

NMCOG Proposed Scope of Work for EDA CARES Act Funding

The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) proposes to submit a grant application for CARES Act funding principally to develop an Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan and to provide technical assistance to economic development stakeholders in the Greater Lowell region. NMCOG will submit an application for \$150,000 in EDA funds with a matching amount of \$37,500 to be provided by NMCOG, for a total project cost of \$187,500. The project timeframe will extend from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2022, assuming that a grant award can be provided by that date. The focus of this effort will be to address the economic injury caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare for potential future impacts associated with this pandemic. The Greater Lowell region has suffered public health impacts and significant damage to the local and regional economy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has resulted in increased strains on the public health system, long-term injuries and death, increased unemployment, business closures, reduced revenues for state and local governments and decreased consumer spending. With the announcement by Governor Baker on May 18th to reopen businesses and government agencies on a phased basis, the Greater Lowell region is prepared to restart its economy while monitoring public health data to prevent a second surge in coronavirus activity.

NMCOG will work with the Greater Lowell CEDS Committee and, in particular, with the Lowell Community Health Center, the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce and the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board, to formulate the framework for the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan. Through the development of a regional survey and discussions with the Greater Lowell CEDS Committee, NMCOG will identify the specific components of the economic injury created by the COVID-19 pandemic and develop creative solutions to address these issues and prepare for future impacts. The Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan will then be treated as a supplement to our recently completed *Greater Lowell Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2020-2024*. This document will help us develop and frame the *Annual CEDS Update for 2021*, which will take into consideration the updated economic impact data and indicators compiled post-March 2020.

Our technical assistance and capacity building efforts will consist of the following components:

- Provide technical assistance and capacity building for our member communities, local businesses and other economic development stakeholders in applying for EDA assistance;
- Serve as a liaison between local, state and federal partners through strategic and targeted technical assistance and local capacity augmentation;
- Facilitate the implementation of locally-generated disaster recovery economic development projects developed as part of the CEDS or Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan; and
- Identify and foster private and non-profit partnership opportunities.

These technical assistance and capacity building tasks are consistent with the role that NMCOG plays in many different technical areas, such as transportation, housing, economic development and hazard mitigation planning. The outcome of these initiatives will include actions for enhancing recovery and growing prosperity, and will result in a framework for addressing resiliency issues in the future by being better prepared to respond in a timely fashion.