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Community Empowerment & Reinvestment Program

FY2024 Annual Report

1. Introduction

FY2024 is the third annual round of the Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Program, which is a competitive grant program that offers flexible operating grants to local collaborations for the implementation of programming and projects that develop, strengthen, and invest in community-led efforts to bring positive economic outcomes to communities that face historically disproportionate challenges to economic growth. Specifically, the program was developed to support communities with high rates of incarceration and/or recidivism, widespread poverty, and large groups of disadvantaged and underrepresented populations. A total of \$15,000,000 was appropriated to the program in the Commonwealth's FY2024 Operating Budget.

2. Line Item Language

7002-2021 – Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program – *For a community empowerment and reinvestment grant program to be administered by the executive office of economic development to develop, strengthen and invest in communities: (i) that are disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system; (ii) where a high percentage of individuals' incomes fall below 250 per cent of the federal poverty level; and (iii) with a large population of socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups; provided, that the board established in this item in section 2 of chapter 227 of the acts of 2020 shall make recommendations to the executive office on the criteria for making grants available to communities and organizations; provided further, that said board shall consist of individuals from and with experience advocating on behalf of said communities; provided further, that said board shall be comprised entirely of individuals who belong to a demographic of socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups; provided further, that eligible uses of grant funding shall include, but not be limited to, for socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups: (a) job training, job creation and job placement for those who face high barriers to employment in said communities; (b) transitional employment programs, social enterprise, pre-apprenticeship or other training programs; (c) school-based or community-based high school dropout prevention and reengagement programs; (d) cooperative and small business development programs and community-based workforce development programs; and (e) programs focused on housing stabilization services, addiction treatment and trauma-informed mental health care; and provided further, that not later than April 1, 2024, the executive office shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing: (1)*

criteria established for creating grants; (2) grants approved under this item, delineated by municipality and organization; (3) grants expected to be approved under this item, delineated by municipality and organization; and (4) the status of funds distributed for approved grants.....

3. 3 Year Model

New this year, EOED procured these grant projects for three years (FY24-26) rather than for one operating year at a time. Awarded grantees will apply for renewal at the conclusion of each fiscal year, and renewal decisions will be made based on budget appropriation and the renewal criteria set out in the RFP. This change was intended to increase the predictability of funding streams for grantee organizations, many of which are grassroots organizations that cannot predictably maintain service levels for these highly vulnerable populations with 6 months on/6 months off grant funding cycles.

4. Community Empowerment & Reinvestment Board

Per Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020, the Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Board was formed to advise EOED regarding the program’s grant criteria. The Advisory Board was convened and met on July 19, 2023, in preparation for the FY2024 application round. As required, the RFP incorporated feedback from the board. The list of board members, including their affiliations and appointers, is provided below.

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Appointed by
Vacant*			Governor
Nicole	Obi	Black Economic Council of Mass. (BECMA)	Governor
Juan Carlos	Rivera	Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell	Governor
Grace	Moreno	Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce	Senate President
Donna	Haghighat	Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts	Senate President
Ron	Waddell	Legendary Legacies	House Speaker
Sean	Ellis	Community Servings	House Speaker

**This board seat is currently vacant.*

5. Award Criteria and Review Process

The RFP and application were published on August 17, 2024, a virtual information session was held on August 22, and the deadline for submissions was September 15, 2023.

EOED received 140 applications from 23 communities, requesting a total of \$49,313,139. This is a 27% year-over-year increase in applications and a 20% year-over-year increase in dollars requested.

First, applications were screened for eligibility. To be eligible, the lead applicant must be a municipal government, other government entity, or IRS-registered nonprofit organization with a current IRS determination letter.

Each application was read, evaluated, and given a score based on a 110-point scale, which included up to 10 bonus points for designing a project which intentionally serves underrepresented groups. The evaluation of the applications was conducted in two parts: Up to 80 points were assigned based on the quality of the goals, partnership, and proposed programming, and 30 points were assigned based on the specific criteria related to the target population(s).

A panel of 19 reviewers, with staff from EOED, EOHLC, MassDevelopment, and various other agencies, was formed to conduct the qualitative review of the applications. Each reviewer was randomly assigned 16 applications to evaluate, and each application was read and scored by at least 2 different reviewers. The scores were averaged for this review segment.

Project Evaluation Scoring

The review panel based their evaluation on the following criteria, which were outlined in the published RFP, and correspond to the questions in the application:

Community Profile and Goals (up to 5 points)

Description of the neighborhood, economic, and social context in which proposed programs will operate, placing the work within a broader community framework.

Collaboration and Partnerships (up to 10 points)

Description of existing community coalition or collaboration with thoughtful assembling of partners; strong partnerships include government, non-profits, businesses, community groups, and/or others.

- Partner roles demonstrate that project is occurring in collaboration (not all carried out by single organization).
- Evidence of the partnership's history, experience, and past successes.
- Innovation of the collaboration: leveraging existing strengths and developing new local capacity and leadership.

Anticipated Impact – Project Plan (up to 35 points)

Outcomes are directly related to the needs of the identified target population(s), and to the overall community goals, particularly in supporting successful re-entry support, prevention of justice system involvement, and/or other relevant program objectives.

- Clear articulation of the vision and goals of the project in as they relate to the target population and the geographic community as a whole. Goals outline a direct impact on individuals that are at risk of justice system involvement, were formerly incarcerated, and/or their families and social contacts.
- Demonstration of how members of target population, such as community residents and/or those that have been formerly incarcerated have been engaged in the project.
- Project activities, outputs and anticipated outcomes seem reasonable and relevant to the project goals and in proportion to the funding request. Proposed services will directly benefit the target population.

- Project activities, outputs and outcomes are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- Empirically validated model. Project or program has undergone a successful program evaluation and/or project is closely based on an empirically validated model and/or applicant has clear plan to undergo program evaluation during the grant period and has integrated that into the budget, timeline and other plans.

Proven Track Record (up to 5 points)

Evidence of the lead applicant's experience in leading coalitions and completing projects for the target population, especially working with justice-impacted people.

Capacity to Succeed & Budget (up to 15 points)

Clear and feasible project timeline.

- Detailed budget, including total project budget, allocation of the requested grant funds, reasonable overhead costs, and inclusion of secured match funds from non-Commonwealth sources, if any.
- Lead applicant organization has filed timely reports with the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, and applicant's grant request is reasonable in proportion to prior year's gross support and revenue.

Advancing Equitable Opportunities (BONUS 10 points)

Clearly articulates how project will advance equitable opportunities in the community by intentionally serving community members who have been socially and economically disadvantaged, and/or historically underrepresented.

Target Population scoring

A second review panel then read and scored all of the applications for alignment with the target population to be served. The Target Population criteria, as written in the RFP is:

Target Population (up to 30 points)

Clear description of the specific target population that the project is designed to benefit. Clear and specific evidence that the community:

- Is disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system,
- Has a large population of socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups.
- Project primarily (based on number of people served) and directly serves people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.
- Prison admission rates in project community (based on Massachusetts DOC data)
- Arrest rates in project community (based on EOPSS data)
- Percentage of people living in poverty in project community (per US Census data)
- Median income for households in project community falls under 250% of federal poverty level (per US Census data)

For the final four criteria, EOED staff collected and analyzed data for each targeted community, with assistance from [Boston University Sociology Professor Jessica Simes](#). EOED staff then developed a scoring methodology that assigned point values based on the relative impact of each factor on the community.

Final Scores

Scores from both panels were added together to establish the Final Score for each application. After careful review and evaluation of the eligible applications, EOED made 67 grant awards to projects in 17 communities.

6. FY2024-26 Community Empowerment & Reinvestment Program Grant Awardees

Lead Organization Name	Project Name	Project City or Town	FY2024 Grant Award
African Community Economic Development of New England (ACEDONE)	Small Business Development Technical Assistance	Boston	\$ 200,000
Agency Design Inc	Restorative Justice and Codesign Applied to School Disciplinary and Safety Practices in Boston	Boston	\$ 285,000
Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston	YouthConnect	Boston	\$ 300,000
Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro South	Brockton Teen Leadership & Workforce Development Program	Brockton	\$ 250,000
Brockton Interfaith Community	Co-op Cultivation Program	Brockton	\$ 425,000
Building Audacity	On The Grow	Lynn	\$ 145,000
Camp Harbor View	Empowering Boston Youth and Families	Boston	\$ 150,000
CENTRO Las Americas	Towards Financial Empowerment	Worcester	\$ 100,000
Charles Houston Cultural Project, Inc.	Black Excellence Project	Worcester	\$ 100,000
Children's Services of Roxbury	Youth, Purpose & Partnership (YPP)	Boston	\$ 175,000
Commonwealth Land Trust	CLT's Justice Support Team for Formerly Homeless and Unhoused Individuals	Boston	\$ 200,000
Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc., (CAPIC)	Substance Use Disorders (SUDS) & Mobile Outreach Program	Chelsea	\$ 100,000
Community Legal Aid., Inc.	Addressing the Civil Consequences of the Criminal Court System Through Education and Advocacy	Worcester	\$ 285,000
Community Reentry Program	Greater Boston Re-Entry Task Force	Boston	\$ 160,000
Community Workshops, Inc. d/b/a Community Work Services	Extending Re-imagining Re-entry	Boston	\$ 400,000
Dismas House of Massachusetts	Dismas Reentry Initiative	Worcester	\$ 225,000
Economic Development Industrial Corp of Lynn	Lynn Business Incubator	Lynn	\$ 300,000

EDC 413 Works, Inc.	Fair Chance: Bridging the Gap between Employers and People with Conviction Histories	Springfield	\$ 450,000
Enlace de Familias Holyoke/ Holyoke Family Network Inc.,	Community Empowerment Lab	Holyoke	\$ 400,000
Essex County Community Organization	Lynn Organizing Hub for Leadership Development and Community	Lynn	\$ 75,000
Family Nurturing Center of MA	Bowdoin Cares Coalition	Boston	\$ 350,000
Fathers' UpLift	Clinical Therapy and Peer-driven Coaching for Fathers in Re-Entry, Recovery, and/or Re-Engagement	Boston	\$ 200,000
Franklin County Community Development Corporation	After Incarceration: Ending the Cycle Through Workplace Training and Entrepreneurship	Greenfield	\$ 155,000
Fresh Start Wellness Center	Resurrected	Worcester	\$ 75,000
Future Hope Apprenticeship and Recovery Program	Future Hope for Dorchester	Boston	\$ 75,000
G{Code}	The G{Code} Experience	Boston	\$ 300,000
Hampden County Career Center, Inc dba MassHire Holyoke	Pillars of the Workforce Community	Holyoke	\$ 225,000
Hampden County Honorary Sheriffs' Charitable Foundation, Inc.	Honorary Sheriffs' Workforce Initiative	Springfield	\$ 230,000
HarborCOV	Housing Stabilization and Legal Representation for Domestic Violence Survivors	Chelsea	\$ 165,000
Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation	The Bridge to Prosperity	Boston	\$ 300,000
Justice For Housing, Inc	Stable Housing and Reintegration	Boston	\$ 450,000
La Colaborativa	Chelsea Youth Work	Chelsea	\$ 400,000
Latino Economic Development Corporation	LevelUp - Building Leaders for Today	Springfield	\$ 100,000
LaunchSpace Inc	Creative Sector Pathway Program	Orange	\$ 75,000
Lawrence Family Development, Inc. d/b/a Lawrence Prospera	SISU Basketball	Lawrence	\$ 250,000
Level Ground Mixed Martial Arts	Student Trainer Workforce Development & Academic Enrichment Program	Boston	\$ 150,000
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute	Dorchester Community Empowerment and Re-Entry Program	Boston	\$ 200,000
Main South Community Development Corporation	Main South Empowerment Project	Worcester	\$ 200,000

Massachusetts Chapter of the National Organization for Women Inc. Foundation	Fall River Menstrual Equity Project	Fall River	\$ 270,000
Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce	BEE Program	Boston	\$ 400,000
Mill City Grows	Lowell Farm to School	Lowell	\$ 100,000
MissionSAFE: A New Beginning, Inc.	Violence Prevention/Workforce Preparedness	Boston	\$ 425,000
More Than Words	Young Adult Job Training & Diversion	Boston	\$ 425,000
New Beginnings reentry Services, Inc	New Beginnings Community Impact	Boston	\$ 100,000
New North Citizens' Council	New Life / Nueva Vida	Holyoke	\$ 100,000
NorthStar Learning Centers	Project Thrive N.B.	New Bedford	\$ 275,000
Pa'lante Transformative Justice	LightHouse Restorative Justice Program	Holyoke	\$ 75,000
Partakers (College Behind Bars)	Partakers Empowerment Program Reentry Initiative-	Boston	\$ 200,000
Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA)	SouthCoast Reentry Collaborative	New Bedford	\$ 90,000
Project Place	Boston Workforce and Reentry Coalition	Boston	\$ 250,000
Roca Inc.	Springfield Emerging Adult Coalition (SEAC)	Springfield	\$ 425,000
Roots & Dreams and Mustard Seeds Inc.	Co-op Business Development	Pittsfield	\$ 75,000
Second Street Second Chances	Second Street Second Chances	Pittsfield	\$ 300,000
St. Stephen's Youth Programs	B-PEACE: Community-based Violence Prevention for Boston Youth and Young Adults	Boston	\$ 125,000
The Cordial Eye Gallery and Artist Space Inc	Creative Futures Cape Cod	Barnstable	\$ 100,000
The Home for Little Wanderers	Economic and Housing Stability for Young Adults	Boston	\$ 300,000
The Neighborhood Developers, Inc.	CONNECT's Housing Hotline - A Housing Stability Resource for the Chelsea Hub	Chelsea	\$ 225,000
The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts	Greater Springfield Women's Economic Security Hub-Phase III	Springfield	\$ 260,000
TLE Center for Urban Entrepreneurship	TLE's Makeup Artistry & Braiding Training & Job Placement Program	Lawrence	\$ 150,000
Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts, Inc.	Pathways Partnership to Empower Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Individuals	Boston	\$ 300,000
Troubled Waters Inc.	Bridge Back Initiative	Lowell	\$ 250,000

Trustees of Clark University	Liberal Arts for Returning Citizens	Worcester	\$ 200,000
Uncornered	Boston Uncornered	Boston	\$ 250,000
UTECH Inc	Breaking Barriers to Reentry	Lowell	\$ 300,000
We Are Better Together Warren Daniel Hairston Project	Communities Prepared for ReEntry Project	Boston	\$ 400,000
YardTime Inc	Lives Are Meant To Be Changed: AFTER THE YARD	Boston	\$ 75,000
YMCA of the North Shore, Inc.	Haverhill YMCA PASS (Positive Alternatives to School Suspension)	Haverhill	\$ 160,000

7. 2024-26 Grantee Statistics

The FY2024 application cycle was the first for which EOED collected data about whether the applicant organization’s leadership self-identified as being formerly incarcerated and/or criminal justice system impacted. 30 of the 67 grant recipients answered this question affirmatively.

Additionally, the grantees for FY2024 included 33 self-identified minority-owned business enterprises or minority-led nonprofit organizations, 19 self-identified women-owned business enterprises or women-led nonprofit organizations, and 4 self-identified LGBTQ business enterprises or LGBTQ-led nonprofit organizations.



Geography

For FY2024-26, 17 communities are represented among the grant projects. Of the 67 grant projects awarded, 37 projects take place in Gateway Cities. Of the 30 projects that do not take place in Gateway Cities, 28 are carried out in the City of Boston, 1 is in Greenfield, and 1 is in Orange.



8. Status of Fund Distribution

The FY2024 grant awards above have been approved by EOED and the Governor’s office. This grant program is structured as a cost reimbursement grant. However, in recognition that many of the grantee organizations have historically been excluded from access to capital and may not have the cash on hand to carry out a fully cost-reimbursement program, EOED has structured the grant payments as follows for FY2024: 50% of grant will be paid at time of contract execution, 25% will be paid following a timely and complete first quarterly report (due 4/15/2024), with remaining funds to be disbursed after the final report (due 7/15/2024) is submitted and approved by EOED, with documentation substantiating all project expenditures.

As of November 2023, the full FY2024 legislative appropriation has been committed to grantees.

9. Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes for FY2024

The Fiscal Year 2024 grant period runs from January 2, 2024 to June 30, 2024. During this time period, grantee organizations anticipate serving thousands of people across Massachusetts. By grantee organizations' report, more than 7,000 currently or previously justice-involved people will be directly served in FY2024, through initiatives including record expungement, "behind the walls" job training, and housing stabilization services. More than 18,000 families and/or immediate social contacts of people who are or have been criminal justice involved will be served in FY2024, including through projects designed to specifically support caregivers impacted by incarceration. Grantee organizations anticipate that more than 4,000 people will be prevented from new criminal justice system involvement, through projects like afterschool cultural and academic programming for primary school-age children and expanding access to well-paying, stable jobs in Gateway Cities. Finally, 377 current or prospective small business are expected to be supported with training or technical assistance during the FY2024 grant period.

Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2024 Anticipated Outcomes



7,074

previously or currently justice-involved people served



18,083

families and/or immediate social contacts of people who are or have been criminal justice involved served



377

Current Or Prospective Small Businesses Supported With Training or Technical Assistance



4,131

new criminal justice system involvements prevented

Thank you for the opportunity to share more information about the FY2024 Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Program.