



A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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Employment Opportunities

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Senior Planner or Planner

BRPC's Public Health program seeks a full-time Planner or Senior Planner specializing in Emergency Preparedness to assist with a broad range of initiatives related to public health and emergencies. This position will contribute to a multitude of dynamic and complex projects to improve public health outcomes in Berkshire County.

Public Health Food Specialist

This is a full-time, offsite position for a food protection subject matter expert to enforce the food code and local food-related regulations, conduct environmental health inspections, support the inspectional services program, help develop a new local Public Health Excellence Training Hub, and contribute to a broad scope of dynamic and complex public health inspection and training programs in Berkshire County.

Transportation Senior Planner or Planner The focus of this position is developing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and the public through active outreach efforts, presentations, and preparing/administering surveys. Projects include the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, electric vehicle acquisition, and charging station development.

Public Health Housing Specialist Seeking a housing subject matter expert with building code or housing inspection experience, to enforce the housing code and local housing regulations, conduct environmental health inspections, support inspectional services program, and help develop a new local Public Health Excellence Training Hub. Offsite, full-time with benefits preferred, part-time possible.

Staff Announcements

Congratulations and a big thank you to [Laura Kittross](#) for ten years as a full-time employee developing and leading the Public Health Program! (Before becoming an employee she worked for 5 years in a similar capacity as a contractor for BRPC.) BRPC's Public Health services, projects, and activities have grown exponentially under Laura's leadership. The Berkshire County Boards of Health Association, which Laura also leads, is a source of information and support for local Boards of Health. The Berkshire Public Health Alliance was founded to provide inspectional services, standardize local health practices, and organize shared public health nursing services such as vaccination and blood pressure clinics and prevention trainings. Another significant achievement is coordinating Berkshire County's COVID-19 pandemic response!



Grants & Opportunities

Berkshire Regional Economic Development Planning Session, Monday, July 10, 10:30 - 12:30, Berkshire Innovation Center, 45 Woodlawn Ave., Pittsfield, MA

Business and community leaders, elected officials, stakeholders, and members of the public are invited to contribute input about economic needs and opportunities for growth within the region.

EOED and the state's Economic Development Planning Council is holding sessions across the state on behalf of the Healey-Driscoll Administration. The council will craft a strategic plan to guide Massachusetts' economic development policy over the next four years.

Registration is available via [Eventbrite](#), including the opportunity to select two break-out session topics.

The [Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program \(WCPP\)](#) federal grant program's goal is to reduce Wildlife Vehicle Collisions while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. Some eligible entities are: State DOTs, Metropolitan Planning Organizations; units of local government, and regional transportation authorities. Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m., ET, **August 1**.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has [released](#) the **PROTECT** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Applications are due via grants.gov by **August 18**.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Discretionary Grant Program to help make surface transportation more resilient offering up to \$848 million from Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023.

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=347585>.

More information: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/protect/discretionary>.

Direct questions to: PROTECTdiscretionary@dot.gov.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has announced the “**One Free Designee**” pilot program offering core public procurement training to one public employee per municipality at no cost.

To enroll an employee in the free training, the chief municipal officer (Mayor, Town Manager/Administrator or Select Board Chair) must complete an online form indicating the employee to receive the training and acknowledging that the cost of the training could be a factor in obtaining the designation. **Specific information, including class registration schedules, to follow.** The OIG is absorbing the cost of this pilot program.

Massachusetts Broadband Institute [Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program](#)

BRPC is a pre-qualified consultant to provide services to municipalities participating in MBI's Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program. Full program details and application [HERE](#).

BERKSHIRE Funding Focus

Berkshire Funding Focus (BFF)

BFF is a regional initiative that supports municipalities, small businesses, nonprofits, and schools seeking government grants.

Learn more at berkshirerfundingfocus.org. Sign up for the BFF weekly e-blast [HERE](#).

Community

Housing Toolbox

The New England Rural Health Association (NERHA) recognizes that the ability to obtain safe and affordable housing is a factor determining an individual's health outcomes. NERHA partnered with BRPC to support Berkshire County communities seeking to expand and/or diversify their housing as a follow up to [A Housing Vision for the Berkshires](#). BRPC is putting the final touches on more than two dozen pieces of educational material, which outline planning, regulatory, funding, and zoning best practices municipal officials can use to support local efforts to expand housing choices. Once completed, the Housing Toolbox provides a menu of tools a community can review to determine which ones will best address their greatest housing needs.



The future sustainability of Berkshire County depends on achieving greater development of all types of housing so residents can grow up, work, play, and age all in their own community. The

toolbox will serve as an important resource for municipal officials and residents to foster the development of housing for people of all stages and places in their lives. These expanded resources will be found under [BRPC's Planning Toolkit webpage](#). For more information contact Community Planning Program Manager [Cornelius Hoss](#), AICP. 413-442-1521 x 44.

Economic Development

Take the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Survey!

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) has launched the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Survey to better understand the needs of Massachusetts residents when it comes to computers and internet access.

This important survey will help MBI to develop a comprehensive Digital Equity Plan for the state and ensure that all Massachusetts residents can fully experience the opportunities that come from having the access and skills to use computers and the internet in their everyday life.

It is critical that Berkshire County residents respond to this survey so that our voices and perspectives can be included in the State's plans. We encourage you to:

1. [Complete the online survey HERE](#) (about 5 minutes) no later than August 1, 2023.
2. Share the link with your friends, colleagues, and community members

Thank you for supporting this important process!

This [map](#) tracks municipalities' responses to date. While it's still early in the process, we want Berkshire County to score higher than it is at present. For more information about BRPC's digital equity work, **and to ensure your town is fully represented**, contact Economic Development Senior Planner [Wylie Goodman](#).

Mountain Day at Bousquet - 2nd Annual Berkshire County Outdoor Recreation Summit

BRPC is partnering with Mill Town Foundation, Bousquet Mountain, and The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow to present Mountain Day on **July 22**.

From 1-3 pm, join us for the (FREE) Outdoor Recreation Summit inside the lodge to learn about new Berkshire initiatives in mountain biking, cycling, and outdoor recreation from our expert panelists and presenters, and meet DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo.

The ticketed portion of Mountain Day begins at 3 pm, and includes a Vendor Village, guided outdoor activities, and live music throughout the afternoon. Mountain Day culminates with a main stage performance by The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow.

The Outdoor Recreation Summit at Mountain Day is one of several major implementation steps resulting from the [2020 Berkshire County Outdoor Recreation Plan](#).

For more information or to buy tickets to Mountain Day, click [HERE](#).

Environmental & Energy



Attention Adams, North Adams, and Williamstown!
Save the date for a *Week of Energy Efficiency and Cost Reduction Solutions Exclusively for Small Businesses!*

From **Tuesday, August 22 to Thursday, August 24**, National Grid and its turnkey energy efficiency provider, Energy Source, will visit local small businesses in Northern Berkshire County to identify energy-saving solutions. During this time, businesses can benefit from a no-cost energy assessment and take advantage of enhanced incentives of up to 90% on select

energy efficiency solutions. These solutions can greatly improve property value, reduce energy costs, and enhance operational sustainability. Some of the measures that may be included are:

- Weatherization
- Heating/Cooling Upgrades
- New lighting controls
- Occupancy sensors
- Sensors for programmable thermostats
- Refrigeration controls

Businesses are welcome to schedule their no-cost energy assessment in advance at <https://www.energysource.com/take-action>.

BRPC is proud to be a Mass Save® Community First Partner, sponsored locally by Massachusetts Utilities. As a Community First Partner, BRPC regularly works with towns to help residents and small businesses manage their energy costs, improve air quality, and much more! If you're interested in becoming a Community First Partner, please contact Environmental & Energy Planner, [Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert](#).

Public Health

BRPC Public Health Training Hub

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has been awarded a large, multi-year grant to provide public health field training and mentoring services to 31 towns in Berkshire County that are part of one of Berkshire's two Public Health Shared Service Arrangements. BRPC will also provide public health training support to the Hampden County Public Health Shared Service Arrangements. Ten Training Hubs cover the whole state. Each will have trained and certified staff that will support local communities in meeting their public health mandates and needs in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Workforce Standards and state laws and regulations. This will reduce disparities among communities and help ensure that all public health inspectors and agents are knowledgeable and trained to common professional standards when enforcing public health laws and regulations. BRPC is hiring additional housing, food, and other public health specialists to provide Training Hub services. For more information, contact the Training Hub Coordinator, [Lydia Shulman](#).

Transportation



[Transportation Plans Released for Public Review](#)

The [Draft Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) and the [Draft Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#) were released for public review and comment by the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) at the June 27, 2023, meeting. Transportation Planning staff have updated the region's 2-year long-range Regional Transportation Plan. This happens every four years. The RTP serves as the County's overarching transportation planning document and is required to ensure the region remains eligible for federal transportation funding. The RTP employs a systematic approach to evaluate the performance of the transportation system, identify 'needs' or deficiencies, and develop solutions that best address existing gaps.

The Unified Planning Work Program is a one-year budget and planning document that lists the research projects, technical assistance, and other activities the Berkshire Region Metropolitan Planning Organization staff will undertake over the next federal fiscal year. The primary focus areas of the UPWP are safety, carbon reduction, complete streets, bicycle facilities, micro transit, and passenger rail.

The draft RTP and UPWP are on BRPC's website; comments must be submitted by **July 18**. Please see BRPC's website for dates and locations for public meetings about the RTP. Please contact [Nick Russo](#) for questions about the RTP and [Clete Kus](#) regarding the UPWP.

July

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	CLOSED	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	EOED Economic Development Planning Session 10:30-12:30					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		Transportation Advisory Committee 4:00 pm		BRPC Executive Committee 4:00 pm BRP Commission 6:00 pm		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		Metropolitan Planning Organization 4:00 pm				
30	31					

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
www.berkshireplanning.org



Berkshire Regional Planning Commission | 1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201

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