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## A Newsletter for Community Planning in the Berkshire Region

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### SAVE THE DATE

**BRPC's Annual Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 25th**  
**5:00 - 7:00 pm**  
more details to follow

### Staff Announcements & Employment Opportunities



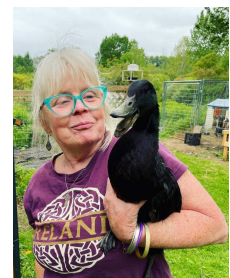
Community Development and Housing Program Manager [Patricia Mullins](#) retired on June 30, 2024. Like many BRPC retirees, she will continue in a part-time project specialist role. Pat celebrated fifteen years with BRPC in November 2023. She has stewarded the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, Affordable Housing initiatives, the CEDAC Home Modification Loan Program, and the Group Purchasing Program.

Pat received fourteen Community Development Block Grants and completed over one hundred Housing Rehabilitation projects in Berkshire County, enabling those families to remain in their homes. She has assisted towns with Architectural Barrier Removal designs and applied for grants to help fund the designs. Pat has also completed seven Americans With Disabilities (ADA) Self Evaluation & Transition Plans for our towns.

BRPC will miss her perseverance (anyone managing a federal grant understands), attention to detail, and problem-solving, which have improved countless people's homes and quality of life! We will surely miss her and wish her the best!

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Public Health Nurse [Nancy Kibby Slattery](#) is shifting gears to retirement and a very part-time role with the Public Health Program as of July 1, 2024. Nancy has been crisscrossing the county on behalf of the Berkshire Public Health Alliance (BPHA) since July 2021, running vaccine clinics and choke-saver classes, monitoring and investigating infectious diseases, and offering health education. We are grateful for Nancy's contributions and hope her retirement is as fulfilling as her nursing career!



Leslie Drager, BPHA Nurse, shared:

*Nancy is always willing to jump in and do what is needed. She has a wonderful sense of humor, and her laugh is contagious. You can't have a bad day with Nancy around. She is a compassionate, kind nurse who I admire.*

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Congratulations and thanks to [Cornelius \(CJ\) Hoss](#) who has an expanded role as Program Manager for both the Community Planning and Community Development & Housing programs.

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Congratulations to [Lyda Shulman](#) who has been promoted to Assistant Public Health Program Manager in recognition of her increasing leadership role. Lydia has been the Coordinator of the Berkshire Public Health Alliance.

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BRPC's summer interns are humming along on their projects. Some of them wrap up in early August, while others will continue longer. We are grateful for their work!

#### **Arts & Culture: Pittsfield's Cultural Plan + ArtWeek Berkshires**

- Liana Rice, UMass Amherst; Sustainable Community Development & Studio Art

#### **Digital Equity: Technology access and skills**

- Aleesha Siddiqui, Colby College; Government & History

#### **Gray to Green, Pittsfield: Increasing health equity by prioritizing green planning**

- Samantha Elliott, Mass College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences; Health Sciences

#### **Outdoor Recreation: Berkshires Outside website**

- Luke Peplowski, Hamilton College; Environmental Studies & Public Policy
- Peter LaRoche, Haverford College; Growth & Structure of Cities and Mathematics

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#### **BRPC Employment Opportunities:**

- [Public Health Community Social Worker](#)
- [Bi-lingual Northern Berkshire Community Outreach Specialists](#)

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#### **Regional Employment Opportunities**

- [Micro Transit Program Director](#) - southern Berkshire County

Links to Berkshire County municipalities' open positions [HERE](#).

## **Grants, Opportunities & Announcements**

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) summer classes open for enrollment on July 1st. Click on the links below to learn more:

- [Design and Construction Contracting](#)
- [Supplies and Services Contracting](#)
- [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#)
- [Chief Procurement Officer Responsibilities and Delegation Authority](#)
- [Contract Administration Overview](#)
- [Emergency Procurement](#)
- [Fraud Awareness](#)
- [Meaningful Public Involvement in the Budgeting Process](#)
- [Revenue Contracts](#)
- [Surplus Supply Disposition Practices Under Chapter 30B](#)
- [Winter Related Procurement](#)



If you have any OIG Academy-related questions, contact them at [MA-IGO-Training@mass.gov](mailto:MA-IGO-Training@mass.gov).

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Training, Tuesday, July 9, 2024, 1 - 2 pm.  
Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General  
Covers current rules and best practices for use of Fiscal Recovery Funds under ARPA.  
[Registration opens July 1.](#)

### MassDEP Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program: FY25-26 Opportunity and Application

This grant opportunity provides \$200,000 in funding, with up to \$20,000 per community or municipal applicant group selected for an award, to enhance public involvement and promote a better understanding of the cleanup of contaminated sites in their communities. The application deadline is **Friday, September 6, 2024.**

The TAG application and comprehensive information about this grant opportunity, including eligibility criteria and examples of past TAG projects, is available on [MassDEP's TAG Program webpage.](#)

## BERKSHIRE Funding Focus

Overwhelmed? Reach out to your BFF (Berkshire Funding Focus) for help navigating grant applications! Take a look at additional grant opportunities and resources on our website: [www.berkshirefundingfocus.org](http://www.berkshirefundingfocus.org).

## Community Planning



[The Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market](#) returns for its second summer in an expanded format from June 25<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup>. The effort is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Services program. It is a partnership between Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Berkshire Grown, Berkshire Bounty, Southern Berkshire Rural Health Network, Community Health Partners, and Berkshire United Way.

Roots Rising and Berkshire Community Action Coalition are assisting with Mobile Market Vehicles. Northern and southern county market managers have been hired to operate the markets. Additional volunteers are being sought to assist customers at market sites.

The Market offers a sliding scale payment system allowing each shopper to pay what they feel they can afford. Those who can comfortably meet all basic needs are encouraged to support the Market by paying full retail; others who might need some assistance can pay the wholesale rate to cover the costs of products (50%), while others might need additional support with most products completely free.

Three sites have been added this year. Market locations:

- Monterey: Tuesdays, Monterey Community Center, 12:30 - 3 pm
- Pittsfield :
  - Wednesdays, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street 2<sup>nd</sup> Chances, 264 Second St., 3-5 pm
  - Thursdays, 18 Degrees, 480 West St., 3 - 5 pm
- North Adams: Thursdays, The Armory, 206 Ashland St. (moving from MCLA), 12 - 2 pm
- Adams: Fridays, 19 Depot St., 11 am- 1 pm
- Becket: Fridays, Town Hall, 3:30 - 6 pm

For more information about the Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market, contact Senior Planner [Seth Jenkins](#).

## Economic Development



### BEAD Challenge Process Continues: June 20th - July 20th

Between June 20th and July 20th, 2024, residents and businesses are asked to test their internet speeds to ensure we're getting the high-speed internet connection needed for today's world.

It's as easy as 1-2-3...

1. VISIT [HowsYourInternet.org](https://www.howsyourinternet.org) and click on the Broadband Map to search for your home address.
2. **SELECT** Take a Speed Test under the Service Challenges window in the bottom left corner of the screen to complete the speed test.
3. **COMPLETE** the speed test and enter your personal information, if prompted. Check your inbox for reminders to take two additional required speed tests\*.

If you need assistance with this important process, please call the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at 413.442.1521 or email [digital@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:digital@berkshireplanning.org). We're happy to help!

*\*Please note that only those whose internet speeds are insufficient will be prompted to take additional speed tests.*

Visit [THIS PAGE](#) to find all the necessary resources to participate in the Challenge Process.



### Public Health



Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Public Health Program will once again house the Berkshire and Franklin County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Units starting July 01, 2024. We want to express our sincerest gratitude to Heather Barbieri, Doreen Hutchinson, and Fairview Hospital for their dedicated efforts in hosting these units for over ten years.

The MRC network comprises more than 300,000 volunteers in roughly 800 community-based units throughout the United States and its territories. MRC units organize and utilize local volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and support ongoing preparedness initiatives. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals and other community members without healthcare backgrounds who want to improve the health and safety of their communities.

MRC Units have routinely been utilized across the nation to support a variety of activities, including:

- Vaccination clinics
- First aid and medical support during large public gatherings
- Community education and outreach
- Disease testing and surveillance
- Disaster behavioral health support
- Emergency sheltering operations

With their close ties to Emergency Preparedness and community efforts, BRPC looks forward to integrating them into our emergency response and planning efforts.

To learn more about the MRC as a national program, please refer to the US Department of Health and Human Services [webpage](#) on MRC. Those interested in joining the Berkshire or Franklin County MRC Units should register at the [Mass. Responds webpage](#). For additional information regarding this transition, how to sign up, or other ways you can help, please contact Senior Planner [Matthew Bryan](#), 413-442-1521, extension 30.

## Transportation



The Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Planning (OTP), has recently launched its Massachusetts Travel Study (MTS) for public input. As the first study of its kind in 11 years, the data collected will be used to gain insight into residents' travel habits and help determine where improvements can be made to public infrastructure. As a comprehensive analysis, residents across the state will be provided opportunities to detail their daily travels, which will help build an accurate picture of local and regional transportation wants and needs. Besides providing a glimpse into residents' travel choices and behaviors, such as frequent destinations and commute times, other data collected will help consultants gauge the use of various transportation systems. These may include ride shares, transportation network companies (TNCs), microtransit and micromobility systems, electric vehicles (EV) and charging stations, and post-COVID transit ridership, in addition to creating a baseline for future, ongoing travel behavior data collection.

To maintain a cohort of respondents representative of the state, households will be chosen to participate based on their geographic location, whether they reside within rural and densely populated areas and communities designated "hard-to-reach." Data from participants may be collected via a GPS-enabled mobile app, an online intake survey, or over the phone with a call center operator. Household members will receive a gift card to one of many retailers or Visa gift card for participating in this study. For more information, please visit the study website <https://matravelstudy.com/>

# July

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Executive Committee 4:00  Commission Development Committee 5:30	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Metropolitan Planning Organization 4:00	24 Tentative: Regional Issues Committee 3:30	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission**  
[www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org)



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