for further instructions and assistance.

Evaluation

All funding decisions and amounts of funding will be made at the sole discretion of the AGO. Applicants may receive no funding or less funding than requested. Some of the criteria utilized in the selection process include the applicant's ability to provide:

- Documented data-driven evidence of need;
- Detailed description of software's ability to improve applicant's code enforcement capacity from previous systems;
- Stated long-term intent to integrate the software into daily code enforcement operations.

Questions

Programmatic questions regarding this RFP may be submitted to AbandonedHousing@state.ma.us. All other questions may be submitted to agogrants@state.ma.us. When submitting your question(s), please include "Technology to Enrich Community Housing 2019" in the email subject line. Questions received and answers provided regarding this RFP will be posted on the AGO's website here: <https://www.mass.gov/grant-opportunities>.

Reasonable Accommodation

Applicants that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of the Call for Applications information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to agogrants@state.ma.us.

Required Commonwealth Contract Documents for Successful Grantees

These documents are listed for informational purposes and should not be submitted with the grant application. Successful applicants will be required to complete these documents within the deadline established at the time of the notification of grant award. No money will be disbursed unless the necessary documents are submitted by the deadlines established.

- Standard Contract Form
- Scope of Services Agreement
- Commonwealth Terms and Conditions
- Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing
- Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (W-9)
- Electronic Funds Transfer Form.

Public Records

All responses and information submitted in response to this RFP are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66, § 10, and c. 4, § 7, cl. 26. Applicants should not include any protected personal information.

Updates to this RFP

Any changes/corrections to any part to this RFP will be posted on <https://www.mass.gov/grant-opportunities>. It is the applicant's responsibility to check this web page frequently for any updates.