



99 High Street
Boston, MA 02110
@MassDev | massdevelopment.com

Underutilized Properties Program

Program Information and Guidelines

Underutilized Properties Program – Community One Stop Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION

A. About the Program

The 2021 Economic Development Bill authorizes \$40M for the Underutilized Properties Program, to be administered by MassDevelopment, for the purpose of funding “projects that will improve, rehabilitate or redevelop blighted, abandoned, vacant or underutilized properties to achieve the public purposes of eliminating blight, increasing housing production, supporting economic development projects, increasing the number of commercial buildings accessible to persons with disabilities.” The program focuses on funding capital improvements and code compliance projects, along with the design of these improvements.

B. Community One Stop for Growth

The program will be accepting proposals through the **Community One Stop for Growth**, 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 Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) administers the Community One Stop for Growth in partnership with the Department of Housing & Community Development and MassDevelopment. Prospective applicants will be able to submit an **Expression of Interest** that outlines priority projects in order to receive feedback and suggestions on the best path for submitting proposals through a **Full Application** for funding consideration. Please refer to the One Stop website for Expression of Interest and Full Application timelines: mass.gov/onestop.

II. PROGRAM FEATURES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Program Highlights

Maximum Award	No set maximum but typical awards are anticipated to range from \$50,000 to \$1,000,000.
Grant Use	Building Work and Predevelopment Activities
Project Duration	Project timeline may exceed one (1) year.
Project focus examples	Funding for capital improvements essential to the occupancy or increased occupancy of existing structures including building stabilization, roof repair, HVAC system improvements, tenant improvements, compliance with

	building code(s), fire/life safety system regulations, accessibility requirements, seismic code and other similar regulations.
Eligible communities	All municipalities are eligible to apply.
Eligible lead applicant	Municipalities, municipal agencies or authorities, economic development and industrial corporations, economic development authorities, non-profit entities and private-sector entities.

B. Eligible Applicants and Projects

Through the Community One Stop, municipalities, municipal agencies or authorities, economic development and industrial corporations, economic development authorities, non-profit entities and for-profit entities can apply for Underutilized Property Program funding. All applications must include a letter of support from the municipality clearly articulating the proposed funding’s public purpose/ benefit. Applicants must be able to demonstrate ownership of the property that would benefit from grant funding. For-profit entities will need to make clear the public purposes advanced by their proposed funding request.

Eligible Uses of Program Funds fall under the Buildings Development Continuum category, including Capital Improvements and Pre-Development: Buildings, which are further defined below.

Capital Improvements

Grant funds may be used for capital improvements that are essential to the occupancy or increased occupancy of existing structures. Such improvements may address building stabilization, roof repair, HVAC system improvements (provided that they are fully integrated elements of a building structure or site), tenant improvements and fit out expenses and other similar purposes. Funds may also be used to facilitate compliance with building code(s), fire/life safety system regulations, accessibility requirements, seismic code and other similar regulations.

Pre-Development: Buildings

Grant funds may be used to engage the services of architects, engineers, landscape architects and other related professionals to assess building conditions and to develop design and

construction documents for capital improvement, code compliance and limited demolition projects described above. Available assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following types of activities:

- Building Condition Studies
- Structural Engineering Reports
- Code Compliance Studies
- Development Feasibility Studies
- Indoor Survey
- Seismic Code Assessments
- Architectural Design
- Other similar uses

III. APPLICATION AND EVALUATION

A. Application Components

The Community One Stop for Growth 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 and 2), plus site information, if applicable
- Additional Questions (Sections 3 through 7), based on the development continuum and the project components selected by the applicant
- Additional Questions for Housing Choice Communities (Sections 8), only for communities designated as Housing Choice
- Certification of Application Submission Authority (Section 9)
- Other Attachments (Section 10), for attachments related to special projects.

A full proposal packet for consideration of Underutilized Properties Program funding must include complete responses to all applicable questions in the following sections:

Core Questions (Sections 1 and 2), plus site information, if applicable,

- **Section 1 - Applicant Information/Background**: Identifying information of the applicant, and partners, if applicable.
- **Section 2 - Project Information**: In this section, applicants will provide general project information, such as the project name, description, leadership and the ability to execute the project, timeline and anticipated outcomes. Applicant will indicate the category of funding for which they would like the project to be considered in question 2.1, which

will drive additional questions. Those applying to the Site Preparation, Buildings and Infrastructure categories must complete the Site Information questions, which include identification of the specific site, ownership, and zoning.

Additional Questions (Sections 3 through 8), based on the development continuum and the project components selected by the applicant in Section 2, Question 2.1.

- **Section 6 – Building Additional Questions**: This section is where applicants will provide detail about the specific capital building project for which funding is requested. Includes detailed scope(s) of work, public purpose, details about the property, planned use, and budget.

Certification of Application Submission Authority (Section 9),

- **Section 9 - Certification of Application Submission Authority**: Signature page certifying the authority to submit the application on behalf of the applying entity, and attesting that all responses are true and accurate.

Other/Optional Attachments (Section 10),

- **Section 10 - Other/Optional Attachments**: This section allows submit other attachments to support the application, including other site images, partner letters or support letters. Please note that these items will generally not be scored or assessed as part of the formal evaluation of the proposal.

IMPORTANT: The sections outlined above relate only to the Buildings 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.

B. Application Evaluation and Scoring Overview:

MassDevelopment will consider the following criteria when reviewing Underutilized Properties Program applications. While few sites will satisfy every criterion, applications will be reviewed on a relative basis. Review criteria will be used to assess the likelihood of requested funding to advance a project towards increased occupancy and resulting public benefits.

- **Eligibility**
The proposed use of the grant funds must be consistent with the categories of eligible uses described above. The applicant must be able to demonstrate ownership of the property that would benefit from grant funding.
- **Public Purpose**
The applicant should demonstrate how the use of grant funds will enhance the public

purpose goals in the program's establishing legislation including, but not limited to, eliminating blight, supporting the economic vitality of downtowns and town centers, facilitating the production of workforce and low-income housing and increasing the number of commercial buildings accessible to persons with disabilities.

- **Capacity and Readiness**

Projects that can be completed within the fiscal year are preferred. Except for requests for design funding, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed improvements have been designed and permitted such that work can start within two months of a grant award. Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate their experience (or the experience of their design and construction team) with similar projects.

- **Project Benefits**

In addition to enhancing the public purposes set forth in the statute, the applicant must demonstrate the economic benefits of the funded improvements in terms of jobs/housing units enabled by the increased occupancy as well as spill-over benefits for the surrounding community.

- **Financial Need**

Applicants must be able to demonstrate the financial need for the support.

- **Diversity**

Awards will reflect the geographic and demographic diversity within the Commonwealth (statutory language).

MassDevelopment staff will determine if all statutory and program guidelines are met.

A Review Committee will independently review and score the applications. Note that reviewers may request additional information from any or all relevant sources during the application review process.

For municipalities or other public entities, community development corporations and non-profit entities, funding will take the form of a grant. In the case of for-profit entities, assistance will take the form of a recoverable grant. Grant funds will be recoverable in the event that the property, or any portion thereof, is sold or otherwise conveyed within five years of the execution of the grant agreement.

Funds will be disbursed on an invoice basis. Grant funds cannot be used to pay for work completed prior to executing a grant agreement or work that is not in an approved work plan attached to the grant agreement.

C. Award Decisions

Applicants that are approved for funding will receive a commitment letter outlining the grant amount and any conditions of the award. All awards are subject to annual state budget appropriation and contingent upon full execution of a contract. Applicants that are not recommended for funding during the round will also be notified in writing, and invited to request feedback about their proposal, if interested.

D. Additional Information

- 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 EOHED webpage.
- Eligible applicants may submit funding requests for more than one Underutilized Properties Program 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.
- MassDevelopment reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant or external sources as may be necessary in order to complete the application review. MassDevelopment also reserves the right to recommend partial grant awards, as deemed appropriate.