



MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program

Program Information and Guidelines FY2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Maura T. Healey, Governor | Kimberley Driscoll, Lt. Governor | Yvonne Hao, Secretary

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative FY2025 Technical Assistance Program

The MA Downtown Initiative Technical Initiative Program is part of the [Community One Stop for Growth](#), a single application portal and collaborative review process of community and economic development grant programs that make targeted investments based on a Development Continuum. It is designed to allow applicants to apply for consideration of multiple sources of funding to support multiple phases and facets of a project. For more information, including key dates, frequently asked questions, and instructions on submitting an Expression of Interest and Full Application, please visit www.mass.gov/onestop.

The One Stop Full Application is organized into the following sections:

- Form 1 – Applicant Information
- Form 2 – Project Information
- Form 3 – Certification of Application Submission Authority

In order to be considered for MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance funding, applicants must include complete responses to all required questions.

Additional Information

- For information on the One Stop, including key dates, frequently asked questions, and instructions on submitting an Expression of Interest and Full Application, please visit www.mass.gov/onestop.
- The Expression of Interest is an optional, but highly recommended form that allows an applicant to seek guidance from the One Stop partner agencies. Applicants are encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest prior to starting their Full Application(s). Visit the [One Stop Expression of Interest webpage](#) for more information and access to the Expression of Interest form.
- 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. The application form template and link to the portal will also be available on the [One Stop webpage](#).
- Eligible applicants may submit funding requests for more than one project in the same round. However, a separate application 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.
- EOED reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant or external sources as may be necessary in order to complete the application review. EOED also reserves the right to recommend partial grant awards, as deemed appropriate.

I. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All 351 communities in the Commonwealth are eligible to apply.

II. USE OF FUNDS

Funds are to be used exclusively for technical assistance in the form of consultant services to address a specific issue in the categories listed in Section V. **The consultant used to deliver the technical assistance will be chosen by MDI staff from a list of pre-qualified consultants. The consultant is paid through the MDI program.** A grantee community can expect its consultant to develop a specific scope of services that may include research, analysis, preliminary design ideas, and a strategic outline of next steps. The community and consultant must agree upon a final product resulting from the technical assistance. In addition, the community is responsible for involving all pertinent stakeholders, as appropriate, in the process of delivering the technical assistance. Communities must agree to share the final products with EOED and with other communities through reports, meetings and workshops/webinars, and to highlight these activities on the web, in print or using other media outlets.

The grant does not pay for staff salaries, software, or physical improvements.

IV. MAXIMUM AWARD AMOUNT

Consultant services up to \$25,000 per award will be provided. EOED reserves the right to reduce the amount of the award from the original request.

The technical assistance provided is limited. Additional awards may be made at the discretion of the Secretary. EOED will fund as many qualifying projects as are possible from the funds available.

V. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR FUNDING

Only one project per municipality will be reviewed under MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program.

Applications will be accepted in the following categories:

- **District Management- Business Improvement District (BID) or Volunteer-based Organization:**
Requests for assistance may address any aspect of creating a BID, PBD or a Volunteer- based Organization, including but not limited to review of the proposed district, development of a local strategy for implementation of a district management option.
- **Design:**
Requests for assistance may address any design issues related to downtown or town center revitalization, including but not limited to preliminary design guidelines, sign and facade program, concepts for streetscape design.
- **Economics of Downtown:**
Requests for assistance may address any economic development issue related to downtown or town center revitalization, including but not limited to a review of market areas for the downtown, feasibility studies, building reuse, or business development.
- **Economic Equity:**

Requests for assistance may address assisting a community with developing approaches for creating a process for embedding equity and inclusion into transformational community-based economic development, including but not limited to: guiding communities through the RRP Equity Toolkit or a portion of the toolkit, programs that support creating a more diverse small business community in the downtown or town center.

- **Housing:**

Requests for assistance may address any aspect of determining how to increase housing in the downtown or town center, including but not limited to a housing plan, market analysis for suitable housing mix, zoning recommendations, and second story development assistance.

- **Downtown Mobility:**

Requests for technical assistance addressing downtown mobility will range from a parking management plan, creation of a parking benefit district, analysis of existing and future parking needs, walkability plan, trolley feasibility plan, bus route analysis, and other requests that address improving mobility in a downtown.

- **Small Business Support/E-commerce:**

Requests for small business support may address any aspect of providing technical assistance to your downtown businesses. This could include workshops, small group training, or one-on-one onsite consultations with 6-8 businesses. It could also be used to support the entirety of businesses in your commercial district with marketing plan, customer building plan and other activities in support of small businesses. Funds could be used to develop a program that assists small business in your downtown to create an on-line presence. Please contact Emmy Hahn to discuss your application.

- **Wayfinding/Branding:**

Requests for assistance may address any aspect of developing a public wayfinding system and the creation of a distinguishable image or logo that carries through the various streetscape elements, including but not limited to creation of public design elements that will be used throughout the downtown, way finding plan, cost analysis for implementation, and branding of a downtown through historic elements.

- **Placemaking:**

Requests for assistance may address any aspect of developing a placemaking series of events to a plan for implementation. The narrative should explain the role that the request for placemaking plan or concept events will have on strengthening the economic or social fabric of the downtown area.

It is not required but recommended that applicants discuss their application with the program coordinator, Emmy Hahn (Elizabeth.hahn@mass.gov).

It is EOED's intention to award at least one grant in each category. If an insufficient number of grants are received in any of the categories, or application scores are significantly lower in one or more categories, EOED reserves the right to adjust the awards as needed.

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed to determine overall consistency with the goals of the MDI, support of the Executive Office of Economic Development and the Commonwealth's priorities and initiatives, and impact on local downtown/town/village center revitalization efforts. EOED will evaluate applications based on the following:

- Achievable Project Scope
- Ability to Execute and Leadership
- Achievable Timeline
- Reasonable Budget, Showing Commitment
- Outcomes and Impact
- Progress to Date, Showing Commitment
- Responsiveness [to support of Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles]

APPENDIX: ACCESSING THE ONLINE APPLICATION

All applications to the MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance 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, accessed at <https://eohed.intelligrants.com>. A user account is required. Below are the steps for getting into the system.

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.

Current Admin Users – Municipal CEOs and/or designees who have used the IGX system in past rounds may use their existing usernames to access the system. Applicants that have forgotten their username and/or password must use the "Forgot Username/Password" function on the IGX login page.

New Organizations – If your organization has not accessed the system in the past, a new registration is required. This should be done by the municipal CEO and/or a designee. Click the “New Organization? 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.

New User in Existing Organizations – 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.

Creating a new Full Application or Expression of Interest – Once accounts are registered and/or approved, a Grant Administrator can create an Expression of Interest or Full 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. Only a Grant Administrator will be able to create and submit the Expression of Interest and Full 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, Grant Administrators may submit the Full Application by selection the “Submit Full Application” option at the bottom of the left side menu, 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, the applicant may contact onestop@mass.gov 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. Once reopened, it is the responsibility of the applicant to resubmit prior to the deadline.