Establishing an Economic Development District in the Berkshires

BRPC | 2018
ACTION NEEDED

BRPC SEEKS THE APPROVAL OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE BERKSHIRES TO PURSUE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (“EDD”) IS A DESIGNATION GIVEN BY THE U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (“EDA”) TO A GEOGRAPHIC AREA THAT MEETS CERTAIN FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS:

✓ THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA MUST CONTAIN AT LEAST ONE ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED AREA
✓ MUST BE OF SUFFICIENT GEOGRAPHIC SIZE
✓ MUST HAVE AN EDA-APPROVED COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (“CEDS”)
❑ MUST OBTAIN THE COMMITMENT OF AT LEAST ½ OF THE MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PROPOSED AREA
❑ MUST OBTAIN THE CONCURRENCE OF THE STATE/COMMONWEALTH IN THE DESIGNATION
EDDs IN MASSACHUSETTS

THERE ARE EIGHT (8) EDDs IN MASSACHUSETTS AND ALL ARE ADMINISTERED BY THE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY FOR THAT PARTICULAR REGION. BERKSHIRE COUNTY IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING AREAS THAT HAS NOT RECEIVED THE DESIGNATION.

✓ FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
✓ PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
✓ MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
✓ MONTACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
✓ METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COMMISSION
✓ SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
✓ OLD COLONY PLANNING COUNCIL
✓ CAPE COD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

☑ BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
ADVANTAGES OF AN EDD

➢ INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES IN THE COUNTY
  • EDDs receive annual grant funding from EDA to implement economic development activities.
  • FRCOG receives approximately $70,000 each year in annual grant funds.

➢ INCREASES THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES ELIGIBLE FOR EDA GRANT ASSISTANCE

➢ INCREASES THE ABILITY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO ACCESS EDA FUNDS

➢ ESTABLISHES AN ON-GOING RELATIONSHIP WITH EDA STAFF
CONSIDERATIONS

➢ ONCE THE EDD IS ESTABLISHED AND ORGANIZED THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE WORK FOR BRPC (E.G. REPORTING, ACCOUNTING, AUDITS, ETC.)

➢ ANNUAL EDA GRANT FUNDING REQUIRES A 1:1 LOCAL MATCH, TO BE ARRANGED BY BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MUNICIPALITIES ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE)
   • BRPC expects to meet the match using a combination of in-kind resources provided through District Local Technical Assistance funds and other economic development projects which support the CEDS.

➢ IT MAY TAKE SEVERAL YEARS TO RECEIVE ANNUAL GRANT FUNDING FROM EDA
NUTS & BOLTS OF AN EDD

➢ THE EDD IS ADMINISTERED BY A DISTRICT ORGANIZATION. BRPC QUALIFIES AS A DISTRICT ORGANIZATION UNDER 13 CFR 304.

➢ A GOVERNING BOARD MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF 13 CFR 304 IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EDD.

  • An EDD must demonstrate that its governing body is broadly representative of the principal economic interests of the Region, which may include the private sector, public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

➢ THE COMPOSITION OF BRPC DOES NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF 13 CFR 304, THUS DESIGNATION OF AN EDD GOVERNING BOARD IN COMPLIANCE WITH 13 CFR 304 WILL BE NECESSARY.
NUTS & BOLTS OF AN EDD

➢ THE ADMINISTRATION AND WORK OF THE EDD WILL BE COMPLETED BY BRPC STAFF AT THE GUIDANCE OF THE EDD GOVERNING BOARD.

➢ THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE EDD IS TO IMPLEMENT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SET FORTH IN THE COUNTY’S CEDS (MOST RECENT VERSION APPROVED DECEMBER 2017).
NEXT STEPS

(1) BRPC WILL COORDINATE WITH EDA ON THE REQUIRED SUBMITTALS

(2) BRPC WILL CONDUCT OUTREACH TO THE 32 MUNICIPALITIES IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY TO SECURE THE REQUIRED COMMITMENTS FROM AT LEAST A MAJORITY OF THE MUNICIPALITIES

(3) BRPC WILL OBTAIN THE CONCURRENCE OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN THE DESIGNATION
FINAL THOUGHTS

➢ BERKSHIRE COUNTY IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING AREAS IN THE COMMONWEALTH NOT INCLUDED IN AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT.

➢ THE COMMITMENT OF SUPPORT FROM THE MUNICIPALTIES IS NOT A MONETARY COMMITMENT. IT IS A GENERAL ASSURANCE OF SUPPORT.

➢ THE REGION NEEDS MORE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES TO HELP GROW ITS ECONOMY.

➢ THE ANNUAL GRANT FUNDING DELAY IS A WAIT LIST SITUATION – THE SOONER WE CAN GET ON THE LIST THE SOONER WE CAN RECEIVE ANNUAL GRANT FUNDING.