

Baker announces \$3M in 'Urban Agenda' grants

Jan 13, 2016, 2:37pm EST Updated: Jan 13, 2016, 3:00pm EST

Boston Business Journal

Gov. Charlie Baker announced \$3 million in grant funding for a program that will pay for 16 economic development, planning, and housing development initiatives, across 13 communities in Massachusetts.

The state's inaugural "Urban Agenda" program promotes economic vitality and cultivates safer, stronger urban neighborhoods and communities throughout Massachusetts. The program seeks to advance vibrant communities, and unlock economic mobility for residents, through community-based partnerships that address workforce development, entrepreneurship, and mixed-income housing development, according to a release.

Here are the winners, along with the descriptions of the program:

Boston - \$225,000

Madison Park Development Corporation will partner with Boston Education, Skills & Training (BEST) Corp., a nonprofit workforce development organization focused on training Boston residents for jobs in the hospitality industry, to create a new hospitality training facility in Dudley Square.

Boston - \$200,000

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative will partner with Commonwealth Kitchen, Project Hope, and the Local Enterprise Assistance Fund (LEAF) to launch a local food manufacturing initiative that will grow small businesses and create food manufacturing jobs in Dorchester and Roxbury.

Framingham - \$125,000

The South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), in partnership with SMOC Financial Services, the Town of Framingham, Framingham Downtown Renaissance, Framingham State University, MetroWest Legal Services, Middlesex Savings Bank, MutualOne Bank, MassBay Community College, the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, and the Brazil New England Chamber of Commerce, will launch a one-stop microenterprise center that will boost entrepreneurship and the growth of startups by low- and moderate-income Framingham residents.

Greenfield and North Adams - \$200,000

The communities of Greenfield and North Adams will spur downtown revitalization and deepen community-based entrepreneurship through a coordinated program of small business training, mentorship, business succession planning, and capital access. The grant will implement priority opportunities outlined in the Sustainable Berkshires and Sustainable Franklin County regional plans.

Holyoke - \$200,000

The Greater Holyoke Chamber Centennial Foundation will partner with the City of Holyoke, the Holyoke Public Library, Nuestras Raices, SCORE, and Holyoke Works to deepen Holyoke's entrepreneurial ecosystem by facilitating the development of affordable workspaces for entrepreneurs, expand the city's SPARK entrepreneurship program, and facilitate the streamlining of Holyoke's local business permitting processes. Holyoke's Urban Agenda program will be targeted at building entrepreneurship among Latino residents, and builds off existing economic development partnerships through the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Working Cities Challenge, and MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative.

Lawrence - \$250,000

The Lawrence Working Families Initiative will scale up an existing Working Cities Challenge partnership aimed at long-term building prosperity among low-income Latino parents of Lawrence Public Schools students, by operationalizing Lawrence employers' local hiring and commitments, implementing new job recruitment and internal promotion programs, and extending job coaching, skills training, job placement, and professional mentorship supports to low-income residents.

New Bedford - \$200,000

The New Bedford Housing Authority and PACE YouthBuild New Bedford will partner to create a vocational skills center that will provide career assessment, educational opportunities, and vocational training to residents of the city's public housing. The program aims to address chronic unemployment and underemployment among city residents by equipping them with the skills necessary to enter and advance in the workforce.

Somerville - \$250,000

The City of Somerville and the Somerville Public Schools, in collaboration with Sprout & Co., TechHub Boston, the Artisan's Asylum, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Fab Foundation, will launch a fabrication laboratory at Somerville High School. The "fab lab" will host a vocational-technical fabrication academy, an evening adult workforce development program, and a youth entrepreneurship and mentorship program that will connect lower-income youth to the innovation economy. The project builds off the city's previous work, through the Working Cities Challenge, to create economic mobility for lower-income residents.

Worcester - \$200,000

The Downtown Worcester Access to Employment Partnership will create a new employment training and support program, aimed at creating employment pipelines in the health care, transportation, and food service sectors. The partnership will reduce barriers to employment for low-income families, veterans, and unemployed and under-employed youth. The Partnership will

be led by the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board, the City of Worcester, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, Quinsigamond Community College, the Worcester Community Connections Coalition, the WMCA of Central Massachusetts, the Worcester Youth Center, the Worcester Community Action Council, Veterans Inc., and Ascentria Care Alliance.

Urban Agenda Economic Development Planning Grants:

Brockton - \$50,000

Brockton's Urban Agenda planning grant will fund feasibility studies and

business plan development for three downtown entrepreneurship projects: a restaurant incubator, a community kitchen and food incubator, and a co-work space. The planning grant builds on previous downtown redevelopment planning by the City and MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative.

Springfield - \$50,000

Springfield's Urban Agenda planning grant will fund a collaborative planning process in the City's North End neighborhood. The planning process will address quality-of-life issues for North End residents, support the work of the North End Campus Coalition, and build neighborhood social capital to promote economic and workforce development.

Winthrop - \$50,000

Winthrop's Urban Agenda planning grant will fund a comprehensive master planning process for the Town's main commercial district, and a reuse plan for a former middle school parcel that will unlock future economic development in the Town.

Urban Agenda Housing Program Grants:

Boston - \$300,000

The City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development will utilize a \$300,000 Urban Agenda Housing Program grant to advance the redevelopment of the Indigo Block, an under-

utilized city-owned parcel in Uphams Corner. Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, Boston Capital, and Escazu Development will transform the site into 88 new housing units for low-, moderate-, and middle-income residents, and 20,000 square feet of light industrial space. The grant will finance a range of predevelopment activities at the project site.

Boston - \$300,000

The Boston Housing Authority will utilize a \$300,000 Urban Agenda Housing Program grant to advance the redevelopment of the BHA's Amory Street Apartments site. The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, Urban Edge, and The Community Builders are constructing 294 units of new mixed-income housing on the 6-acre site, and rehabilitating 215 units of existing housing for elderly and disabled residents. The grant will finance a range of predevelopment activities at the project site.

Holyoke - \$150,000

The Holyoke Redevelopment Authority will utilize a \$150,000 Urban Agenda Housing Program grant to advance the redevelopment of 1.5 acres of vacant and underutilized city-owned real estate in South Holyoke. The grant will finance a range of predevelopment activities at the project site, as the Redevelopment Authority engages a qualified master developer.

Lynn - \$250,000

The Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND) will utilize a \$250,000 Urban Agenda Housing Program grant to advance the second phase of the City's Washington Street Gateway redevelopment. The grant will finance a range of predevelopment activities that will enable the construction of 20 new market-rate housing units.