

# District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)

1599-0026



We respectfully request an increase to **\$4 million** for DLTA within 1599-0026.  
Amendment #664 • District Local Technical Assistance • Filed by Rep. Donato

**District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) directly funds much-needed technical assistance for cities and towns.** DLTA planning dollars help cities and towns take on necessary projects that they don't have the staff capacity to address on their own, and to partner with neighboring communities to tackle shared projects with reduced administrative burden.

**DLTA is uniquely flexible.** Funds can be spent on a wide variety of planning and implementation projects: zoning, housing production, economic development, conservation planning, and much more.

Equally important: DLTA also helps cities and towns improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local services, and allows them to work with their neighbors on planning, research, and services. Unfortunately, funding for DLTA has not been increased since 2019, and due to inflation, it has lost almost 20% of its value. This forces RPAs to try and do more with less and reduces the number of communities we can assist.

## DLTA helps municipalities unlock funding opportunities

With DLTA funding, cities and towns can plan for the long term and have the details of shovel-ready, shovel-worthy projects ready when federal competitive funding is available.

Communities can also use DLTA to unlock state funding opportunities and respond to state programs. DLTA has helped municipalities:

- Work toward Roadmap Law emissions targets with climate action plans, electric vehicle strategies, and municipal aggregation plans
- Build local public health capacity in alignment with the SAPHE Act
- Develop a toolkit to support remote and hybrid meeting engagement
- Help municipalities implement economic development recommendations from Local Rapid Recovery Plans
- Revise zoning codes to comply with the Legislature's MBTA Multifamily Zoning provision and respond to priorities in the Housing Choice Law

## Statewide Impact

DLTA dollars are distributed to Massachusetts' 13 regional planning agencies (RPAs). Nearly half of Massachusetts communities, including both cities and towns, don't have professional planners to help shape their future economic development, transportation, housing, green spaces, and town facilities.

RPAs help Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns with these essential tasks, providing technical assistance on everything from updating stormwater guidelines to managing data to preparing economic development plans.

**The technical assistance work of most of these RPAs is funded almost entirely by DLTA.**

**State funds go even further with DLTA**

## Questions? Contact:

Georgia Barlow  
[gbarlow@mapc.org](mailto:gbarlow@mapc.org)

Norman Abbott  
[anorman@mapc.org](mailto:anorman@mapc.org)



For every DLTA project a regional planning agency works on, it provides a 10 percent funding match—meaning that funding DLTA at \$4 million will support at least \$4.4 million of technical assistance work.

Many of the 13 regional planning agencies leverage this funding even more with outside funding and grant assistance, **as much as doubling the amount of money the state provides.** In 2024, over \$1,089,000 of non-DLTA funds, were secured to help advance these projects—a significant increase over the required 10% match.

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We respectfully ask that you help modernize DLTA.

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This year, we are also pursuing a change to the statute that governs DLTA so that RPAs can continue to support municipalities as they pursue state and federal discretionary grants. Over the past three years, this line item has also included \$2 million for the Grant Assistance Program (GAP), which has allowed RPAs to apply for, win, and manage state and federal discretionary dollars. While the federal funding landscape has changed, depriving municipalities of the support offered by GAP could be disastrous — especially for smaller municipalities, which may be unable to apply for discretionary dollars all together.

This statute change will allow RPA staff to continue to plan, draft, and provide crucial support to municipalities that often lack the staff capacity and expertise to even complete One Stop applications — let alone more onerous federal applications. Not only can these dollars be used to help municipalities go after crucial state planning dollars that are often lacking from federal opportunities, but RPAs are also often able to provide a 10 or even 100 times return on this investment, when grants are awarded.

## Why:

One of the biggest hurdles that municipalities face when applying for federal and state funding is lack of capacity — especially for rural and smaller communities. However, DLTA cannot be used for this purpose. With a small change to statute, communities can continue to seek assistance from knowledgeable RPA staff, which can lead to more cost effective, competitive, and regional projects to increase the likelihood of funding.

## Suggested Language:

SECTION \_\_. Section 2XXX of Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding after the phrase: “other land use and smart growth issues”— “; **and state and federal grant application support.**”

## Outcomes

\$8,000 enabled MAPC to partner with the City of Boston to win one of seven Congestion Reduction Grants worth \$21.6 million. The grant will help reduce traffic in the region by increasing the number of new traditional and electric Bluebike stations and will also add several new shuttle routes to supplement MBTA service throughout the city.

\$16,000 helped secure \$400,000 for the Massachusetts Flooding Vulnerability Project. This statewide effort focuses on understanding and reducing flood vulnerability. The project involves gathering data, engaging with communities, mapping flood risks, and planning flood mitigation projects in the Environmental Justice communities of Brockton, Everett, and West Springfield, among others to build stronger, more resilient communities.

\$20,000 supported MAPC, Boston, Newton, Everett, and Cambridge to write an application that resulted in a \$3 million PRO Housing grant from HUD to explore construction technologies to increase housing production in Greater Boston.