

Community Innovation Challenge Grant

GUIDELINES

Our new fiscal reality demands that we invest in and incentivize innovation among local government to find new and more efficient ways to deliver core local services, much as we are doing at the state level to change the way government does business. The Patrick-Murray Administration's new Community Innovation Challenge Grant Program will identify compelling strategies that will help cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth to maintain critical local services and stretch every tax payer dollar as far as possible.

Application deadline: January 15, 2012

I. PURPOSE

A multi-year competitive grants program to provide significant incentives and financial support for one-time or transitional costs related to improving local government service delivery efficiency, service quality, and achieving cost savings through:

- **Regionalization:** shared services, joint or regional facilities, intergovernmental agreements, consolidations, mergers, and other types of collaborations.
- **Other reform and efficiency Initiatives:** for a single entity to plan and implement innovative internal efficiency initiatives to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery in ways that achieve cost savings.

Allowable applicants include:

- municipalities
- regional schools
- school districts considering forming a regional school district or regionalizing services
- regional planning agencies and councils of government

Regional planning agencies and councils of governments may also serve as the administrative or fiscal agent on behalf of municipalities.

II. GRANTS

Grant amounts: Requests for awards up to \$500,000 will be considered. Applicants will be required to submit a detailed budget and project timeline.

Grant awards and selection process: Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee of state and independent members, with final decisions made by the Secretary of Administration and Finance based on the criteria set forth below. The evaluation committee may request further information or hold interviews.

Grant recipients will be announced not later than February, 2012.

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Eligible use of funds: One-time costs, transitional costs, or seed money for regionalization and other efficiency initiatives.

Eligible project activities: Planning and implementation activities are eligible. Feasibility studies are NOT eligible.

Grant Disbursements: Grant recipients will receive award funds for eligible costs in quarterly allotments based on submission of a quarterly report on project activities, expenses, and identified performance measurements achieved during the quarter.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Criteria for selection will include but not be limited to:

- Innovative
- Potential for greatest impact
- Cost savings and/or other tangible benefits such as service enhancements, service delivery efficiencies, or other benefits
- Demonstrated feasibility of successful implementation
- Speed of project timeline for completion
- Potential applicability to other local governments (including in the context of regionalization proposals, opportunity for other local governments to join)

IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Executive Office for Administration and Finance is soliciting thoughtful plans and proposals for innovative initiatives. Describe proposed initiative in detail, including exact purpose of the grant funds, objectives, problems trying to address, any efforts or steps already taken to address the problem, any obstacles encountered to date and plans to resolve those challenges, the manner in which economies of scale or efficiencies would be achieved, change in service delivery, what entity would be responsible for service delivery, how participating entities would retain oversight/responsibility of service, and how the population would continue to be served.

In addition to a general description of the proposal, applicants should also address the following aspects:

Benefits:

Identify cost savings and benefits for each participating entity.

Identify cost savings and how such savings will be achieved, including any removal of redundancies, reductions in personnel or unfilled positions eliminated.

Identify other benefits. Other benefits may include enhanced level of service, improvements to organization or management structure, improved public access to

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local government services, a more efficient level of service that still meets the population's needs, improvements in qualifications or efficiency of staff, increased hours of operation, new online availability, or reduction in capital facilities to maintain.

Identify need for funding such that the initiative would not happen or would not achieve the identified benefits without the funds provided by this grant program.

Cost impact:

For each participating entity, identify any new costs that will be incurred and how the costs will be paid for or offset. Describe how new initiative will be made financially viable for the long-term once established.

Measures of success:

Propose approach to evaluating and measuring the success of the initiative, both the success of implementing the proposed project and the success of the initiative or reform going forward once implemented. Include expected measurable improvements in service delivery or efficiency. Applicant will be required to engage with the grant program manager to develop performance measurement criteria.

Project budget for requested amount:

Provide a detailed and realistic project budget estimate. Include breakdown of amount requested by activity/task and type of cost. Note if project budget is attached as separate document.

If other sources of funds have been secured or have been sought for this project, please identify other sources and whether those funds have been applied for (provide copy of application) or secured (provide evidence).

Project timeline:

Projects must be completed before or by December 31, 2012. However, special consideration may be given to extended timelines for extraordinary projects. Note if project timeline is attached as separate document.

Identify innovative aspects of proposal:

...including changes in way local government does business

Potential applicability to other local governments:

Projects will be evaluated in part on potential for applicability to other local governments and/or potential for expansion. Describe how proposed project meets this requirement of

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serving as a viable prototype for other local government entities. Describe how this project can be expanded.

Evidence of commitment among applicants/participants:

Applicants must submit documentation of demonstrated support for the proposed initiative and grant application from each participating entity: if a city by the mayor or city manager, if a town by the board of selectmen, if a town with a town council by the town manager or administrator, if a school district by the school committee, if a district by the prudential committee. See signature form at end of application.

V. REPORTING

Project updates: In order to receive funds for eligible costs in quarterly allotments, applicants will be required to submit quarterly reports on project activities, expenses, and identified performance measurements achieved during the quarter.

Project evaluation: Grant recipients will be required to engage with the grant program manager to conduct evaluation and success measurement activities.

Final report: Applicants will be required to submit a final project report, including documentation of project activities, benefits, lessons learned, documents created (such as MOU, ISA, or other agreements or contracts). Final report should include sufficient documentation such that another local government entity could use the report as a guide to replicating the initiative.

VI. FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Information sessions scheduled for:

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Town of Ashland
Town Hall, 101 Main Street
9:30-10:30 AM

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Town of Plymouth
Fehlow Room, Public Library, 132 South Street
10:00-11:00 AM

Monday, November 21, 2011

City of Greenfield
GCC Downtown Center, 270 Main Street
10:00-11:00 AM

Program Contacts:

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