

Fiscal Year 2021 Grant Proposal
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program
Subject to state appropriation

RFP Release Date: **October 27, 2020**

Proposal Deadline: **November 20, 2020 by 4:00 p.m.**
Late applications will not be accepted.

Email proposal to: Nhat.Le@mass.gov
Cc: Applicable MOBD Regional Director.

Address: MA Office of Business Development
136 Blackstone St, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

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Announcement and Overview

The Massachusetts Office of Business Development is accepting proposals for the Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2021. MOBD is seeking proposals from eligible organizations as defined in M.G.L. Chapter 23A, Section 3K to collaborate with MOBD and support the businesses in the Commonwealth, aligning with the Commonwealth's *Economic Development Bill – Partnerships for Growth*, including but not limiting to supporting regionally-based efforts to nurture and facilitate economic growth and prosperity in the Commonwealth.

Due to the pandemic, MOBD will prioritize proposals with well-defined proposal on the strategy and action plan to assist small businesses, entrepreneurs, and business partners impacted by COVID-19 in addition to the services as detailed by M.G.L Chapter 23A, Section 3K and as revised in Acts of 2016, Chapter 219, section 9. The proposal must demonstrate how the organization conduct the services and connect them with local and State resources to stabilize their business operation and preserve jobs, especially for those small diverse businesses in Gateway Cities. Recipients are also expected to communicate and refer businesses to MOBD and able to meet the deliverables as mentioned in the proposal. The state's *Partnerships for Growth* outlines how essential it is for the state to work with its communities to advance economic development.

Grant proposals should define the communities they serve, the strategy and marketing plan to reach these communities, current and planned programs, and performance benchmarks and metrics. These grants are intended to supplement the organization's current and anticipated funding and not to be the primary funding support. Other funding sources and uses should be disclosed in the application.

Eligibility

Two or more organizations may apply jointly, with one entity acting as fiscal agent.

- Be exempt from federal taxation under 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 3J and 3K, as amended by sections 8 and 9 of Chapter 219 of the Acts of 2016 – see *Governance* below.
- Operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous cities/towns with interrelated economic assets.
- Develop programs to encourage participation in economic development activities from businesses, public and quasi-public agencies, and municipalities.
- Have received or will have commitments to receive substantial financial and in-kind support from private resources or member municipalities.

Governance: REDO Services Required by Section 9 of Chapter 219 of the Acts of 2016

Contracts for services entered into under this section shall include, but not be limited to, the following required services to be performed by the regional economic development organizations on behalf of the commonwealth:

- (i) assessing regional competitive strengths, weaknesses and opportunities;
- (ii) representing the regional business community in long-range workforce skills pipeline planning efforts to ensure robust skills and talent pipelines that meet regional needs;
- (iii) representing the regional business community in collaborative, long-range workforce skills, transportation and land use planning;
- (iv) promoting regionally significant industry clusters;
- (v) promoting connections across sectors of the regional economy;
- (vi) maintaining an inventory of key development parcels;
- (vii) marketing the region in coordination with the Massachusetts Marketing Partnership established under section 13A; and
- (viii) furnishing advice and assistance to businesses and industrial prospects which may locate in the region.

Ineligible Organizations

- Governmental regional entities, which serve as regional or district planning commissions under M.G.L. Chapter 40B.
- Regional employment boards.
- Tourism councils under M.G.L. Chapter 23A § 14.
- Entities that are a political subdivision of a municipality or wholly owned by a municipality.

Use of Funds

A) Limitation on Non-REDO Associated Overhead Costs

- No more than 10% of the REDO grant can be used for the grantee's overhead costs which are not specifically related to REDO activities allowable pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 23A § 3K.

B) Total Budgetary Limitations

- This REDO grant may only supplement the organization's operating budget; therefore, **the requested amount should not exceed 50% of the organization's actual prior-year operating budget.** This grant is intended to increase organizational capacity and improve service delivery for the benefit of the Massachusetts business climate.
- Grant funds from the REDO Grant Program **cannot** be used to subsidize non-REDO operating costs.

C) Other Public or Quasi-Public Funding Sources

Organizations are required to list other funding sources on the application. Please disclose:

1. The origin and amount of the funding;
2. Detailed budgets and accounting documents for REDO grant funds to differentiate spending from each source of funding; and
3. If applicable, describe any initiatives that are planned to be jointly funded through the REDO Grant and another public funding source.

Selection process and criteria

The review committee will review and score the grant proposals and at its sole discretion contract with individual organizations and/or regional partnerships that demonstrate an ability to utilize grant funds to improve upon the region's economic competitiveness. Proposals must demonstrate the ability to meet the following in order to receive funding:

- Provide a strategy and action plan to address business needs as they recover from the circumstances related to COVID-19.
- Demonstrate that organization/partnership understands the region's strengths and opportunities, and has the capacity in providing services to the entire region identified in the proposal.
- Demonstrate the value added of the funding to the organization and region in an organized, well-written and complete grant proposal; and how it aligns with the Commonwealth's economic development plan *Partnership for Growth*;
- Have a detailed budget, executable and measurable metrics, and a clear timeline for services outlined in the proposal.
- Have a strong track record of committed collaboration either among partners and/or with MOBD.

The Massachusetts Office of Business Development reserves the right to require, as a condition of a grant of funds, that two or more organizations with significant overlap in service areas or initiatives create a regional partnership to ensure substantial coverage.

Contract and Payment

If the proposal is accepted for funding, disbursement of grant funds is subject to the execution of a contract with the grantee. The application and grant proposal narrative shall become the basis for MOBD's contract negotiations with the applicant to determine the precise scope of work, budget, and use of funds. All documents deemed necessary by MOBD will be revised from the grant proposal and incorporated into the contract as attachments, including a scope of work submitted by the Grantee and approved by MOBD.

Grant Program Reporting

Organizations shall submit quarterly and annual reports in the provided templates.

- Activity report template (excel) should be submitted quarterly and can be done jointly or separately. This report should include type business assistance to companies, the identification of diverse business, number of jobs created or retained, events hosted, and meetings with partners and regional directors, and any update on priority development sites.
- Final report (PowerPoint) should feature business support along with job numbers, communities, business success stories, partner organizations and regional areas of concern.
- It is expected that important regional highlights will be communicated in real-time to the MOBD Main Office or Regional Offices.
- Any additional documents that exhibit and support the work being done by the REDO in the region are welcomed, but not required.

Applicants for the FY21 Regional Economic Development Organization are committing to completing the following minimum deliverables plus those listed in the submitted proposals. Final evaluation will be based on how many goals are met.

Key Components	Grant Deliverables	Reporting Metrics
Business Creation & Retention	<p>Conduct outreach to diverse groups that were impacted by COVID-19. Host panels or workshops for businesses and partners. Collect all data as needed for the activity report.</p> <p>List provided assistance and services to diverse businesses with less than 25 employees.</p> <p>Coordinate with MOBD Regional Director on potential project opportunities. Assist MOBD and secretariat in hosting meetings or events, as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide data in the given excel template quarterly. Report would include workshops, meetings, and type of assistance provided; should include the name of businesses, industries, type of assistance, creation/retention of jobs, and any \$ of private investment through REDO's support. <input type="checkbox"/> Of the businesses assisted, at least 30% should be diverse small businesses. <input type="checkbox"/> Refer at least 25 company MOBD Regional Director; <input type="checkbox"/> Invite MOBD to meetings/events, panels, tours, etc. Assist in promoting tax credit programs, especially Vacant Storefront
COVID Impact & Action Plan	<p>As we are in a pandemic, organizations should pay specific attention to the diverse small businesses that were affected by COVID-19 and deliver services and business outreach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Detail the COVID impacts to the regions served and provide an action plan to address those impacts. Metrics should be included in the plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Include how the organization is currently assisting and planning to assist businesses and communities in the regions in accessing programs or information to support economic recovery.
Communication & Reports	<p>Must communicate frequently with MOBD's regional directors about grant status.</p> <p>Must have and maintain websites, calendar of regional events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meet and update MOBD/Regional Director at least once per month on programs and events. Must timely communicate on challenges and issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain and update the event calendar and website regularly.