

TDI Call for Districts FAQ

We are excited to announce the Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Call for Districts! Applications will be released in mid-October 2025. This round will include both new Districts and the extension of existing Districts.

1. What is TDI?

TDI is unique nationwide among programs for small and medium-sized post-industrial cities. Our model is built on bringing government to the communities in greatest need, with the least traditional access to our resources, and rolling up our sleeves to work with partners at the neighborhood level to build trust and prove our value over time. We commit intensive resources to a district for a 3-year period, simultaneously working on real estate development, small business stability and growth, arts and cultural amenities, placemaking, and targeted technical assistance and strategic planning. This work is laid on a platform of community engagement and partnership development; we require that cities assemble a cross-sector partnership to apply in the first place, and over the course of the program, we work to make the partnership more representative of the neighborhood and use it as a platform to grow sustaining, working relationships.

2. Who is eligible?

All Gateway Cities as defined by M.G.L. ch 23A, Section 3A, are eligible to apply for new Districts. These include:

- Attleboro, Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Peabody, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester.

Gateway cities that have previously hosted a TDI Fellow are eligible to apply for a TDI District with the following restrictions:

- The application must focus on a commercial district other than the original TDI District (s).
- The partnership in the application must be substantially different than the original TDI Partnership.
- There must be a local partner willing to co-invest in the district along with MassDevelopment.

3. What determines eligibility?

Applicants are required to form a local collaborative partnership to apply for a TDI District designation. The partnership will work with MassDevelopment to move progress forward in the District. The partnership must identify a lead contact, and

each Gateway City can submit no more than one application. All information submitted will become the property of MassDevelopment and will be reviewed by staff and an appointed review committee during the Call for Districts process.

Districts must:

- Be small (a roughly five-minute walking radius).
- Contain a mix of uses around recent public or private investments.
- Be of importance to the city and the region.
- Have suffered from disinvestment in the past.
- Be ripe for organizational support work and catalytic investments to create momentum.

4. What do selected cities receive if awarded a TDI District? (The TDI Toolkit)

- A TDI Fellow: a midcareer economic development professional who will serve as a local organizer for the duration of the TDI commitment, fully paid for by MassDevelopment.
- Custom technical assistance from MassDevelopment and its “House Doctor” consultants throughout the three-year program.
- Access to small grants, which are new financial and capacity-building tools developed to promote local market growth focused on small businesses and activating/improving mixed-use development.
- Consideration for potential strategic MassDevelopment investments in the District.

5. How does TDI define a partnership?

The local collaborative partnership is a working group of lead stakeholders engaged in the long-term implementation of the District’s success. The partnership should be composed of a variety of stakeholders in the District who are able to create broad community consensus for work to be done in the District. This group should include property owners and major businesses. While there are no firm requirements for who belongs in a partnership, the group should be represented by at least the City itself, and any major employers, anchor institutions, residents, and nonprofits that work in or near the District.

Thank you for your interest in participating in, or extending your involvement with, MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative.