



23

COMMUNITY MITIGATION FUND

2023 Projects of Regional Significance Grant Application Bid No. Bid No. BD-23-1068-1068C-1068L-81256

All completed applications must be sent by January 31st to be considered for funding for the 2023 Grant Round. Please submit this completed form as well as any relevant attachments to MGCCMF@Massgaming.gov.

For more detailed instructions as well as the 2023 Application Guidelines please visit <https://massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/>

I. Project Summary
Legal Name of Applicant: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Project Name (Please limit to 5 words): Regional Business Ecosystem Network
Amount Requested: \$ 485,600
Brief Project Description (approx. 50 words): The Regional Business Ecosystem Network will be a visionary pilot of PVPC, the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, and other partners to implement a new capacity-building network of regional business coalitions and resources to grow successful small- and micro-businesses, especially in underserved communities, helping MGM to meet its target goals for the regional economy.

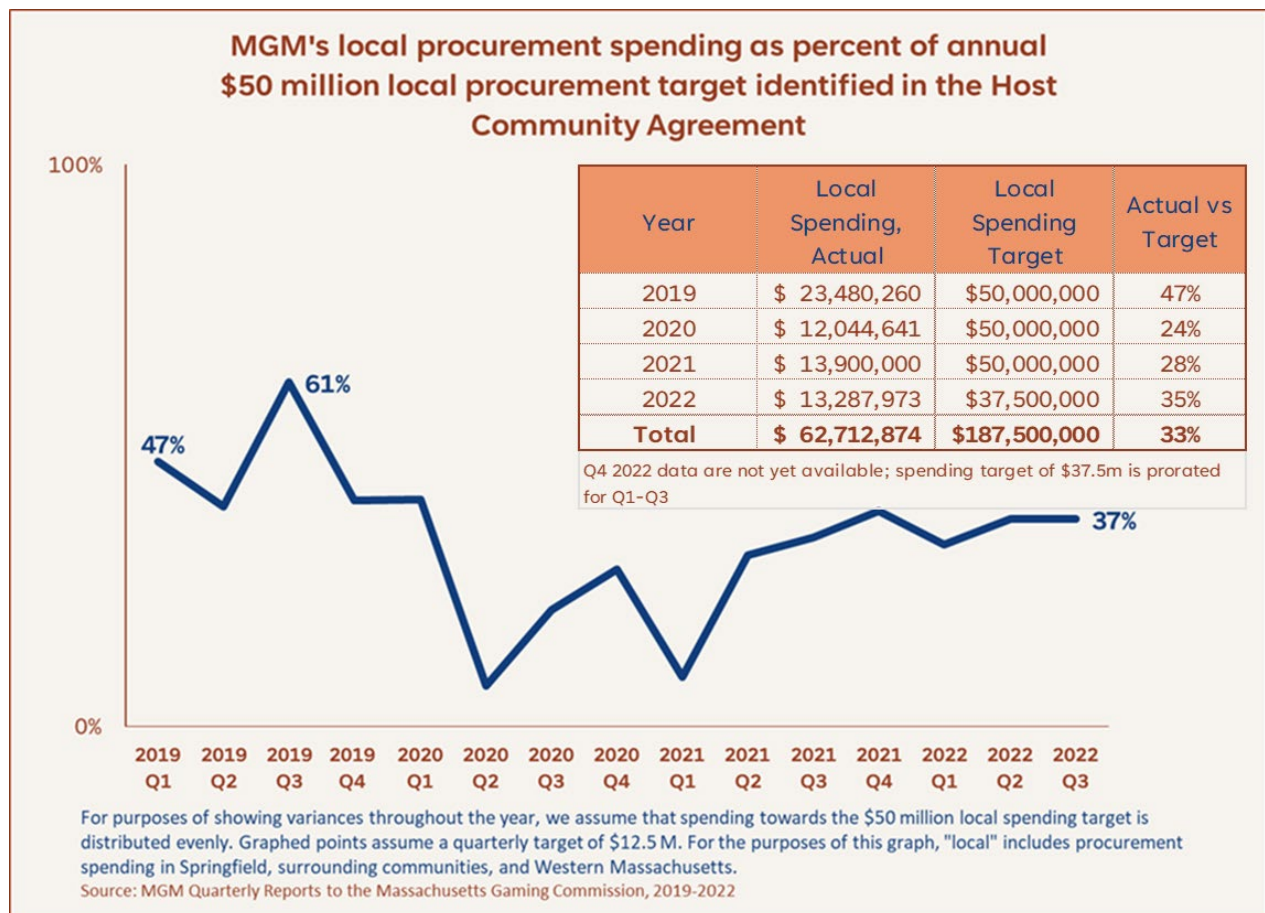
II. Applicant Contact Information
Please provide below the manager for this grant and any other individuals you would like to be copied on all correspondence.
Grant Manager: Eric Weiss, Director of Economic and Municipal Collaboration
Email Address: eweiss@pvpc.org
Telephone Number: 413-781-6045 / 413-687-3356
Address: 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104-3419
Contact II:
Role:
Email Address:
Telephone Number:
Address:
Contact III:
Role:
Email Address:
Telephone Number:
Address:

III. Detailed Project Description & Mitigation

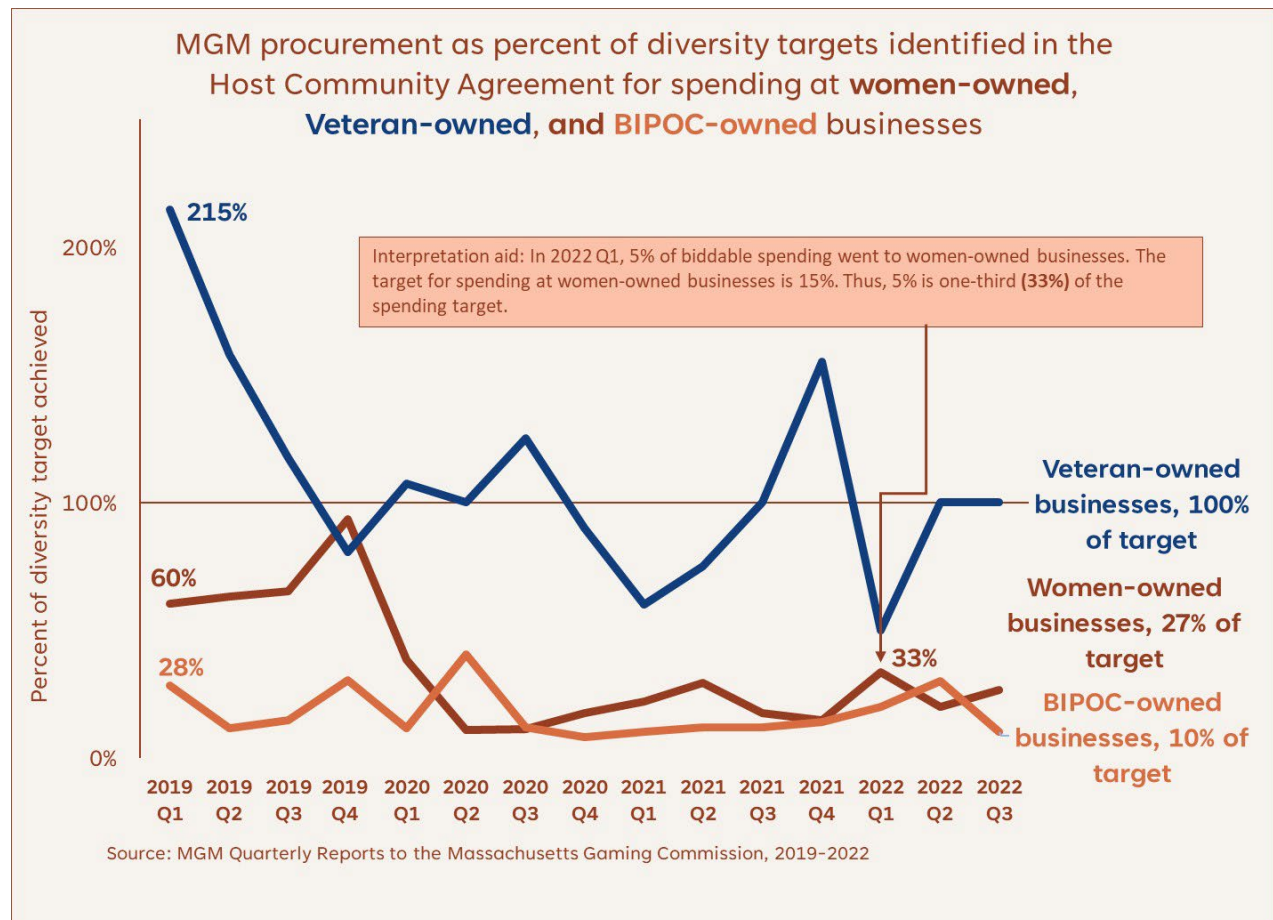
1)

A) Please describe in detail the impact that is attributed to the operation of a gaming facility. Please provide documentation or evidence that gives support for the determination that the operation of the gaming facility caused or is causing the impact (i.e. surveys, data, reports)

The MGM Springfield gaming establishment, which opened in late August 2018, has resulted in numerous benefits to the regional economy of the Pioneer Valley, including job creation, increased tourism, and increased local revenues. Not all local residents, however, have shared equally in the economic opportunities the MGM ushered in. One of the metrics included in the Host Community Agreement between MGM and the City of Springfield for determining the impact of MGM on the local and regional economy identified \$50 million as the annual minimum for local and regional procurement of goods and services. MGM has fallen short of its target for local and regional spending in each of its four+ years of operation.

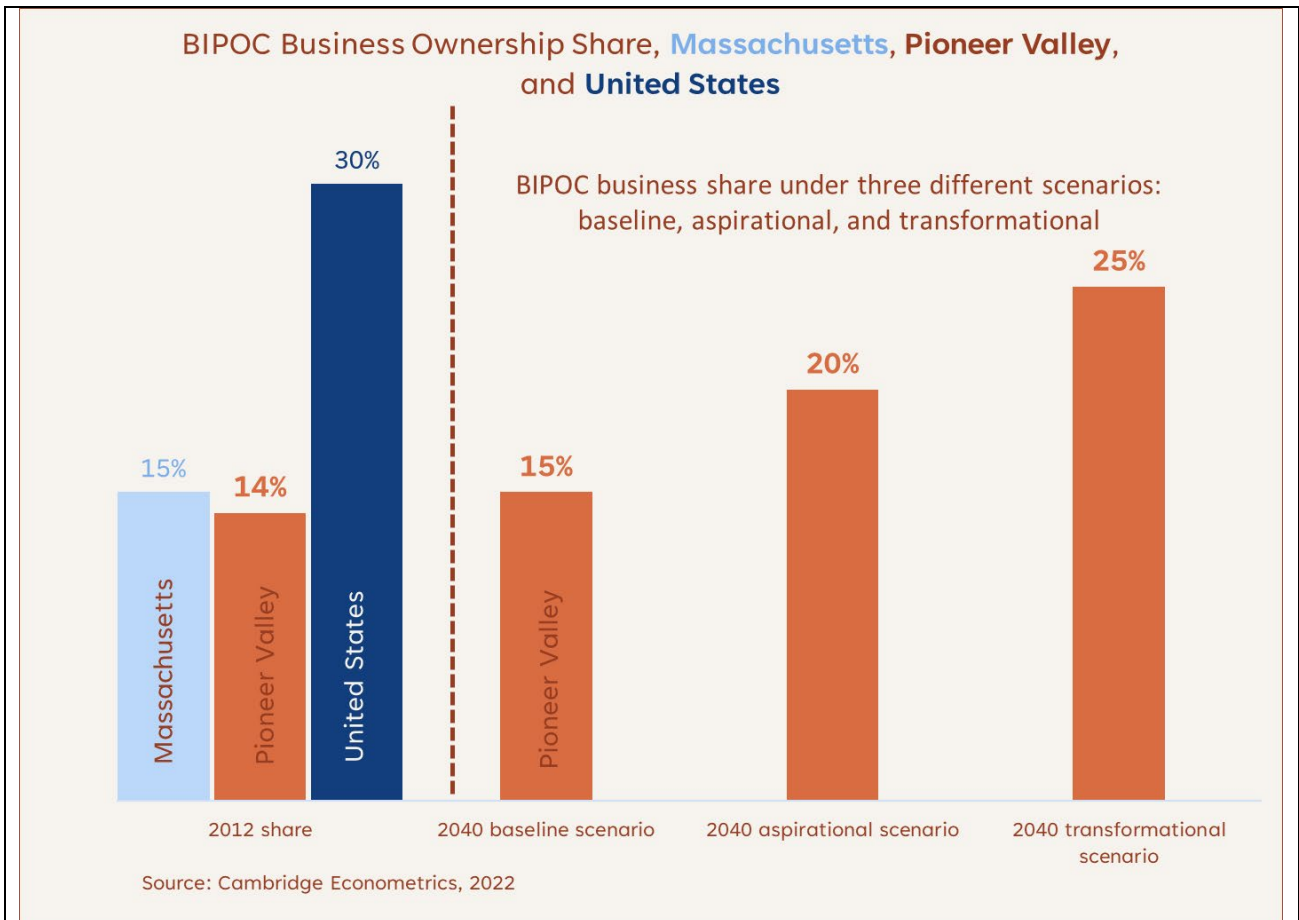


With respect to diversity targets, in particular women-owned and minority-owned small- and micro-businesses, despite MGM’s outreach efforts, the desired targets (15% spending on Women-owned businesses, 10% spending on BIPOC-owned businesses, and 2% spending on Veteran-owned businesses) have not been realized.



What is the context for this lack of progress? COVID-19 hit the Pioneer Valley 18 months after the MGM opened, which complicates our understanding of the full impact of gaming on this sector. We know that, in general, small- and micro-businesses in the Pioneer Valley were devastated after March 2020. Small business revenues declined steeply in the initial weeks of the COVID-19 shutdowns – down 40.6% in Hampden County and 58.1% in Hampshire County – and remained below January 2020 levels throughout 2020 and into 2021.

Compared to the U.S. average, the percentage of small- and micro-businesses in the Pioneer Valley is less than half; it is also less than the Massachusetts average.



The percentage of BIPOC-owned small- and micro-businesses is even lower than the overall regional average. The number of BIPOC-owned businesses significantly lags behind the BIPOC population, with only 14.0% of businesses BIPOC-owned, while 25.5% of the population is categorized as BIPOC. Underserved communities, including low-income households and BIPOC communities, in particular the growing Latinx population, have historically had unequal access to wealth-building opportunities, including the resources that facilitate successful small business creation.

PVPC’s proposed once-in-a-generation pilot project will address both the systemic barriers that have prevented the Pioneer Valley’s small- and micro-business economy from being as robust and resilient as it has the potential to become and leverage the unique opportunities that MGM has brought to the region. The Regional Business Ecosystem Network (RBEN) will be the first project of its kind in the Pioneer Valley and has the support of local and state elected officials. Our project aims to significantly bolster the opportunities to grow and sustain small- and micro-businesses, especially in the BIPOC community. With respect to BIPOC-owned businesses, we are targeting a goal that would halve the gap, growing to 19.8% of the total by 2040. Looking more near-term (over the next 10 years) and setting more modest goals, this could result in

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approximately 1,400 new or expanded BIPOC businesses, creating an estimated 3,850 jobs, \$178 million in wages, and \$35 million in business investment for the region.

B) Please describe how this is a regionally significant project including the overall project goals and what communities or other entities are beneficiaries of the project.

Every community in the region served by PVPC will benefit from this initiative, with those prioritized by the Mass Gaming Commission [Springfield, Agawam, Chicopee, Holyoke, East Longmeadow, Hampden, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Northampton, West Springfield, and Wilbraham] likely to benefit the most, given the relative size of their local economies.

2) *(If applicable)* Please explain how this impact was not anticipated in the Applicant's Host or Surrounding Community Agreement.

The impact of changes in the region's small-and micro-business economy that were triggered by the opening of the MGM could not have been anticipated by either MGM or the host/surrounding communities.

3) Please describe what the Applicant is proposing and how the mitigation request will address the impact indicated.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration in 2020-2022, PVPC has undertaken extensive community outreach, conducted data analysis of economic conditions, and spearheaded ongoing discussions with more than 35 local leaders in the business community and local governments to develop a suite of solutions to improve and strengthen the regional economy. Through this work, PVPC has identified that there is a significant gap in equal access to resources needed by local small- and micro-businesses in the BIPOC and other underserved communities in Springfield and the surrounding area. In order for these small- and micro-businesses to start, survive, and thrive, they need greater access to targeted information, opportunity, and technical assistance. The provision of these resources will grow the regional small business ecosystem, which, in turn, will enhance the potential for the MGM to fulfill its required procurement and diversity goals.

To meet this need and in close collaboration with allied regional agencies and local BIPOC leadership, PVPC will collaborate with the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts and other community partners including MassDevelopment, Springfield Technical Community College, MassHire Springfield Career Center, Common Capital, Mass Equitable Economy, and Wayfinders to pilot the RBEN, a new capacity-building network of regional business coalitions and resources that will assist local small enterprises and micro-businesses in underserved communities to grow and flourish. In order to enhance its availability to users, it is envisioned that the RBEN will have both a brick-and-mortar and virtual presence. Access to these resources, in particular greater access to capital and increased financial literacy, will position these businesses to take advantage of casino-related economic opportunities and will strengthen the economy of the region.

To further this regional initiative, PVPC is currently engaged with *New Growth Innovation Network: Powering Inclusive Economies* (NGIN), a national nonprofit organization supported by, among others, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Ford Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and *Ascendant Global*, an economic development consulting firm focused on building diversified economies, to develop an appropriate governance model and resources to support the RBEN. In addition to these collaborations, PVPC has recently started discussions with the Manager of the Equitable Economic Program, Federal Reserve Bank, Boston, and several Community Reinvestment Officers in regional banks to develop future funding. Based on successful models in other similar-sized communities, most notably Cleveland’s Fund for Our Economic Future, the goal is to develop approximately \$4 million that will be used to increase equitable economic growth, including investment in small- and micro-businesses.

4) For all Transportation Construction Applications, the applicant should consult with MassDOT and the appropriate regional planning agency to obtain input on the project and identify opportunities for regional efforts. The results of this consultation should be included in this section of the application.

N/A

IV. Scope, Budget, and Timeline

Applicant: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Vendor Code:

Total Grant Amount Requested: \$ 485,600

Estimated Total Project Cost: \$4,000,000

Scope of Work

Please include below a breakdown of the proposed work. The project scope should be sufficiently detailed to allow the review team to understand the steps required for project completion.

Scope of Work

The PVPC will collaborate with its partners to implement the RBEN. It will be the first project of its kind in the Pioneer Valley and has gained the recognition and support of many economic development organizations, grass-roots community groups and elected officials. The project aims to significantly bolster the opportunities to grow and sustain small- and micro-businesses, especially in the underserved and BIPOC communities.

To complete this pilot, the PVPC will take the steps outlined below:

1.0 PVPC Administrative Time – The PVPC will provide guidance, oversight and direction for the duration of the project and will coordinate work with current and future partners.

- 2.0 Gap Analysis – The PVPC will examine gaps in service in the service region (Hampden and Hampshire Counties) with the intent of definitively identifying areas of critical need based on previous research and current information.
- 3.0 Equity working group – Based on the recommendations from the NGIN/Ascendant Global Report, the PVPC will work with select regional agencies to form a new Economic Equity Working Group which will serve as an advisory board and provide a platform for ongoing discussion and direction. This portion of the effort will be driven by local community leaders and will be shaped by local buy-in and ownership which will guide the project into the areas of greatest need.
- 4.0 The PVPC will continue direct outreach into the BIPOC community and will invest time working with BIPOC community leaders and connectors in an inclusive and transparent matter. By building on and leveraging these groups’ expertise and knowledge, the RBEN will meet the needs of the underserved community, improving their utilization of the new Ecosystem’s resources and opportunities.
- 5.0 Interactive Mitigation Effects – PVPC will identify and quantify what can and should be mitigated as a direct result of the casino’s impact on the regional micro- and small-business economy. Data will be used to target resources that address the impacts.
- 6.0 Implement Pilot Hub – The goal is to have the RBEN fully implemented by December 2024. Our data and input from regional stakeholders show that the region is ready for this innovative project and that the time has come to bring everyone together to do what is beneficial and right for the regional economy. This phase of work will also encompass the creation of a governance structure for the RBEN.

Scope of Work Preliminary Budget

1.0 PVPC Admin time (7.5%)	\$35,500
2.0 Conduct data collection and gap analysis regarding small- and micro-businesses	\$15,600
3.0 Initiate and formalize the regional economic equity working group, including the development of necessary operating agreements and/or MOU’s	\$16,500
4.0 Direct outreach to BIPOC and other underserved communities	\$31,000
5.0 Examine and measure interactive mitigation effects of effort	\$27,000
6.0 Implement creation of Pilot Regional Business Ecosystem	\$360,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: PVPC will continue fundraising throughout the entire effort • PVPC will not be seeking additional funds from CMF 	
TOTAL	\$485,600

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Timeline	Description of Purchase/Work	QTY	Budget
July 2023 – December 2024	PVPC Administration and Project Oversight	PVPC	\$35,500
July 2023 – December 2024	Gap Analysis and Work with Regional Economic Working Group, Including Development of Agreements and MOU's	PVPC and Consultant	\$32,100
July 2023 – December 2024	Direct Outreach to BIPOC Community and Collaboration with Community Groups and Partners	PVPC	\$31,000
September 2023 – July 2024	Examination of Interactive Mitigation Effects and Work with Economic Equity Working Group	PVPC and Consultant	\$27,000
July 2024 – December 2024	Implementation of the Regional Business Ecosystem, Including Creation of the Governance Structure	PVPC, WMEDC and Partners	\$360,100
	TOTAL:		\$485,600

Funding Source	Description of Purchase/Work	QTY	
In Kind Services	Seeking Additional Funding and Support - None at this time		
Federal	Seeking Additional Funding and Support - None at this time		
State	Seeking Additional Funding and Support - None at his time		
Local Match	Seeking Additional Funding and Support – None at this time		

V. Waiver	
If you are applying for a waiver, please submit the Waiver Form with your application. The form can be found at www.massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/forms/	
Are you applying for a waiver?	
___ Yes	X_ No

VI. Please provide a brief description of each attachment.
PVPC CARES Act Grant Summary Power Point

VII. Applicant Certificate

On behalf of the aforementioned Applicant/municipality/governmental entity I hereby certify that the funds that are requested in this application will be used solely for the purposes articulated in this Application.



1/31/23

**Signature of Responsible Municipal
Official/Governmental Entity**

Date:

Kimberly H. Robinson

(print name)

Executive Director

Title:

Building an Economy that Works for Everyone: An Economic Equity Fund for the Pioneer Valley

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director

Eric Weiss, Director of Economic and Municipal Collaboration

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

1/31/2023



Federal Money as Catalyst for Change

As part of the COVID-19 Recover Act, the PVPC received a \$400,000 CARES Act Grant from the EDA. These funds were to be used in economic recovery and resiliency work. PVPC placed a priority on engaging underserved communities in our region.

Over the past two years we have made important strides forward in cross-sector communication through direct outreach and the creation of a broad-based economic recovery task force.

We are asking for your help to achieve our regional goal: to help create an *Economy that Works for Everyone* by supporting the creation of the *Economic Equity Fund for the Pioneer Valley*.

Pioneer Valley Economic Recovery Task Force

Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts	Katie Allen Zobel, President
MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board	Rebecca Bialecki, Executive Director
Tech Foundry	Trish Caravan, CEO
Peerless Machine	Kristen Carlson, President
Hilltown Community Development Corporation	Dave Christopolis, Executive Director
Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts	Jessica Collins, Executive Director
City of Springfield, Economic Development	Brian Connors, Deputy Director
Springfield Technical Community College	John Cook, President/CEO
MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board	David Cruise, President/CEO
Economic Development Council of Western Mass	Xiomara DiLobato, Chief of Staff
Franklin Region Council of Governments	Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
Wayfinders	Keith Fairey, President/CEO
Springfield Redevelopment Authority	Armando Feliciano, Chairperson
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Steve Goodwin, Deputy Chancellor/CPO
Mass Development	Richard Griffin, VP Community Investment
Easthampton Savings Bank	Dena Hall, Executive VP/CMO
Greylock Management Consulting	Samalid Hogan, Director, Western Region
Springfield Housing Authority	Denise Jordan, Executive Director
City of Easthampton	Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor
Common Capital	Raymond Lanza-Weil, President
NRG Real Estate Services	Ed Nunez, Realtor
Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley	Vanessa Otero, Executive Director
Public Health-Baystate Health	Frank Robinson, Vice President
Holyoke Community College	Christina Royal, President
Economic Development Council of Western Mass	Rick Sullivan, President/CEO
City of Holyoke Planning and Economic Development	Aaron Vega, Director
Capital Region Council of Governments	Matt Hart, Executive Director

EDA CARES Act Grant Deliverables

Assessed the economic impacts of COVID-19 within the Pioneer Valley Region.

Convened and facilitated discussions with strategic partners and community leaders throughout the region, in an effort to create a shared understanding of issues and potential solutions.

In partnership with the Healing Racism Institute and the EDC, PVPC hosted one-on-one sessions with engaged leaders of underserved and BIPOC communities.

EDA CARES Act Grant Deliverables (cont.)

Conducted evidence-based economic development scenario planning.

Evaluated the impacts of COVID-19 on small and rural communities.

Formulated a *Next Steps* action plan focusing on economic equity and recovery in the Pioneer Valley, which includes the continued efforts of our Economic Recovery Task force and other partners.

New Understanding of our Region

The Pioneer Valley is a highly segregated region, in the top 33% across the US. While the needs of the underserved populations are well documented across some subjects, PVPC was able to gain new insight into the economic inequities that exist in our region and were exacerbated by the pandemic. The intersectionality of issues and barriers clearly points to a need to collaborate to support the economic growth that this Valley needs.

The Federal CARES Act work identified key areas that need to be addressed. There is an urgent need for skills training and education to overcome the barriers to creating and growing small businesses, home ownership and wealth building in the BIPOC and other underserved communities.

We need to bring agencies together to cooperate, moving forward and overcome fragmentation. PVPC will be the convener and help coordinate the creation of a network (or hub) with VVM and the EDC (and others) which will provide the needed assistance.

Long-Term Economic Equity Goals

Goal #1: Align agencies to overcome competition and fragmentation among community programs that have historically hindered our progress as a region.

Goal #2: Continue to directly outreach into the BIPOC community to help overcome systemic economic challenges.

Goal #3: Create network (Hub) to provide information, financial literacy and assistance with EDC and VVM as partners.

Goal #4: Overcome the identified regional disconnects between rural and urban communities.

Summary of Key Points

The job losses and the loss of income from the pandemic are significant. The BIPOC and Latino poverty rates in our region range between 24% and 46%. Twenty-five percent of total population in the region as BIPOC, while only 14% of the businesses are. Lastly, there is documented 40% gap in home ownership rates.

We need to continue to identify and create metrics with support and input from the task force and other partners . We used the Federal CARES grant to try things which had never been tried before, specifically by reaching directly into the BIPOC community through its leaders.

We recognized that we must “Build an Economy that Works for Everyone”. By building a local economy that it will be more inclusive, equitable and resilient through the creation of new partnerships and coalitions with the support of an “Economic Equity Fund”.

We will work towards creating a Regional Business Ecosystem Network (hub) in cooperation with EDC and VVM, and others. This effort will work directly with the BIPOC Community to improve access to capital and financial literacy and promote wealth building.

Next Steps

Build on work done to date and with help and with guidance from, NGIN, and Ascendant Global and the Boston Federal Reserve create framework for the Regional Business Ecosystem Network (The Hub)

Ascendant global is currently interviewing key players and partners to determine strongest and best direction for the The Hub project

Work with stakeholders in region and with Economic Recovery working group on fund and The Hub start up

Manage and operate fund and The Hub for the benefit of the region as part of it's collective goal to create a more inclusive and equitable economy

Want to Talk More?

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director

krobinson@pvpc.org / 413.233.7946

Eric Weiss, Director of Economic and Municipal Collaboration

eweiss@pvpc.org / 413.687.3356

