



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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December 6, 2024

District Local Technical Assistance 2025

Notice of Available Technical Assistance

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is soliciting eligible projects from its member communities to receive technical assistance under the 2025 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. Under this program, BRPC staff provides technical assistance to communities on eligible projects at no cost to the community.

Description of the DLTA Program

The DLTA fund is an annual grant established via Massachusetts General Law. For fiscal year 2025, this fund received an annual appropriation to be distributed statewide to regional planning agencies to support local and regional planning and service provision projects. Please note that any awards made under this solicitation are contingent on the availability of funds provided to BRPC from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Priority Funding Areas for Technical Assistance

A proposed project must fall into one of the two general priority categories listed below to be considered eligible for technical assistance:

- 1) "Planning Ahead for Housing" (or to help reach the Statewide Housing Production Goal) or "Planning Ahead for Growth"

Please see Attachment # 1 for examples of eligible projects for each priority funding area

- 2) Community Compact Cabinet Activities

All proposed projects should align with Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices. Community Compact best practices can include those that are part of the Community Compact Cabinet program as a first priority and best practices explicitly aligned with Community Compact Cabinet best practices but are not best practices identified in a signed Community Compact Cabinet agreement. Visit here for more information: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-compact-best-practice-areas>

Application Deadline

Applications for technical assistance must be received via email to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission by 5:00 PM on **Friday, February 21, 2025**. **Submissions before this deadline are very welcome and encouraged.**

Instructions

Please complete and return the attached "Request for Technical Assistance" form before the application deadline. **The Select Board Chairperson or Mayor must sign all applications.**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss potential projects with BRPC staff **before** submitting an application. Potential applicants are welcome to also reach out to discuss community needs and projects that may be larger in scope than a typical DLTA project. Staff can assist in evaluating whether DLTA or other funding sources may be the most appropriate fit for a project. If a project requires funding outside of or in addition to DLTA, staff can potentially assist in preparing grant applications to other funding sources at no charge to the community.

No Local Match Requirement

There is no local match requirement to receive technical assistance under the 2025 DLTA program. However, municipalities are encouraged to provide a voluntary cash or in-kind match.

Evaluation of Applications

Preference will be given to applications that meet the following criteria:

Primary Criteria

- *Supports municipalities seeking assistance to achieve designation under the Housing Choice Initiative*
- *Supports municipalities seeking to adopt best practices under the Community Compact Cabinet program*
- *Supports best practices and activities identified in the Community Compact Cabinet program*
- *Achieves the objectives of the two priority funding areas, especially COVID-19 recovery activities that fall within the priority categories*
- *Regional Cooperation and/or resource sharing (e.g., involves multiple (2+) municipalities and supports collaboration)*
- *Responds to a regional development need*
- *Enhances the region's economic competitiveness, including local permit streamlining, assessing economic development opportunities in a community or region, downtown economic revitalization, mixed-use development, establishment, expansion, or utilization of a Ch. 43D priority development site*
- *Addresses the housing needs of a community and/or the region, especially related to 40R districts*
- *Implements components of local plans or previous studies related to housing or development*
- *Is likely to catalyze changes "on the ground" (redevelopment, approved zoning changes, new by-laws, regulation, service delivery cost savings, inter-*

municipal collaboration on service delivery or renewable energy use/production, etc.)

- *Serves as a model for other municipalities*

Secondary Criteria

- *The extent to which the project can be completed by BRPC staff*
- *Efforts will be made to distribute projects to different municipalities throughout the region*
- *Multiple projects in a single municipality will only be awarded if funding allows, not including participants in a regional application*
- *Receipt of and performance on past DLTA projects*
- *Availability of other funding sources*
- *Provision of voluntary cash, especially municipal funds, or in-kind match*

Decisions & Notice of Awards

- All decisions are at the discretion of BRPC staff based upon its interpretation of the evaluation criteria and funding availability.
- BRPC reserves the right to request additional information before a decision is made.
- If a proposed project exceeds BRPC's ability to undertake a project through the DLTA program, BRPC and the applicant may engage in a strategic discussion about reducing the scope of the project or obtaining additional funding (e.g. local contribution, other grants) to complete the portion of the project that exceeds the DLTA-funded elements of the project.
- BRPC anticipates selecting projects for technical assistance by February 28, 2025. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decisions the week of March 3, 2025.

NOTE: Funds cannot be used for routine administrative tasks of municipalities, including, but not limited to, grant application preparation, and cannot substitute DLTA funds for which other state resources are available.

BRPC Contacts:

If you have any questions or wish to discuss a project idea, please contact:

Cornelius Hoss, Community Planning and Development Program Manager - (413) 442-1521 ext. 44, choss@berkshireplanning.org



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Request for Technical Assistance District Local Technical Assistance Program 2025

PART 1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Lead Municipality: _____ Date: _____

Point of Contact, Lead Municipality, as designated by the governing body (please print):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Partner Municipalities: (List all partner municipalities, contacts and contact information (email and phone) from those municipalities:

Does your Municipality have a current signed Community Compact Cabinet Agreement?

Yes

No

If yes, for what Best Practice _____

Has your Municipality received or is it seeking Housing Choice Initiative designation?

Yes

No

PART 2. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Please check the type of assistance requested:

[Housing Choice Initiative](#)

[Implements a Communities' Signed Community Compact Cabinet Best Practice](#)

[Community Compact Cabinet Activities](#)

Planning Ahead for Housing (see Attachment 1)

Planning Ahead for Growth (see Attachment 1)

PART 3. ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

Please attach a brief (one-page) summary of the project that addresses the following topics **or use the form at the end of this document:**

1. **Purpose:** Provide a concise statement of the purpose and type of assistance requested.

2. **Priority Funding Areas:** Provide a concise description of how your assistance request addresses one of the priority funding areas. If your request is to adopt or implement a signed Community Compact best practice, please identify that best practice. If you request Housing Choice Initiative designation, please describe how your community intends to obtain that designation.
3. **Project Background:** Briefly describe how the proposed project fits with other municipal objectives, such as implementing activities outlined in a master plan or other planning document. If applicable, please describe any related projects recently completed or currently underway that directly relate to the proposed project. Please also note any planned action or investment that would or could potentially result from the successful completion of the proposed action.
4. **Project Scope & Timeline:** Please list and provide a short description of the major tasks and anticipated timeline to achieve the proposed project, including the anticipated starting date.
5. **Desired Results:** Please describe the desired results (deliverables or products) as an outcome of this project.
6. **Local Official/Staff Commitment:** Please describe the municipal officials/committee members/staff members who will be involved with this project, clearly identifying their roles.
7. **Local Match:** Please identify any voluntary in-kind or cash match (no match required).

PART 4. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

Applications are due by 5:00 pm **Friday, February 21, 2025.**

IMPORTANT:

Application packets must be sent via email only to:

Cornelius Hoss, Community Planning and Development Program Manager

choss@berkshireplanning.org

Tel (413) 442-1521 x44

Please feel free to reach out to Cornelius Hoss with any questions or to discuss potential projects prior to submission. Please note that any awards made under this solicitation are contingent on the continuing availability of funds provided to BRPC from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PART 5. AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Please include the signature of the Chief Elected Official authorizing you to submit this request.

Name _____ **Date** _____

Title _____

Signature _____

(MAYOR/SELECT BOARD CHAIR)

PART 3. ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

Please attach a brief (one-page) summary of the project that addresses the following topics or complete this form:

8. **Purpose:** Provide a concise statement of the purpose and type of assistance requested.

9. **Priority Funding Areas:** Provide a concise description of how your assistance request addresses one of the priority funding areas. If your request is to adopt or implement a signed Community Compact best practice, please identify that best practice. If you request Housing Choice Initiative designation, please describe how your community intends to obtain that designation.

10. **Project Background:** Briefly describe how the proposed project fits with other municipal objectives, such as implementing activities outlined in a master plan or other planning document. If applicable, please describe any related projects recently completed or currently underway that directly relate to the proposed project. Please also note any planned action or investment that would or could potentially result from the successful completion of the proposed action.

11. **Project Scope & Timeline:** Please list and provide a short description of the major tasks and anticipated timeline to achieve the proposed project, including the anticipated starting date.

12. **Desired Results:** Please describe the desired results (deliverables or products) as an outcome of this project.

13. **Local Official/Staff Commitment:** Please describe the municipal officials/committee members/staff members who will be involved with this project, clearly identifying their roles.

14. **Local Match:** Please identify any voluntary in-kind or cash match (no match required)

Attachment # 1

Examples of Eligible Projects for Each Priority Funding Area

- a. **Planning Ahead for Housing:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support affordable and market-rate housing production opportunities.:
 - The development of market, mixed-income and affordable multi-family housing in transit-oriented-development locations, employment centers, downtown locations, and state endorsed Priority Development Areas (PDAs) within the RPA's jurisdiction, including any "Gateway municipality" (see MGL, c. 23A, s. 3A);
 - The creation of as-of-right zoning districts, such as those eligible under DHCD's Compact Neighborhoods policy or the Chapter 40R/Smart Growth statute, including starter homes;
 - Consideration of Transfer Development Rights zoning districts, including areas that may qualify as sending and receiving areas.
 - Development of Workforce housing under the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) and Urban Center Housing TIF areas.
 - The creation of prompt and predictable permitting through an Expedited Permitting Priority Development Site using Chapter 43D for Residential;
 - Identifying challenges and solutions with respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to construct multi-family residential projects in as-of-right zoning districts and parcels;
 - Identifying multi-family residential projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments to such projects, and recommending steps that the Commonwealth and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward;
 - Regional analysis of affordable and market-rate housing needs to include, for example, preparation of a *Housing Production Plan* pursuant to 760 CMR 56.00 et. seq., and similar undertakings that may guide the execution of a compact among communities for locating affordable and market-rate housing;
 - Assisting one or several municipalities who must comply with requirements under the new Fair Housing regulation issued by HUD;
 - Assisting one or more communities to analyze their qualifications to be designated as a Housing Choice Community (including improvements to existing reporting related to Building Permits to the US Census) and/or apply for Housing Choice Initiative capital grants.

- a. **Planning Ahead for Growth:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support economic development opportunities that may include, but are not limited to:
 - Identification, assessment and mapping of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) at the local and regional levels, including discussion of specific areas for multi-family housing growth.
 - Supporting prompt and predictable permitting through the Chapter 43D Expedited Permitting Program for Economic Development projects;
 - Identifying challenges and solutions with respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to advance economic development activities;
 - At a city or town's request, identifying economic development projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments, and recommending steps that the state

- and/or the applicable municipality could realistically take to enable those projects to go forward; and
- Developing or updating components of municipal master plans and providing technical assistance that supports the implementation of strategies that are designed to advance well-planned growth and development policies and practices.

- b. Supporting the Community Compact, including regionalization:** Supporting municipalities seeking to adopt state best practices under the Community Compact Cabinet program, including those who want to pursue projects of a regional nature. Assisting Compact Communities with implementation of their Community Compact best practice selection(s).
- c. Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative:** Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative (HCI) and communities seeking assistance to achieve Designation under the HCI. The HCI will designate communities that have produced certain housing levels and have best practices that allow for compact housing development. Priority shall be to support Designated Housing Choice Communities. The activities under “Planning Ahead for Housing” qualify as best practices under the HCI.