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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Partnerships for Recovery, $774 Million Economic Recovery Plan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a $774 million comprehensive plan to stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy. The plan focuses on getting people back to work, supporting small businesses, fostering innovation, revitalizing downtowns and ensuring housing stability. Partnerships for Recovery begins today by directing $115 million in new funding to small businesses and Main Streets hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and for workforce training efforts. Additionally, the Administration is aligning multiple funding sources, both existing and proposed, to appropriately respond to the crisis.

Partnerships for Recovery supports five key recovery efforts:

- **Getting Massachusetts back to work**
- **Supporting small businesses**
- **Revitalizing downtowns**
- **Supporting housing equity and stability**
- **Fostering innovation**

Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, Labor and Workforce Secretary Rosalin Acosta, and Administration and Finance Secretary Michael J. Heffernan joined Joe Kriesberg, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations to announce the plan at the Gardner Auditorium.

“This plan represents a comprehensive strategy to get people back to work and to support the small businesses hit the hardest by the pandemic, putting the Commonwealth on a path to recovery,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “By leveraging existing tools and programs and implementing new ones this plan will allow us to make critical resources and assistance to those who need it most available now.”

“While we continue to combat this pandemic, this plan takes an approach that addresses key needs of the businesses in downtowns and main streets, provides housing support for vulnerable families, and opens new doors for people seeking to return to work,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** “While we acknowledge we still have a ways to go, this plan will help to jumpstart our innovation economy and position Massachusetts to be on a path for success.”

- Putting $115 million to work right away for small businesses and workforce training, including more than $25 million to get people back to work;
- Directing $323 million in existing capital programs as part of the response to continue doing more of what works;
- Filing for $122 million through the Revised H.2 budget to supplement existing funding in support of struggling Main Street businesses and skill building for residents;
- Steering $43 million in Federal, trust and other state funding toward our most critical needs; and
- Committing $171 million to keep people safely housed during the pandemic.

Getting People Back to Work

In order to get people back to work, new investments are being made to build workforce skills, growing training programs and pathways, forging new partnerships between employers and workers, and supporting internet connectivity to facilitate remote work and online career advancement. The more than $25 million available now includes:

- $10.4 million to engage Massachusetts employers by expanding workforce partnerships with large employers in target sectors to create aligned statewide training-employment pathways;
- $9.2 million to subsidize internet for low-income populations, and to expand hot spots in unserved and underserved communities;
- $3.2 million to modernize MassHire virtual pathways to assess and connect UI claimants to appropriate services and supports;
- $2 million to bolster manufacturing training by purchasing a standardized virtual training program to increase workforce for the manufacturing sector; and
- $300,000 to supplement $8.4 million toward Career Technical Institutes in H.2 to help close the skills gap for skilled technician jobs and align training to industry needs.

An additional $54 million is available to support workforce recovery efforts through existing programming such as the Skills Capital Grants program, the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, and the Workforce Training Trust Fund.

Revised House 2 also proposes $17.9 million in workforce funding, including $8.4 million in funding to transform vocational high schools into Career Technical Institutes running three shifts per day. This initiative is

designed to train 20,000 new workers over four years in skilled trades and technical fields including plumbing, HVAC, manufacturing, and robotics. This will consist of a combination of enrolling more high school students in high-impact vocational trade programs and expanding capacity for adults to earn industry-based credentials, aligned to apprenticeships and post-secondary degrees.

"These funds will provide critical re-employment services to our workforce, helping people make the transition from unemployment benefits to good paying jobs in some of the Commonwealth's key long term job growth sectors," **said Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta.**

Direct Support to Small Business and Main Street

To generate economic growth amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and support Main Streets across Massachusetts, the Administration is investing $322.8 million in direct support of small and diverse businesses and local communities. This funding includes grants (see details below) to the hardest hit small businesses, especially small businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, or members of other underrepresented groups. These grant awards will allow small businesses to cover expenses such as rent, payroll, and utilities as they get back on their feet. Additional funding will support small businesses through hands-on and personalized technical assistance, including targeted support for women- and minority-owned businesses around digital and online technology as their business model pivots away from a brick-and-mortar location.

Many communities have seen their Main Streets and downtown districts hit particularly hard by the pandemic, and new funding aims to help cities and towns plan for short-term innovations and long-term recovery. A new $10 million round of the **Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program** (/shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program) will continue to help cities and towns quickly implement or expand improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. Separately, local recovery planning grants will soon be available to cities and towns to assist with long-term planning for their business districts. A total of $10 million is available for this program.

To support the museums and other cultural facilities that have faced a particularly challenging reality this year, but remain a cornerstone of what Massachusetts offers to visitors, these institutions will be eligible for $10 million in Cultural Facilities Operating Grants. This funding will help these organizations to make safety improvements and other upgrades to allow them to continue to offer their unique attractions and exhibits.

As part of this recovery plan, the Governor’s recently filed revised budget proposal recommends over $100 million in additional funding for economic recovery and development efforts, including $35 million for community development financial institutions (CDFI) grants and loans, and $15 million for matching grants for capital investments by businesses with 20 or fewer employees. Additionally, more than $115 million in existing capital through programs such as MassWorks, and those in the MassDevelopment portfolio (Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, Site Readiness Program, Transformative Development Initiative, and Collaborative Workspaces), will be leveraged in support of economic recovery. This recovery plan complements the Administration’s $275 million economic recovery package, which was announced in June.

Small Business and Main Street Highlights (new funding):

- $50.8 million in Small Business Grants to help the hardest hit businesses;

- $10 million to continue funding the Shared Streets and Spaces Program;
- $10 million for local recovery planning grants to support cities and towns;
- $10 million to support cultural facilities such as museums;
- $8.3 million in small business technical assistance to help businesses access grant programs and loans, as well as help build business management skills, resilience, and other support in navigating pandemic impacts;
- Including $2.3 million to provide personalized technical assistance to woman- and minority-owned businesses;

“Our current circumstances call for a plan with the size and scope to match the urgency we need to address the most pressing challenges we now face,” **said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy.** “By targeting vital resources toward these key areas, this strategy will allow us to lay a solid foundation for our path to recovery.”

“During this unprecedented public health emergency, the Baker-Polito Administration is continuing to invest significant resources to support recovery and growth initiatives for small businesses and Main Streets across Massachusetts,” **said Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan.** “Through close coordination with federal, state, and local partners – including our Legislative colleagues – we are proud to put forth a plan that thoughtfully invests funds from multiple sources to equip employers with the tools, resources, and supports to help navigate the new COVID-19 landscape.”

“We greatly appreciate Governor Baker’s sense of urgency to move these grant dollars now, while also working with the Legislature to secure additional funds in the state budget and the economic development bill,” **said Joseph Kriesberg, President of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations and Board Member of the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation**. “Small business owners have sacrificed to help keep all of us safe and healthy. This initiative is our opportunity to have their back.”

Additional Investments

In order to keep people safely in their homes during the pandemic and support small landlords with expenses, the Administration recently announced $171 million in support of the Eviction Diversion Initiative. This comprehensive strategy includes funding to help to cover housing costs such as rent and mortgage payments, invest in new programs around mediation and legal representation, and provide repaid rehousing when a tenant is evicted. Additionally, the Administration continues to invest in the Commonwealth’s stock of affordable rental housing with $121 million in direct subsidies.

Massachusetts has long been a hotbed of innovation and creativity in science and technology, and sectors such as the life sciences and advanced manufacturing are not only critical to the innovation economy, but also continue to contribute to the response to the coronavirus. To ensure we continue to lead in this space, $62 million in existing capital funding through the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and MassVentures is available to support recovery and growth.

Small Business Grant Program Details

Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC) is administering the Small Business Grants program, with $50.8 million available beginning today. Grant awards range between $25,000 – $75,000, and eligibility criteria and applications are available **here** (https://www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org/covid-19-response/small-business-resources).

As part of this grant program, preference is given to small businesses whose owners are women, minorities, veterans, members of other underrepresented groups, or focused on serving the Gateway Cities of Massachusetts, who have been unable to open and those most adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Preference is also given to applicants that have not been able to receive aid from other federal programs, including PPP and other relief related to COVID-19.

The program has two distinct funding "doors" based on business size, with different eligibility criteria, which is available **online** (https://www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org/covid-19-response/covid-19-grants-massachusetts-small-businesses). Applicants must review the information to determine which program to proceed with applying.

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