



## PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Celebrates Awards to 12 Economic Development Organizations

Event and roundtable celebrate \$900,000 in REDO grants to groups that support regional efforts to bolster small businesses

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Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

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**ASHLAND** — Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined Senate President Karen Spilka, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy and business groups from around the state at Ashland Town Hall to celebrate Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) grant awards to twelve organizations.

REDO was established to stimulate regional business growth by assisting organizations across Massachusetts that serve local businesses. In partnership with the Legislature, program funding increased in FY 2019 to \$1 million, a level that has been maintained in the FY 2020 budget filed by the Governor last month.

Since 2015, more than \$2.8 million has been awarded to regional agencies that provide networking, marketing, educational and other supports to businesses in their regions. So far this year, REDO has given 10 awards totaling \$900,000 to 12 organizations and is conducting an ongoing review of applications.

“Our Administration remains committed to creating jobs and helping small businesses thrive,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “REDO provides a foundation for regional chambers of commerce and economic development groups to support businesses in their area, and adds a valuable option to our toolbox to stimulate growth across the Commonwealth.”

“Supporting regional business networks with programs like REDO strengthens the economic health of Massachusetts, and aligns with our Administration’s belief in empowering communities to respond flexibly to their unique needs and challenges,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “It’s a pleasure to be here today to meet the awardees and discuss this important program, and I thank Senate President Spilka for her leadership and passion in working with our Administration to make it a priority.”

REDO offsets operational expenses for grant recipients, and awardees must support regionally-based business development efforts. These include identification of regional competitive strengths and opportunities, assessment of potential obstacles, regional development strategies, creation of long-range regional workforce skills pipelines, acting as workforce and education partners, transportation and land use planning, and support of existing small businesses and downtown districts, and spearheading efforts to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses.

REDO is administered by the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD), which is overseen by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. Friday’s event included a roundtable discussion of needs and challenges facing the chambers of commerce and business development groups in attendance.

“Unique programs like REDO are critical in building local and regional economies” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy**. “I look forward to continued discussion of the role our Administration can play in strengthening and expanding small business in Massachusetts.”

“We are lucky to enjoy a strong economy here in Massachusetts, but that strength doesn’t come about by accident--it needs to be carefully nurtured and supported,” **stated Senate President Karen E. Spilka**. “When the Senate first proposed the concept of Regional Economic Development Organizations, the Commonwealth was reeling from the Great Recession, and we needed to create ways for businesses to gain quick and easy assistance

from the state. By calling on each region's expertise, I'm proud to say that we not only survived the recession but created strong regional hubs of economic growth. These awards will help further our continued prosperity and success."

"I am grateful for all of the important work these organizations do to support small businesses in our communities and to help our local economies thrive," **said Representative Jack Lewis**. "I believe the REDO program has been instrumental in enabling these critical efforts."

"The REDO program provides critical coordination between the Commonwealth and regional organizations on development initiatives and opportunities to improve our competitiveness," **said Paul Matthews, Executive Director of the 495/MetroWest Partnership**. "As a participant in the program from the very beginning in 2010, we applaud the leadership of the Baker Polito Administration, the House, and the Senate over the last year in providing such strong support for the REDO program and regional economic development across the Commonwealth."

"We are grateful that Governor Baker appreciates that regional economies, like our successful Metrowest region, are important to the Commonwealth as a whole and the communities within them," **said Ashland town manager Michael Herbert**. "Support through programs like the REDO program only help to further that success."

## 2019 Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Awards:

### **1Berkshire** (<https://1berkshire.com/>) - **\$90,746**

1Berkshire helps businesses in Western Mass. expand their networks. Its goal is to help grow businesses through promotion and networking in the region. The REDO grant assists 1Berkshire by increasing focus on the Berkshire Starts entrepreneurial support program, the Berkshire Blueprint 2.0 and a site selection tool. The REDO grant also supported 1Berkshire as it launched a jobs portal with full-time positions paying \$40,000 per year or

more. Berkshire serves 32 communities in Western Massachusetts.

### **[495/MetroWest Partnership](https://www.495partnership.org/)** (https://www.495partnership.org/) - **\$109,141**

495/MetroWest Partnership works with local businesses to foster growth. Its goals include improving the economy and the lives of the workforce, as well as cultivating natural resources and better transportation to enhance business growth in the area. The REDO grant assists the 495/MetroWest Partnership with marketing priority development areas, providing technical assistance for municipal economic development and focusing on supporting the region's clusters. The partnership serves 35 cities and towns in the Greater Boston region.

### **[Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce](http://www.whycapcod.org/)** (http://www.whycapcod.org/) **and** **[The Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce](http://plymouthchamber.com/)** (http://plymouthchamber.com/) - **\$65,000**

The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce fights for local businesses with a goal of strengthening the regional economy, promoting the Cape as a great place to live, work and play, while also taking on community, cultural and environmental concerns. The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce works with The Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce to utilize REDO funding to support their work on the Blue Economy, a project that has leveraged support from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, the EDA and other regional stakeholders. The Plymouth Chamber serves hundreds of businesses on the South Shore as a networking and business advocacy group. Together, the two chambers serve 32 cities and towns.

### **[Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce](https://blackstonevalley.org/)** (https://blackstonevalley.org/) **and** **[Worcester Regional Chamber](https://www.worcesterchamber.org/)** (https://www.worcesterchamber.org/) - **\$109,141**

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) provides leadership to businesses and addresses issues which impact commerce and the quality of life in the Blackstone Valley. BVCC also offers business leadership and technical support programs. Working with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, BVCC is able to use the REDO grant to focus on supporting the manufacturing sector in their region through student programs,

roundtable meetings and the BV EdHubVocational/Technical Training Program. The Worcester Chamber is a leader in business development in Central Massachusetts and Worcester County. WRCC works with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce to form the Central Regional Economic Development Alliance. Together, they also use the REDO grant to support their Open for Business programming series, hosting eight sessions in different municipalities. The two chambers reach 35 cities and towns.

### **Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts** (<http://www.westernmassedc.com/>)

**- \$181,306**

The EDC is a non-profit organization that leads the region's economic development efforts. As a leading advocacy group, the EDC helps businesses expand, move to and succeed in Western Massachusetts while building toward high quality, local jobs. The REDO grant allows the EDC of Western Mass to focus on supporting the local business community through marketing plan development and targeting site selectors, the HomeField Advantage Program, and Business to Business Matchmaking events with partner organizations. The EDC works with 67 cities and towns.

### **Metro South Chamber of Commerce** (<https://www.metrosouthchamber.com/>) - **\$106,025**

The Brockton-based Metro South Chamber of Commerce promotes the local business community through public advocacy. The Chamber primarily focuses on education, networking, information and community development. Through the REDO grant, the organization is able to focus on updating its regional strategic plan, promoting the Metro South brand, supporting the Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board with job fairs and a STEM event, and furthering development of industry clusters. MSCC serves 18 cities and towns.

### **Middlesex3 Coalition** (<http://www.middlesex3.com/get-involved.html>) - **\$50,000**

Middlesex3 Coalition is receiving the REDO grant for the first time this year, after growing to serve 10 cities and towns. They are a regional partnership that focuses on regional collaboration to further economic development in the area, as well as working with employers to address major issues facing their workforce. The REDO grant will increase Middlesex3's capacity to continue to grow by connecting with businesses and opportunities in the region.

**[North Central Massachusetts Development Corp.](https://www.choosenorthcentral.com/)** (<https://www.choosenorthcentral.com/>) - **\$109,141**

In conjunction with the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, the Development Corporation is a non-profit that creates jobs and improves the economy of its region. They seek to help businesses looking to start, expand, or move to North Central Mass. They also connect businesses with the local communities. The REDO grant allows the Development Corp. to focus on running a successful micro-lending program to help small businesses start, expand or grow in the region. Additionally, they maintain a priority development site list, organize site tours and market the region to businesses and developers.

**[North Shore Alliance for Economic Development](https://northshorealliance.org/)** (<https://northshorealliance.org/>) - **\$29,500**

Working with Salem State University's Enterprise Center, this group serves as a regional partnership to aid and advance local interests in the region. Their goals are to advocate for the North Shore, help business, and make connections. The North Shore Alliance maintains a strong schedule of events, supported by the REDO grant, bringing business leaders and cabinet secretaries to their Policymaker Series Workshops.

**[South Coast Development Partnership](http://www.southcoastpartnership.org/)** (<http://www.southcoastpartnership.org/>) - **\$50,000**

The South Coast Partnership (SCDP) seeks to start, support and promote a stronger economy. Through UMass Dartmouth, the partnership also strives for educational attainment and work readiness. Their ultimate goal is to better the quality of life on the

south coast. SCDP was able to leverage the REDO funding for the next three years to match a federal EDA grant intended to develop the “Southeastern Massachusetts Marine Science and Technology Corridor” initiative, which will support regional job creation in targeted marine technology industries that currently exist in the Southeastern region.

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