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**Date:** February 4, 2026  
**To:** Chief Elected Officials, Planning Board Chairpersons, Town Administrators/Managers, City/Town Planners, CMRPC Delegates and Alternates  
**From:** Trish Settles, Deputy Executive Director  
**Regarding:** Notice of 2026 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Availability

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The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts General Assembly (Legislature) has once again provided funding for the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program. Since 2006, this program has enabled CMRPC to provide technical assistance to member communities on eligible projects. This year CMRPC received approximately \$265,574 to support our communities. This letter serves as an invitation for CMRPC member communities to apply for the second round of technical assistance. For this round, \$59,244 remains to be allocated for support of DLTA projects.

#### **Second Round Schedule**

- February 27, 2026 at 12pm, Deadline for submittal of second round of resource requests to Trish Settles at [tsettles@cmrpc.org](mailto:tsettles@cmrpc.org).
- March 5, 2026 at 6:30pm, Meeting of the CMRPC Physical Development Committee to consider second round of requests. **Applicants are encouraged to attend the Physical Development Committee Zoom meeting to present their proposal along with cooperating CMRPC staff.**

One or more DLTA assistance requests may be submitted for consideration for Calendar Year 2026 DLTA. CMRPC will advertise and solicit requests until the funds have been allocated. A third round of requests may be solicited if funding is still available.

Requests for resources should be submitted in coordination with CMRPC staff and should be submitted via email to CMRPC to the attention of: **Trish Settles, Deputy Executive Director** via email [tsettles@cmrpc.org](mailto:tsettles@cmrpc.org)

#### **Program Priorities**

According to the most recent guidelines of the Commonwealth's DLTA program, a proposed project must fall into one of the following four (4) general priority categories (**see attached Appendix A for examples of eligible projects for each priority funding area**) to be considered eligible for technical assistance:

1. Planning Ahead for Housing;
2. Planning Ahead for Growth;
3. Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative
4. Federal and State Funding Opportunities

The goal of the DLTA Fund is to direct these funds to projects and activities that result in change in the municipality(ies) receiving these DLTA Fund services, whether in law, regulation, program management, or practice, that serve to further these objectives.

Activities that are eligible to fund under with DLTA include:

**Planning Ahead for Housing:**

Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support affordable and market-rate housing production opportunities or support municipalities complying with new HUD fair housing regulations, specifically related to the Housing Goal of 135,000 new units by 2025, which may include, but are not limited to:

- The creation of as-of-right zoning districts such as those eligible under EOHL’s Chapter 40R Smart Growth program, and the new Chapter 40Y Starter Homes, and Chapter 40A s.3A MBTA Communities;
- Develop and/or update zoning that allows ADUs by right with reasonable regulations;
- Audit zoning for barriers to housing development and create amendments to remove barriers;
- Identifying challenges and solutions in respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to construct multi-family residential projects in as-of-right zoning districts and parcels;
- Assisting one or more community 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 Community designation;
- Assisting communities to analyze the feasibility of municipally owned land for housing and advising them in developing RFPs and land disposition agreements;
- Consideration of Transfer Development Rights zoning districts including areas that may qualify as sending and receiving areas.

Additionally, EOHL (formerly DHCD) released Compliance Guidelines for Multi-family Zoning Districts Under Section 3A of the Zoning Act (“guidelines”) in August 2023 to implement this program and would like the assistance of CMRPC to help its MBTA Communities in the region to comply with the guidelines. Therefore, CMRPC will prioritize DLTA funding to assist communities with Chapter 40, Section 3A compliance and any technical assistance related to promoting housing development in MBTA zoning districts.

**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;
- Encouraging communities to use the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) to assess economic development opportunities within communities and/or regions and to develop implementation strategies based on EDSAT recommendations;
- Identifying challenges and solutions in respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to advance economic development activities;
- At a municipality’s request, identifying economic development projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments, and recommending steps that 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 which are designed to advance well-planned growth and development policies and practices.

**Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative:**

The RPA shall support the Housing Choice Initiative (HCI) and those communities that are seeking assistance to achieve Designation under the HCI. Under the HCI, EOHLC will designate communities who have produced certain levels of housing and have best practices that allow for compact housing development. First priority shall be to support Designated Housing Choice Communities; therefore, the RPA is encouraged to prioritize requests for communities seeking to achieve Housing Choice Designation. The activities under “Planning Ahead for Housing” qualify as best practices under the HCI Best Practices. The RPA shall encourage their member communities to employ the most recent HCI Best Practices which can be found at [www.mass.gov/housing-choice-initiative](http://www.mass.gov/housing-choice-initiative) .

**Federal and State Funding Opportunities:**

The RPA can use funds to utilize its expertise by helping its member municipalities or other local and regional public entities take advantage of federal and state funding opportunities, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Eligible activities and projects under this section may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Identification and understanding of top project priorities;
- Research, assessment, and identification of federal and state funding opportunities;
- Review of grant application guidelines and preparation of applications and/or identification of specialty skills needed (e.g. specialized technical assessment, engineering, cost benefit analysis);
- Provision of needed procurement services; and
- Assessment of municipal grant reporting capacity and determination if assistance is needed by the RPA.

**In addition to innovative and standalone projects, CMRPC seeks to maximize impact and efficiency by assisting multiple communities with related projects.** The following needs have been identified by multiple communities in recent years. If your community is interested in assistance in any of the following areas, please let us know:

- Development of housing bylaws (accessory dwelling units, cottage housing, et al.)
- Subdivision regulations updates
- Economic Development Committee or Business Association technical assistance
- Municipal Housing Trust technical assistance/ plan development
- Stormwater/ Low-Impact Development Bylaws
- Wildlife corridor planning
- Historic preservation
- Site design

**Application/Request Development**

CMRPC and the Physical Development Committee strongly encourage potential applicants to work closely with CMRPC staff in the development of the scope of services. This allows us to more confidently design a project that will meet the guidelines for DLTA, have the greatest probability of acceptance and funding, leverage our capacity and relationship, and provide the greatest benefit to the

proponent and the region. Staff will work with project proponents to develop and submit the request for resources. See attached Request for Resource Form. Please note that all projects must be completed by December 31, 2026. Letters of Commitment are required, Delegates of the town should be notified of the request, and the request should describe the municipality's level of engagement with specifics of personnel where possible.

### Decisions & Notice of Awards

- In addition to the program priorities described above, when making decisions for project selection, CMRPC will consider the following criteria:
  - Impact on Economy, Environment and Equity, the (3) Three pillars of Imagine 2050, CMRPC's Regional Plan) both locally and within the region;
  - Readiness for implementation;
  - Potential for replicability;
  - Local capacity to actively guide and participate in the project;
  - Consistency with and support of local, regional, and state plans including but not limited to local Master Plans, Housing Production Plans, Open Space and Recreation Plans, Regional Plans including Imagine 2050, and Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (SWC CEDS).
  - Level of inter-municipal collaboration;
  - Efficient use of funds
  - Likelihood the funding might leverage other funding sources and or create the bridge to additional desired projects.
  
- All decisions are at the discretion of the CMRPC Physical Development Committee based upon its interpretation of the evaluation criteria and the availability of funding. CMRPC's Physical Development Committee reserves the right to request additional information before a decision is made.
- If a proposed project exceeds CMRPC's ability to undertake a project through the DLTA program, CMRPC and the applicant may engage in a strategic discussion about either reducing the scope of the project or obtaining additional or alternative funding (e.g. local contribution, other grants) to complete the portion of the project that exceeds the DLTA-funded elements of the project.
- CMRPC's Physical Development Committee anticipates selecting projects for technical assistance beginning in late 2025. Applicants will be notified in writing via email of the decisions.
- Any future round of requests will be reviewed by the Physical Development Committee at its subsequent meeting. The dates for application deadlines and meeting dates will be announced on the website. Watch the CMRPC Newsletter and Website for announcements.

If you have questions or need additional information about the CY2026 DLTA Program, please contact one of the following CMRPC staff members:

- Sujatha Krishnan: [Sujatha@cmrpc.org](mailto:Sujatha@cmrpc.org)
- Trish Settles: [tsettles@cmrpc.org](mailto:tsettles@cmrpc.org)
- Dominique DuTremble: [ddutremble@cmrpc.org](mailto:ddutremble@cmrpc.org)
- Andrew Loew: [aloew@cmrpc.org](mailto:aloew@cmrpc.org)
- Kerrie Carnes Salwa: [ksalwa@cmrpc.org](mailto:ksalwa@cmrpc.org)
- Connor Robichaud: [crobichaud@cmrpc.org](mailto:crobichaud@cmrpc.org)

We look forward to receiving and considering your community's request(s) for DLTA assistance.



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## Appendix A - Funding Categories

Activities that are eligible to fund under District Local Technical Assistance in 2026 include the following:

**Planning Ahead for Housing:** Planning and implementation activities that encourage and support affordable and market-rate housing production opportunities or support municipalities complying with new HUD fair housing regulations, specifically related to the Housing Goal of 135,000 new units by 2025, which may include, but are not limited to:

- The development of market, mixed-income and affordable multi-family housing in transit-oriented-development locations, employment centers, downtown or village center locations within the RPA's jurisdiction;
- The creation of as-of-right zoning districts such as those eligible under EOHLIC's Chapter 40R Smart Growth program, and the new Chapter 40Y Starter Homes, and Chapter 40A s.3A MBTA Communities;
- Develop and/or update zoning that allows ADUs by right with reasonable regulations;
- Audit zoning for barriers to housing development and create amendments to remove barriers;
- Development of Workforce Housing under the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) and Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing areas;
- Identifying challenges and solutions in respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to construct multi-family residential projects in as-of-right zoning districts and parcels;
- 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 more community 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 Community designation;
- Assisting communities analyze the feasibility of municipally owned land for housing and advising them in developing RFPs and land disposition agreements;
- The creation of prompt and predictable permitting through an Expedited Permitting Priority Development Site using Chapter 43D for Residential; and
- Consideration of Transfer Development Rights zoning districts including areas that may qualify as sending and receiving areas.

**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 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;

- Encouraging communities to use the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) to assess economic development opportunities within communities and/or regions and to develop implementation strategies based on EDSAT recommendations;
- Identifying challenges and solutions in respect to infrastructure requirements that affect the ability to advance economic development activities;
- At a municipality's request, identifying economic development projects subject to the Permit Extension Act (as amended), assessing impediments, and recommending steps that 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 which are designed to advance well-planned growth and development policies and practices.

**Supporting the Housing Choice Initiative:** The RPA shall support the Housing Choice Initiative (HCI) and those communities that are seeking assistance to achieve Designation under the HCI. Under the HCI, EOHLC will designate communities who have produced certain levels of housing and have best practices that allow for compact housing development. First priority shall be to support Designated Housing Choice Communities; therefore, the RPA is encouraged to prioritize requests for communities seeking to achieve Housing Choice Designation. The activities under "Planning Ahead for Housing" qualify as best practices under the HCI Best Practices. The RPA shall encourage their member communities to employ the most recent HCI Best Practices which can be found at [www.mass.gov/housing-choice-initiative](http://www.mass.gov/housing-choice-initiative).

**Federal and State Funding Opportunities:** The RPA can use funds to utilize its expertise by helping its member municipalities or other local and regional public entities take advantage of federal and state funding opportunities, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Eligible activities and projects under this section may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Identification and understanding of top project priorities;
- Research, assessment, and identification of federal and state funding opportunities;
- Review of grant application guidelines and preparation of applications and/or identification of specialty skills needed (e.g. Specialized technical assessment, engineering, cost benefit analysis);
- Provision of needed procurement services; and
- Assessment of municipal grant reporting capacity and determination if assistance is needed by the rpa.

DLTA Funds shall not be used to support:

- Any activities related to assertion of the General Land Area Minimum (GLAM) (1.5% of total land area) safe harbor under 760 CMR 56.03 (b) (Chapter 40B); and
- Routine administrative tasks of municipalities including, but not limited to, grant application preparation; and
- Any projects or activities for which other state resources are available to fund.