**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is an Economic Development District (EDD)?**

An EDD and its governing board is an entity that meets certain federal requirements whose main purpose is to implement the economic development activities identified in the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

**Are there any other EDDs located in Massachusetts?**

Yes, Berkshire County is one of the few regions remaining that has not been designated as an EDD. Currently there are 8 EDDs in Massachusetts and all are administered by the regional planning agency for the region.

| ☐ Franklin Regional Council of Governments |
| ☐ Merrimack Valley Planning Commission |
| ☐ Metropolitan Area Planning Commission |
| ☐ Montachusett Regional Planning Commission |
| ☐ Old Colony Planning Council |
| ☐ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission |
| ☐ Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District |
| ☐ Cape Cod Economic Development District |

**What are the advantages and disadvantages of establishing an EDD?**

- Increases the economic development resources in the region. EDA provides each EDD with annual grant funds to implement the activities set forth in the CEDS; however, there may be a waiting list for new EDDs to receive funding. For example, FRCOG (Franklin Regional Council of Governments) received $70,000 from EDA last federal fiscal year to directly support economic development planning in Franklin County.

- Increases the number of municipalities eligible to apply for EDA Public Works Assistance grants in a region that does not meet the economic distress criteria for eligibility, so long as a substantial benefit can be shown to unemployed or low-income residents of distressed areas within that larger region. *(Note: Berkshire County taken as a whole does not meet the economic distress criteria in terms of Unemployment Rates and Per Capita Income levels, but specific municipalities and census tracts within Berkshire County do).*

- Establishes an on-going working relationship with EDA staff. The EDA grant process allows for extensive collaboration between EDA and applicants during the writing of grants so an established relationship is quite beneficial.

- Administrative work... reporting... accounting... audit... etc. on the part of BRPC.

- Annual EDD grant funds require a 1:1 local match. For example, FRCOG uses a combination of local assessment funds, DLTA and other state contracts to meet the
match requirement. Municipalities are NOT required to contribute to this match, it is the responsibility of BRPC.

How is an EDD established?
BRPC, as the District Organization, must obtain commitments from at least ⅔ of the municipalities within the proposed District to support the economic development activities of the District. Thus, BRPC must obtain written endorsement of at least 17 of the 32 municipalities in the region to support the establishment of the EDD.

Is an EDD a separate legal entity that will be created?
No, BRPC will serve as the District Organization for the EDD; however, the composition of BRPC does not meet the federal requirements that the EDD’s governing body represent the main economic interests of the region. To meet this requirement, an EDD governing board will be designated to oversee the activities of the EDD.

Who will be on the governing board and how will they be selected?
BRPC has latitude in designating the governing board; however, oversight must broadly represent the principal economic interests of the region, including the private sector, public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups and private individuals. This description reflects the makeup of the CEDS Committee for Berkshire County.

What will the governing board be responsible for?
The main charge of the governing board is to provide guidance to EDD staff (i.e. BRPC staff) on implementing the economic development activities contained in the CEDS. EDD responsibilities will be conducted concurrently with CEDS Committee meetings, and this unified EDD board and CEDS Committee will continue to develop the CEDS for the region on a 5-year cycle, with annual updates during intervening years. The Commission will retain ultimate authority for final approval of the CEDS, the required Annual Report, and the budget for economic development activities.

Berkshire County’s most recent CEDS was certified in December of 2017 and is available at www.berkshireplanning.org.