

Commonwealth Places

Program Guidelines 2018-2019



Program Description

MassDevelopment's "Commonwealth Places" is a funding mechanism to advance community-driven placemaking in downtown and neighborhood commercial districts throughout Massachusetts. Placemaking is a process through which people in communities work together to improve public spaces. While urban design and economic development are central to placemaking, the most significant component is the community process and programming that can facilitate social interaction, spark public discourse and increase local capacity and engagement.

The program aims to engage and mobilize community members to make individual contributions through a crowdfunding platform, managed by our partner Patronicity, with the incentive of a dollar-for-dollar funding match of up to \$50,000 from MassDevelopment if the crowdfunding goal is reached within 60 days.

Projects should be proposed on Patronicity's webpage. Any member of the community can propose a project but it must have the support of at least one local public or non-profit sponsor in order to move forward in the application review process and be considered for a grant award. Once a project has been approved, Patronicity will assist project sponsors with their fundraising efforts to help ensure successful crowdfunding campaigns. Please see **Application Process** below for more details.

Eligible Applicants

Commonwealth Places funding of up to \$50,000 is available to projects located in Massachusetts communities where the median household income is equal to or less than 100% of the state median household income. Funding of up to \$25,000 is available to projects located in Massachusetts communities where the median household income is between 100% and 120% of the state median household income. Exceptional projects in communities where the median household income is above 120% of the state median household income may be eligible if a direct and significant impact on low-income populations can be demonstrated. Please see attached eligibility list for more details.

Only local public and nonprofit entities, with documented municipal support, are eligible to receive funds. Nonprofits must have a 501(c)(3) designation in place before the project application. Applicants may be required to obtain a "Certificate of Solicitation" from the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office in connection with their crowdfunding efforts (learn more at: www.mass.gov/ago/doing-business-inmassachusetts/public-charities-or-not-for-profits/soliciting-funds/overview-of-solicitation.html). Applicants are responsible for determining whether they must obtain a "Certificate of Solicitation" or take other measures in accordance with applicable law, and disbursement of MassDevelopment grant funds will be contingent upon such compliance.

Types of Projects Allowed

Projects must demonstrate that they will activate a new or underused space that is open to and accessible by the public. It is important that these projects have established public awareness and local momentum. The project must be defined and focused. The project must be a placemaking project with the potential to catalyze economic impact. The project should be located in a downtown or commercial area and enhance the public realm at the pedestrian scale.

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Placemaking projects range from temporary improvements to the more permanent, but success is contingent upon being part of a larger ongoing community process. Examples of projects that fit this description include but are not limited to:

- Creating or permanently improving public spaces (e.g., public plazas)
- Streetscape improvements and beautification
- Access to public amenities (e.g., riverwalks, pier enhancements)
- Installing “pocket parks” or community gardens
- Pop-up parks and parklets
- Pop-up retail/incubator/café space (community or nonprofit)
- Activation of vacant properties and storefronts
- Farmers’ markets
- Alley rehabilitation
- Bike paths and light individual transport lanes
- Walkability improvements
- Community theater rehabilitation (community or non-profit)
- Place branding and event implementation
- Any other project that activates public space or a community place

Projects that provide permanent improvements are eligible for up to a \$50,000 matching award. An activation of a place for a period exceeding twelve months will be considered a permanent placemaking project. Projects that provide temporary improvements are eligible for awards between \$5,000 - \$15,000. For the purposes of the Commonwealth Places program a “temporary” activation is one that activates the place for a minimum of one month but does not exceed twelve months.

Established festivals and entertainment series are not eligible. At least 75% of the total Commonwealth Places project budget (crowdfunding plus MassDevelopment match) must be used to fund capital costs. Up to 25% or \$5,000, whichever is less, of the total Commonwealth Places project budget may be used for specialized training, assistance and technical support pending MassDevelopment approval.

Grant Dollars

To be eligible for a matching grant, projects must raise 100% of their crowdfunding goal within sixty (60) days of the launch of their crowdfunding campaign. Project sponsors/applicants must be prepared to execute a form grant agreement provided by MassDevelopment in order to be eligible to receive MassDevelopment grant funds. Eligible projects must have a minimum total cost of \$10,000, in which case the recipient will receive \$5,000 in MassDevelopment matching funds if the fundraising goal is met. A detailed budget must be included in the application. Budgets should identify total project costs, any funding sources outside of the crowdfunding and match, and the requested match dollars.

Preference will be given to projects that leverage additional funding. Project sponsors/applicants should indicate whether other funds have been pledged and committed to the project at the time of application. These can include funds provided by a project stakeholder, e.g., a local government, a non-profit entity, private source, or other state or federal agencies, which are committed to the project scope of work at the time of application. If a project does not have other pledged funds at the time of application, it is still eligible to apply.

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An example of project finances follows:

Total Project Cost: \$100,000

Initial Cash on Hand (pledged funds): \$50,000

Crowdfunding Campaign Goal: \$25,000

MassDevelopment Match, if Crowdfunding Campaign Goal is achieved: \$25,000

Total of Crowdfunding Campaign and MassDevelopment Match: \$50,000

Any money that is raised beyond the initial crowdfunding goal and approved match will not be matched by MassDevelopment but may still be directed towards the project with unrestricted use.

Evaluation Criteria

- A project's ability to catalyze economic development will be evaluated based on potential to result in outcomes including but not limited to:
 - Attracting new users into the commercial district
 - Testing a market for new businesses and uses
 - Leveraging additional private and/or public dollars for follow-on investment
 - Perception shift or increased public awareness of the commercial district
- Project sponsors/applicants should conduct sufficient outreach and engagement activities within the host neighborhood to determine community support for the project and that the project will complement and/or enhance the community's neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- Projects should demonstrate a thoughtful strategy for raising funds during crowdfunding campaign.
- Project start and anticipated completion date will be considered within application review. Preference may be given to projects able to commence work within 90 days of reaching the project's crowdfunding goal.
- Projects should be located in a downtown or commercial area. Preference may be given to projects based on their potential to leverage or connect existing community assets.
- In addition to the required letters of support from the municipality, preference will be given to applications that include letters of support from local organizations and/or community leaders.
- Preference will be given to projects where MassDevelopment funds will leverage the greatest amounts of funds pledged outside of the crowdfunding campaign.

Projects with multiple funding sources will need to demonstrate that they will be able to begin the project in a timely manner. All projects must be ready to proceed within six (6) months of reaching the project's crowdfunding goal and be complete within eighteen (18) months.

Grant Terms and Conditions

- Grants will be made only to an applicant deemed eligible by MassDevelopment.
- Project sponsors/applicants must be prepared to execute a form of agreement provided by MassDevelopment in order to receive grant funds

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- Any one donor is limited to a donation maximum of \$10,000 or 35% of the total crowdfunding amount, whichever is less.
- Projects must meet their crowdfunding goal within sixty (60) days of the crowdfunding campaign launch in order to receive MassDevelopment's matching grant funds.
- Project sponsors/applicants will be required to provide data about the project at key project milestones to be detailed within specific project grant agreements.
- Selected projects must produce a professional-quality crowdfunding pitch video in coordination with Patronicity. Project sponsors/applicants may use either a Commonwealth Places videographer (no cost to the project), or may use their own videographer subject to Patronicity's acceptance thereof.

Project Process Flow

- **STEP 1 - Tell Us About Your Project**

Applicants will use the Commonwealth Places portal on the Patronicity website to create a project profile. This profile acts as the initial application. Once a project page is started, Patronicity will make contact with the project sponsor/applicant.

- **STEP 2 - Patronicity Review**

MassDevelopment's partner Patronicity will perform an initial screening of the project and profile. Patronicity staff may request additional information to determine program eligibility and inform evaluation by criteria listed above. At this stage, applicants will be required to demonstrate participation from a local public or nonprofit sponsor and provide a letter of support from the municipality.

- **STEP 3 - MassDevelopment Review/Approval**

If project passes initial Patronicity review, projects will be referred to the MassDevelopment review team for acceptance and evaluated on the criteria noted in this document. Some projects may be approved at a lesser amount than requested. MassDevelopment staff may contact the applicant for more information.

- **STEP 4 - Patronicity Polish & Video Production**

If approved by the MassDevelopment review team, Patronicity will then engage fully with the project sponsor/applicant to complete the project page, develop a marketing strategy, produce a video for the project page, and build out the crowdfunding campaign.

- **STEP 5 - Project Goes Live!**

Start crowdfunding! Patronicity will provide crowdfunding and marketing technical assistance throughout the sixty (60)-day crowdfunding period.

- **STEP 6 - Implementation**

If the crowdfunding campaign is successful, MassDevelopment will match the funds raised up to approved matching grant amount and project implementation must begin within six (6) months thereafter.

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- **STEP 7 - Learning and sharing lessons learned**

Projects will be required to provide initial data and ongoing metrics as detailed within the project grant agreements. A specific approach to performance measurement will be determined on a project-by-project basis in coordination with project team and with local capacity in mind. Project teams may be asked to present to and advise other communities working to implement similar projects.

Attachment A: Eligibility List

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- **Eligible for a 50-50 match of up to \$50,000**

Funding of up to \$50,000 is available to projects located in Massachusetts communities where the median household income is equal to or less than 100% of the state median household income.

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| - Acushnet | - Fairhaven | - Monroe |
| - Adams | - Fall River | - Monson |
| - Agawam | - Falmouth | - Montague |
| - Amherst | - Fitchburg | - Monterey |
| - Aquinnah | - Florida | - Mount |
| - Athol | - Framingham | - Washington |
| - Attleboro | - Gardner | - Nahant |
| - Auburn | - Gill | - New Bedford |
| - Avon | - Gloucester | - New |
| - Barnstable | - Goshen | - Marlborough |
| - Barre | - Gosnold | - New Salem |
| - Becket | - Great Barrington | - North Adams |
| - Bernardston | - Greenfield | - North Brookfield |
| - Beverly | - Hadley | - Northampton |
| - Blandford | - Halifax | - Northbridge |
| - Boston | - Hancock | - Northfield |
| - Bourne | - Hardwick | - Oak Bluffs |
| - Brewster | - Harwich | - Orange |
| - Brockton | - Hatfield | - Orleans |
| - Brookfield | - Haverhill | - Otis |
| - Buckland | - Hawley | - Oxford |
| - Carver | - Heath | - Palmer |
| - Charlemont | - Hinsdale | - Peabody |
| - Chatham | - Holbrook | - Peru |
| - Chelsea | - Holyoke | - Petersham |
| - Cheshire | - Huntington | - Phillipston |
| - Chesterfield | - Lanesborough | - Pittsfield |
| - Chicopee | - Lawrence | - Plainfield |
| - Clarksburg | - Lee | - Provincetown |
| - Clinton | - Leicester | - Quincy |
| - Colrain | - Lenox | - Randolph |
| - Cummington | - Leominster | - Revere |
| - Dalton | - Leyden | - Rockland |
| - Dartmouth | - Lowell | - Rockport |
| - Dennis | - Ludlow | - Rowe |
| - Dudley | - Lynn | - Royalston |
| - Eastham | - Malden | - Russell |
| - Easthampton | - Marlborough | - Salem |
| - Edgartown | - Mashpee | - Salisbury |
| - Egremont | - Methuen | - Sandisfield |
| - Erving | - Milford | - Savoy |
| - Everett | - Millbury | - Sheffield |

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- Shelburne
- Shirley
- Somerset
- South Hadley
- Southbridge
- Spencer
- Springfield
- Stockbridge
- Stoughton
- Sunderland
- Taunton
- Templeton
- Tisbury
- Truro
- Wales
- Ware
- Wareham
- Warren
- Warwick
- Webster
- Wellfleet
- Wendell
- West Boylston
- West Brookfield
- West Springfield
- West Stockbridge
- Westfield
- Weymouth
- Whately
- Williamsburg
- Williamstown
- Winchendon
- Winthrop
- Worcester
- Worthington
- Yarmouth

- **Eligible for a 50-50 match of up to \$25,000**

Funding of up to \$25,000 is available to projects located in Massachusetts communities where the median household income is between 100% and 120% of the state median household income

- Abington
- Amesbury
- Ashburnham
- Ashby
- Ashfield
- Ayer
- Belcher
- Blackstone
- Braintree
- Bridgewater
- Brimfield
- Cambridge
- Chester
- Chilmark
- Conway
- Danvers
- Dedham
- Deerfield
- Douglas
- Dracut
- East Bridgewater
- East Brookfield
- East Longmeadow
- Granby
- Granville
- Hampden
- Holland
- Hubbardston
- Hudson
- Hull
- Ipswich
- Kingston
- Leverett
- Lunenburg
- Marion
- Marshfield
- Mattapoisett
- Maynard
- Medford
- Melrose
- Merrimac
- Middleborough
- Middlefield
- Montgomery
- Nantucket
- New Ashford
- New Braintree
- Newburyport
- North Attleborough
- Norwood
- Oakham
- Pepperell
- Plymouth
- Plympton
- Raynham
- Rowley
- Sandwich
- Saugus
- Seekonk
- Shutesbury
- Somerville
- Southwick
- Stoneham
- Sturbridge
- Swansea
- Tolland
- Townsend
- Tyringham
- Uxbridge
- Waltham
- Washington
- West Bridgewater
- West Tisbury
- Westhampton
- Westport
- Whitman
- Windsor
- Woburn

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- **Limited Eligibility**

Exceptional projects in communities where the median household income is above 100% of the state median household income may be eligible for up to \$50,000 if a direct and significant impact on low-income populations can be demonstrated. Examples of a direct and significant impact include improvement of a public space which hosts regular programming for underserved populations or of a space adjacent to a significant number of units of low-income housing.

Communities with limited eligibility for up to \$50,000 include those listed above as between 100% and 120% of state median household income, as well as those communities listed below, with a median household income above 120% of the state median household income.

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| - Acton | - Groveland | - Northborough |
| - Alford | - Hamilton | - Norton |
| - Andover | - Hanover | - Norwell |
| - Arlington | - Hanson | - Paxton |
| - Ashland | - Harvard | - Pelham |
| - Bedford | - Hingham | - Pembroke |
| - Bellingham | - Holden | - Plainville |
| - Belmont | - Holliston | - Princeton |
| - Berkley | - Hopedale | - Reading |
| - Berlin | - Hopkinton | - Rehoboth |
| - Billerica | - Lakeville | - Richmond |
| - Bolton | - Lancaster | - Rochester |
| - Boxborough | - Lexington | - Rutland |
| - Boxford | - Lincoln | - Scituate |
| - Boylston | - Littleton | - Sharon |
| - Brookline | - Longmeadow | - Sherborn |
| - Burlington | - Lynnfield | - Shrewsbury |
| - Canton | - Manchester-by- | - Southampton |
| - Carlisle | the-Sea | - Southborough |
| - Charlton | - Mansfield | - Sterling |
| - Chelmsford | - Marblehead | - Stow |
| - Cohasset | - Medfield | - Sudbury |
| - Concord | - Medway | - Sutton |
| - Dighton | - Mendon | - Swampscott |
| - Dover | - Middleton | - Tewksbury |
| - Dunstable | - Millis | - Topsfield |
| - Duxbury | - Millville | - Tyngsborough |
| - Easton | - Milton | - Upton |
| - Essex | - Natick | - Wakefield |
| - Foxborough | - Needham | - Walpole |
| - Franklin | - Newbury | - Watertown |
| - Free | - Newton | - Wayland |
| - Georgetown | - Norfolk | - Wellesley |
| - Grafton | - North Andover | - Wenham |
| - Groton | - North Reading | - West Newbury |

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- Westborough
- Westford
- Westminster
- Weston
- Westwood
- Wilbraham
- Wilmington
- Winchester
- Wrentham