

## SMOC Awarded \$75,000 Urban Agenda Grant From Baker-Polito Administration

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FRAMINGHAM – Today, Feb. 12, the Baker-Polito Administration awarded \$500,000 to nine projects through the [Urban Agenda Grant Program](#). The program seeks to unlock community-driven responses

to local obstacles, and promote economic development opportunities through partnership-building, problem solving, and shared accountability in urban centers.

The competitive awards offer flexible funding for local efforts that bring together community stakeholders to pursue economic development initiatives. These awards will fund projects in Boston, Clinton, Framingham, Greenfield, Holyoke, Lowell, New Bedford, Revere and Springfield.

Funding will support workforce development, small businesses, and entrepreneurship initiatives.

“Our administration utilizes the urban agenda grant program to support communities with strong local leadership committed to pursuing high-impact projects,” said Governor Charlie Baker, in a media release. “These urban agenda awards will help residents re-enter the workforce, provide technical assistance to small businesses, support entrepreneurs and invest in collaborative partnerships.”

“Our administration understands the importance of local leadership and its impact on the lives of residents,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “The Urban Agenda Grant Program relies on the strong partnerships between local government, non-profits and the business community that are critical to fostering economic success and building stronger neighborhoods in every region in Massachusetts.”

One of the grants was to the South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc. in Framingham for \$75,000. The Framingham Business Resource Alliance (the Alliance) seeks to sustain and deepen its partnership, support SMOC’s Microloan program, and effectively provide personalized assistance to local small businesses, complementing Framingham’s economic development efforts including Choose Framingham, Framingham Downtown Renaissance and Transit Oriented Development.

The Urban Agenda Grant Program provides grants to communities working to provide residents with economic opportunities and workforce training. The program prioritizes projects that are based on collaborative work models that feature a strong partnership between community organizations and municipalities. Awards prioritize collaboration, shared accountability and building leadership capacity at the local level.

“Stable, vital communities have the support of effective non-profits, successful local businesses, and committed municipal leadership,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash. “Today’s awards address tough challenges in our urban centers by empowering these important coalitions to identify their resources, work together towards shared goals and create new opportunities for residents.”

The Commonwealth’s Urban Agenda is focused on promoting economic vitality and cultivating safer, stronger urban neighborhoods across Massachusetts. The Baker-Polito Administration recognizes that urban centers face unique economic and quality-of-life challenges, and that the path to success lies in tapping into the unique local assets that they already possess, rather than in one-size-fits-all directives from government.

In 2016, the Baker-Polito Administration awarded \$3 million in grant funding to 13 communities for the inaugural round of the Urban Agenda Grant Program. Urban Agenda is administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), and offers flexible grant funding to support creative local partnerships. The program is for neighborhoods across Massachusetts that have developed partnerships that leverage existing economic assets, target specific workforce populations, define their economic development and quality of life goals, and deliver on those goals.

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Source file photo from a previous press conference with the Governor at SMOC in Framingham