Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Housing and
Economic Development

COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH

Background

During the regional engagement sessions for the Economic Development Plan *Partnerships for Growth*, municipalities and community development leaders continually noted the challenge of securing state funding. This feedback led to an internal review and exploration of ways to improve access to various programs and streamline grant processes. The result is the creation of the Community One Stop for Growth, a single application portal to apply for certain housing and community development funding programs, aligning with the Build Vibrant Communities pillar and Accessible Government principle of *Partnerships for Growth.*

What We Heard

1. **Knowledge of and Access to Funds:** First, it was challenging to identify and understand the purposes and requirements of various funding sources that were available.

2. **Time Consuming and Complicated Processes:** Second, it was challenging to apply to multiple programs with different application timelines, all with unique processes and guidelines.

What We Did

1. **Developed Single Application Portal** to streamline access to multiple grant programs on a single timeline.

2. **Built Referral, Guidance, and Collaborative Review** processes into the grant round, to allow the state to better coordinate and strategize in funding housing and economic development projects in communities.

Building Upon Community Compact and Economic Recovery Efforts

- **The Community Compact Connector, launched by the Lieutenant Governor, addressed the concern around access to funds and knowledge of programs with an online, centralized grant finder and calendar.**

- **Building upon that success, EOHED and agencies have developed a one stop model to streamline the grant process for programs related to community economic development, in coordination with the Community Compact.**

- **It is more important than ever to coordinate across programs to best support communities as they recover from the pandemic. With simplified application processes, communities will have easier access to the administration's recovery tools, including funding and program staff expertise, as they develop holistic community economic development goals.**

Community One Stop for Growth Benefits

- **Ability to be considered for more than one grant program simultaneously**, saving time on research and applications to different agencies and programs.

- **Guidance and State partnerships,** allowing applicants to receive key feedback before completing a full application, and allowing the State to holistically and directly engage with local leadership.

- **Direct referrals to additional programs** that applicants may realize could support their priorities.

- **Removal of redundant legacy program processes and questions** to streamline the application experience.

- **A full view by program staff of community priorities**, allowing the state to understand community vision beyond four corners of a single, discrete application.

- **Collaborative review,** allowing for State funding coordination and enhanced State awareness and support for community development goals.
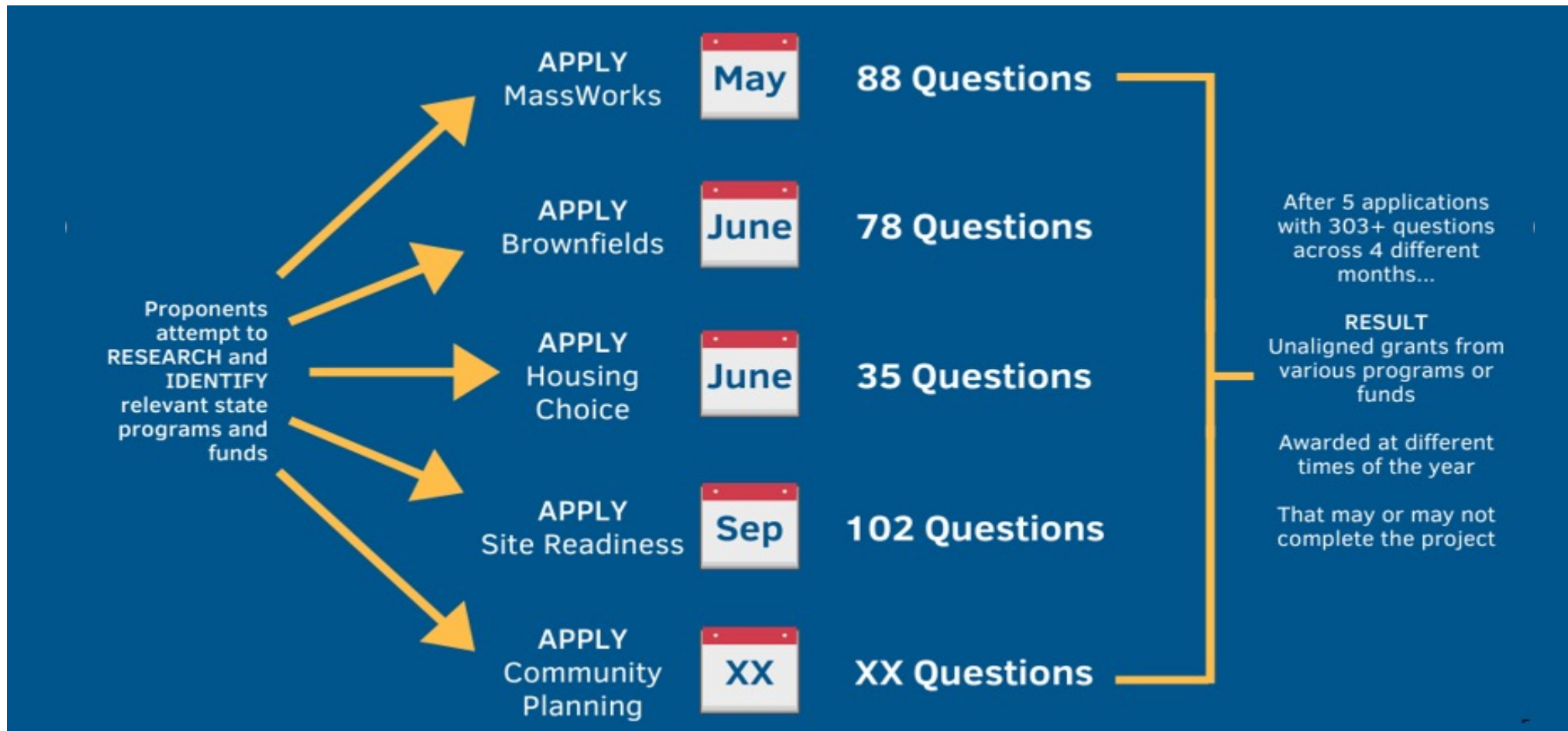
The process will also reorient the State from a passive reviewer of funding requests to an active partner in economic development strategy, priorities, and investment.

HYPOTHETICAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

A downtown revitalization effort in a Housing Choice Community, that contains a site that needs demolition of a structure and a brownfield clean up, a plan to create a businesses improvement district, and the crafting of a proforma to determine the feasibility of developing 300 units of market-rate housing. The applicant filled out the Expression of Interest to get guidance on the project.
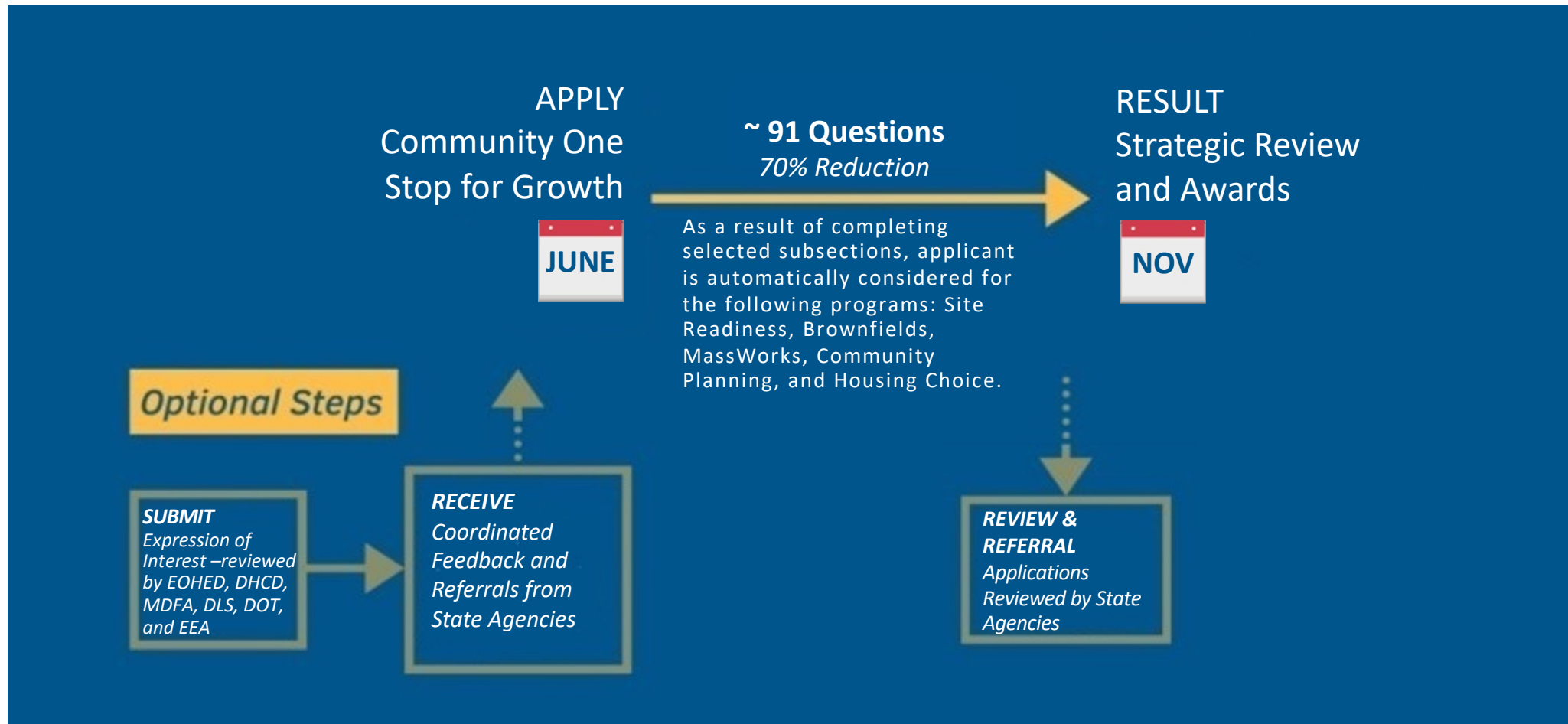
Example Application: New Process

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APPLY
Community One Stop for Growth

JUNE

~ 91 Questions
70% Reduction

As a result of completing selected subsections, applicant is automatically considered for the following programs: Site Readiness, Brownfields, MassWorks, Community Planning, and Housing Choice.

RESULT
Strategic Review and Awards

NOV

Optional Steps

SUBMIT
Expression of Interest –reviewed by EOHED, DHCD, MDFA, DLS, DOT, and EEA

RECEIVE
Coordinated Feedback and Referrals from State Agencies

REVIEW & REFERRAL
Applications Reviewed by State Agencies

One Door to Many Funding Programs - Precedents

Applicants may have experience with two existing approaches to simplifying administration of grant programs; this experience may be helpful in conceptualizing and onboarding to the Community One Stop for Growth. These include:

Mass Works Infrastructure Program	Rental Round: Housing One-Stop
Model: In 2011, six funding programs were statutorily combined into a single program and a single capital line item, allowing communities to use a single application to access grant funding.	Model: Over a decade ago, DHCD began administering fourteen programs together through a single funding application round, though the programs remain separate line items.

Mass Works Infrastructure Program:

- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)
- Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grant
- Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion (MORE) Program
- Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Grant
- Small Town Road Assistance Program (STRAP)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Grant Program

Rental Round: Housing One-Stop:

- Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Mass State Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Housing Stabilization Fund monies
- Capital Improvement and Preservation Fund
- Housing Innovations Fund
- Facilities Consolidation Fund
- Community Based Housing
- Commercial Area Transit Node Housing Program
- Affordable Housing Preservation and Development Fund
- Section 8 Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Assistance
- MRVP Project Based Voucher (PBV) Assistance
- Federal (HUD) Housing Trust Fund (HTF)

The Community One Stop for Growth will emulate the consolidated purpose of both examples by using one application, while most directly replicating the coordinated internal administration of the Rental Round: Housing One-Stop Model.

Programs in the Community One Stop for Growth

Beginning in January 2021, ten programs will be administered through the Community One Stop for Growth – one application door to access programs offered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Department of Housing and Community Development, and MassDevelopment.

COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH PROGRAMS

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
- Mass Works
- Urban Agenda
- 43D Expedited Permitting

Department of Housing and Community Development
- Housing Choice Capital Grants
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- (NEW) Community Planning Grants
- (NEW) Rural Development Fund

MassDevelopment
- Brownfields
- Site Readiness
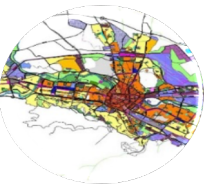- (NEW) Underutilized Properties

Development Continuum

All grant programs within the Community One Stop for Growth will fall into the Continuum. The following are allowable uses of funds within each category:

Preparing for Growth	Catalyzing Specific Projects
Grants to support activities and initial steps by community-based actors to attract and guide private investment in a community.	Grants to support private, commercial, industrial, and residential investment projects that further the community vision.

Community Capacity Building	Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Predevelopment & Permitting	Buildings (Vertical)	Infrastructure (Horizontal)
Technical Assistance for Improving a Downtown or Commercial Center	Master Plan	Site Concept Plan	**Buildings:**	Capital Improvements	Design, Engineering, Permitting
Early Stage Strategy Development	Urban Renewal Plan	Site Market Study	Building Condition Study		Bidding
Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortium or Coalition	Land Use Plan	Site Acquisition, related tasks	Structural Engineering Reports		Construction
	Downtown Plan	Demolition	Code Compliance Studies		Construction Admin
	Parking Management Plan	Construction of site related upgrades	Development Feasibility Studies		
	Housing Production Plans	Brownfields Site Assessment	Indoor Survey		
	Market Feasibility Studies	Brownfields Remediation	Seismic Code Assessments		
	Zoning Review & Updates		**Site/Infrastructure:**		
	Other Strategic Plans		Engineering Documents		
			Pre-Permitting and Permitting		
			Pro-Forma Development		
			Due Diligence		

Program Overlay onto Continuum

The **FY22 funding rounds for existing programs will be implemented through the Community One Stop for Growth**. There are also new programs, authorized by the 2020 Economic Development Bill, incorporated into the One Stop. The table below **overlays existing and new programs with the new Continuum framework** (for guidance purposes only).

Programs	Community Capacity Building	Planning & Zoning	Site Preparation	Predevelopment & Permitting	Buildings (vertical)	Infrastructure (horizontal)
Urban Agenda	✓					
Mass Downtown	✓	✓				
NEW Community Planning		✓				
Brownfields			✓			
Site Readiness			✓	✓		
NEW Under Utilized Properties				✓	✓	
MassWorks				✓		✓
Housing Choice		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NEW Rural Development		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Community One Stop for Growth – Referral Process

Applicants will have **two opportunities** in during the Community One Stop for Growth cycle to be referred to additional programs for funding consideration.

After submitting an Expression of Interest, applicants will be referred to relevant grant program aligned with Community One Stop for Growth if a project or priority may be able to access those funds. Communities can also be referred to DOT or EEA programs, where appropriate.

After submitting a Full Application, applicants will also be referred to relevant grant programs, if the project(s) may be able to use additional funds.

REFERRAL PROGRAMS ALIGNED WITH COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
- Seaport Economic Council
- Massachusetts Dredging Program

Department of Housing and Community Development
- Community Development Block Grants (non-entitlement communities)
- Urban Renewal

MassDevelopment
- Transformative Development Initiative (TDI)
- Commonwealth Places
- Real Estate Services
- Collaborative Workspaces

Massachusetts Office of Business Development
- Regional Economic Development Organizations
- Economic Development Incentive Program, Vacant Storefronts Program
- Community Development Capital Program

Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC)
- Technical Assistance Grant Program

Community Compact

What to Expect: Community One Stop for Growth Phases and Timeline

JAN

- **Virtual Sessions (January – February)** – Three webinars will be available to applicants prior to submitting any application materials, covering an overview of the Community One Stop for Growth, One Stop application guidance, and using the Agate technology platform.

- **Expression of Interest and Guidance (February – April)** – An opportunity for the applicant to submit an overview of priorities and goals as well as highlight key projects. The Expression of Interest will be reviewed by EOHED, DHCD, MDFA, DLS, DOT, and EEA. Applicants can receive feedback and guidance from the State on how to strengthen an application and on a community's overall economic development strategy, as well as referrals to thirteen (13) aligned grant programs.

- **Full Application (May – June)** – Single application portal allowing access to ten (10) integrated grant programs that will accept the full application.

- **Review and Evaluation (June – September)** – State agencies review applications and also engage in joint review of grants among agencies and other key reviewers.

- **Notification of Awards and Referrals (October – November)** – Community One Stop for Growth partners will review all applications and make determinations of grant amounts based upon availability of funds and notify applicants. Applicants may be referred to other relevant grant programs aligned with the One Stop.

- **Contracting (November – December)** – State agencies work with successful applicants to execute a funding contract and issue awards.

NOV

- **Reporting (Annual, year following award)** – Awarded entities report on their activities in line with contracting terms.

Next Steps

- **View the recorded Virtual Sessions**

  - **Webinar 1:** One Stop Overview Webinar

  - **Webinar 2:** One Stop Application Guidance Webinar

  - **Webinar 3:** Technology Webinar

- **Carefully Review NOFA and Program Guidelines**

- **Prepare/Submit an Expression of Interest** *(Optional)* – Deadline: April 2, 2021

- **Prepare/Submit Full Application(s)** – Deadline: June 4, 2021

For detailed information, visit mass.gov/onestop