MassDevelopment is pleased to submit an annual report for the Collaborative Workspace Program – a program designed to accelerate the pace of new business formation, job creation, and entrepreneurial activity in Massachusetts communities by supporting infrastructure that fuels community-based innovation. Through the Collaborative Workspace Program, an organization can apply for a seed grant of up to $25,000 to plan and study the feasibility of a new collaborative workspace, or a fit-out grant of up to $250,000 to complete building improvements and/or equipment purchases. Both types of grants require a one-to-one match. Eligible spaces include innovation centers, makerspaces, artists’ spaces, collaborative kitchens, and traditional collaborative workspaces.

This report summarizes the **33 new awards (5 seed grants and 28 fit-out) made in FY2020 totaling $2,047,910**. Funding to support the Collaborative Workspace Program in FY2020 originated from state capital authorizations of $1.5 million. An additional $665,000 was contributed by the Barr Foundation as the final installment of a three-year $1,965,000 grant awarded to MassDevelopment to support the program.

Since its inception in the fall of 2014, the Collaborative Workspace Program has made **138 awards (44 seed grants, 94 fit-out grants) totaling $8,637,041** throughout the Commonwealth. Annual surveys submitted by grantees demonstrate that the Collaborative Workspace Program has activated 291,094 square feet in the funded spaces that now occupy more than 780,000 square feet. Grantees have also added 6,821 new members/users since implementing their grant-funded projects, and total reported members/users now stands at 12,652. These spaces continue to respond to member needs by adding new programs, educational tools, and networking opportunities.

Over the past several months, we’ve been heartened to see many previous awardees step up to the plate to support their communities by using their workspaces, equipment, and skills to produce protective face masks and shields, meals, and more – demonstrating the collaborative spirit and ‘can-do’ attitude that is deeply rooted in the mission of these spaces.
FY2020 Grant Recipients

Old Stone Mill Center, Adams – $75,000
The Old Stone Mill aims to be a community-accessible space for creative expression, collaboration, innovation, and zero-waste practice and education. The center will use this grant to bring the rehabilitated mill building up to code and allow the center to open to the public by improving the electrical system and completing water sealant projects and accessibility improvements.

Belchertown Cultural Alliance, Belchertown – $10,000
The Belchertown Cultural Alliance is a proposed coworking space, makerspace, and community incubator kitchen at the former Belchertown State School property, which is currently being redeveloped into a mixed-use neighborhood named Carriage Grove. The organization will use grant funding to conduct a feasibility analysis, undertake strategic planning, and estimate the cost of preliminary designs.

BevArt (Miranda’s Hearth), Beverly – $12,910
The nonprofit Miranda’s Hearth is seeking to establish BevArt: The Beverly Arts Community Center, an artist incubator and community art center. This grant will cover consultant costs associated with a feasibility analysis.

Artists for Humanity, Boston – $100,000
Artists for Humanity provides under-resourced teenagers with paid employment opportunities in art and design. The organization will use grant funding to fit out its welding studio and buy equipment.

Midway Artist Studios, Boston – $125,000
Launched in 2005, Midway Artist Studios provides free work and meeting space for artists, designers, investors, and small business owners, and has affordable live-work studios available for lease. This grant will help the organization fund needed improvements at its existing coworking space and create two new coworking spaces.
The Record Co., Boston – $125,000
The Record Co. is a nonprofit community music workspace established for musicians, producers, engineers, songwriters, and other creatives. Grant funding will allow the organization to build key infrastructure and new recording studios.

The Stationery Factory, Dalton – $100,000
The Stationery Factory is a 100,000-square-foot former manufacturing facility that was redeveloped for event and commercial office space. The building is home to a multifaceted coworking space that includes artist studios, incubator space, a commercial kitchen, and a community emergency resource center. The grant will fund infrastructure investments for code compliance, kitchen renovations, and the expansion of usable space.

Narrows Center for the Arts, Fall River – $125,000
Located in a mill building in Fall River’s Transformative Development Initiative district, the Narrows Center for the Arts is a nonprofit organization featuring performance space, visual art galleries and studios, a classroom, and a café. This grant funding will allow the organization to renovate the second floor of its building into event, office, and artist studio space with a new HVAC system, flooring, restrooms, windows, and an improved building entrance.

Urban Fork, Fitchburg – $160,000
Urban Fork is a proposed collaborative workplace and commercial kitchen in Fitchburg’s Transformative Development Initiative district. This grant will be used to buy equipment and build out the space.

Wheelhouse Cowork, Gloucester – $23,500
Wheelhouse Cowork is Cape Ann’s first coworking space and provides a venue for individuals and groups to realize their business goals. The grant will fund HVAC improvements and the build-out of private workspaces for members.

Another Castle, Greenfield – $3,500
Another Castle is a coworking space that caters to video game developers, designers, and professionals in Western Massachusetts and beyond. Another Castle will use this grant to further fit out its space with private meeting booths and additional computer equipment.

Greenspace CoWork, Greenfield – $25,000
Greenspace CoWork is a flexible, on-demand coworking space located in the heart of downtown Greenfield. As Greenspace’s current space is reaching capacity, the organization will use grant funds to expand into a nearby building.
The Hive Makerspace, Greenfield – $25,000
The Hive Makerspace is a proposed makerspace that will enable entrepreneurs and artists to develop new products, projects, and works of art with on-site digital fabrication equipment and electronic, metalworking, and woodworking tools. This grant will be used to hire a consultant to provide all aspects of feasibility work.

Loophole Brewing Services (3 Keys Cahoots), Holyoke – $20,200
Loophole Brewing Services is a proposed brewing space aimed at helping small craft breweries meet demand and engage in collaborations, and providing aspiring brewers with an opportunity to use commercial-grade equipment to test their products. The grant will fund architectural design costs to fit out the space.

60 Vibe, Lawrence – $4,800
60 Vibe is a coworking space adjacent to Lawrence’s Transformative Development Initiative district for startups, entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and small businesses. This grant will fund the purchase of a private phone booth for 60 Vibe members.

Revolving Test Kitchen/Lawrence Partnership, Lawrence – $125,000
Run by the Lawrence Partnership, the Revolving Test Kitchen is a business incubator adjacent to Lawrence’s Transformative Development Initiative district that provides startup food entrepreneurs with storage, prep, and café space along with technical assistance from area partners. The grant will allow the organization to restructure its single-user café area to accommodate multiple entrepreneurs, and build out its basement into a shared commercial kitchen.

Inc.Ubate Coworking, Lynn – $100,000
Winthrop-based Inc.Ubate CoWorking aims to open a second coworking space, in Lynn, that will include a common work area, conference room, private meeting spaces, and modern amenities. This grant will be used to build out the space.

The Brickyard Collaborative, Lynn – $4,000
The Brickyard Collaborative is a fully equipped makerspace focused on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics) and entrepreneurship. The organization will use this grant to expand its rapid prototyping offerings with an additional 3D printer.
Stockpot Malden, Malden – $108,000
Stock Pot Malden is a shared kitchen incubator space home to approximately 25 start-up food companies. Stock Pot Malden will use this grant to fit out its second shared kitchen where more advanced companies can operate.

BoroBot, Middleboro – $15,000
BoroBot is a makerspace that provides members with equipment and training in an effort to promote entrepreneurship and teach marketable skills. Grant funding will help the organization buy a 3D printer and laser cutter.

The Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern Massachusetts, New Bedford – $15,000
The Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern Massachusetts has partnered with local organizations WHALE and studio2sustain to redevelop the historic Capitol Theater with affordable housing, retail space, and a coworking and small business incubator space. The organization will use this grant to conduct design work associated with the building redevelopment.

Quest Center for Innovation, New Bedford – $125,000
The Quest Center for Innovation is a coworking space that encourages entrepreneurial start-up activity and offers training programs. This grant will support the build-out of unfinished space on the building’s second floor into private offices including partitions and flooring, lighting, mechanical, and technology upgrades.

Lever, North Adams – $24,000
Lever is a coworking space and startup incubator. The organization will use grant funds to create two additional offices and improve efficiency throughout the space.

LaunchSpace, Orange – $100,000
Located within the Orange Innovation Center, LaunchSpace is a makerspace committed to community development, workforce education and development, entrepreneurial support, and business incubation. LaunchSpace will use this grant to replace the building’s roof and heating system.

Framework Pittsfield Coworking, Pittsfield – $7,000
Framework Pittsfield Coworking is a coworking space for entrepreneurs, freelancers, and small businesses. Framework will use this grant to buy and install a free-standing private phone booth.
Provincetown Commons, Provincetown – $50,000
The Provincetown Commons supports creative professionals, artists, small enterprises, scientific and technological projects, and community initiatives through coworking space, shared resources, educational programming, and economic development initiatives. The organization will use grant funds to complete the build-out of its remaining unfinished space, including buying materials for sound attenuation, phone booths, and exterior doors.

Make-It Springfield, Springfield – $125,000
Make-It Springfield is a community makerspace providing local makers, artisans, crafters, entrepreneurs, programmers, students, and others with the opportunity to learn new skills and build relationships. The organization is relocating to the Springfield Innovation Center in Springfield’s Transformative Development Initiative district, and will use grant funds to build out the space with HVAC, electrical, life safety, plumbing systems, workspaces, and ADA-compliance improvements.

Food rEvolution, Stoneham – $20,000
Food rEvolution is a shared commercial kitchen that supports local and sustainable food production. This grant will help Food rEvolution build out its basement for food storage and prep space.

WorcLab (formerly the Worcester CleanTech Incubator), Worcester – $25,000
WorcLab, formerly known as the Worcester CleanTech Incubator, is a coworking space that provides the space, programs, training, and mentoring entrepreneurs need to propel their ideas into the marketplace. The organization will use this grant to remove a wall in its existing space, thereby providing a more open layout, and furnish the fourth floor of the Printers Building with equipment and partitions.

Worcester Public Library Foundation, Worcester – $15,000
The Worcester Public Innovation Center, proposed by the Worcester Public Library Foundation, will be a flexible makerspace providing access to resources, tools, and technology for community-based learning, problem solving, collaboration, and engagement in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics). The organization will use this grant to buy a laser cutter and 3D printer.
Artisan’s Asylum - Somerville

Artisan’s Asylum serves as an important anchor institution for artists, fabricators, and entrepreneurs in Greater Boston. Over the last year, the community fabrication center has been able to expand its shop capacity and capabilities, grow its educational offerings, and welcome more than 100 new members. By providing new online opportunities for learning, including the popular “Mission to Mars” course, the nonprofit has doubled its student enrollment in robotics. Most importantly, this year Artisan’s Asylum was able to pivot when the COVID-19 pandemic erupted to produce personal protective equipment (PPE). Beginning in March 2020, Artisan’s members got busy studying the PPE shortage, identifying ways they could contribute, and producing nearly 20,000 face shields and gowns.

One of Artisan’s Asylum’s many success stories is Merlin Labs, a company that started at the Asylum in 2018, benefiting from access to the space, tooling, and expertise. Merlin Labs develops technology that enables large traditionally manned aircraft to fly unmanned and autonomously. Today, the company has raised more than $23 million in venture capital, generated approximately $10 million in revenue, and has a flight test facility in the Mojave Desert. Merlin Labs now supports 50 jobs, the majority of which are in Massachusetts.

The WorcShop – Leicester (previously Worcester)

Despite setbacks related to the COVID-19 pandemic including a several-month moratorium on classes, canceled or paused memberships, lack of rentals, and added expenses associated with increased sanitization and air-filtration units, The WorcShop welcomed 20 new members this year and undertook a relocation to Leicester. New classes and offerings, such as a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) plasma table and jig tables, have provided entrepreneurs and start-up businesses access to resources for a fraction of what it would cost to purchase. These improvements have allowed members to develop marketable skills and cultivate networks to pursue next-stage development.

Colette Dumont joined The WorcShop two years ago without any experience in blacksmithing or metal fabrication. After taking advantage of many of The WorcShop’s resources, she is now a Bladesmith and metal artist. Colette has a shop on Etsy, Manic Faerie Forge, and she is routinely commissioned for custom metalwork. She is also teaching several blacksmithing classes for beginners, including one geared specifically towards the LGBTQ+ community.
Framingham Makerspace – Framingham

At Framingham Makerspace, members have the ability to pursue their dreams. For example, a part-time soap maker and member was able to move production from her residential kitchen to a rented studio space in order to expand her business. Another member involved in robotics used the space’s new Collaborative Workspace Program-funded CNC equipment to construct battle robots for competition, and has become the primary instructor for the new equipment – as a result, Framingham Makerspace is now considering hosting future robotics competitions.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Framingham Makerspace produced and delivered more than 90 cloth masks, 229 face shields, and 1479 gowns to local nursing homes – typically delivering products within 48 hours of a request. Volunteer members ran multiple shifts per day at three socially distant stations in the facility, donating all labor costs and most of the material. While membership has largely held steady, even with COVID-19 restrictions in place, the Framingham Makerspace did see increased interest in membership in the third quarter of 2020.

Groundwork – New Bedford

New Bedford collaborative workspace Groundwork notes its community has stayed cohesive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with the space’s strong retention rate demonstrating that it has built a sustainable and resilient network. Due to the increase in remote working, Groundwork expects demand for coworking space to increase in the next few years – and is moving forward with an expansion to the second floor of its building, which will create additional private offices to accommodate existing members and attract new interest.

One member, Midori Evans, is a tutor and musician working to establish herself as a creativity consultant. Midori completed the winter 2020 EforAll cohort and became acquainted with Groundwork by attending the accelerator sessions held there. Groundwork invited Midori to barter for a membership by agreeing to provide a monthly live piano performance in the space. Midori has now become an integral part of the community – leading several creativity workshops for members and continuing to provide music via livestream during the pandemic.
Lowell Makes - Lowell

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lowell Makes completed a fundraising effort that allowed the nonprofit to purchase a building at 150 Western Avenue in Lowell to serve as its new home. The new facility will expand Lowell Makes’ footprint by roughly 80% and is located in the heart of a larger artist community, Western Avenue Studios. In addition to giving back to the community by frequently offering low- or no-cost space rentals, in March and April 2020, Lowell Makes put all 14 of its 3D printers, its conference room, and its classroom to use to produce more than 1,000 3D-printed face masks and face shields. The space also served as a distribution facility for hundreds of additional items donated by local hobbyist printers. This “open source PPE” was donated to local first responders during the initial outbreak of COVID-19, when traditional medical equipment was in short supply.

Chelsi Hanley became a member of Lowell Makes in 2016 and quickly helped launch a ceramics shop at the space. Over the next three years, she built a thriving small business, first by teaching pottery classes, and then by hosting private workshops and recruiting a number of recurring members to learn under her tutelage. Chelsi was so successful that she struck out on her own in 2019, moving her business, The Pottery Mill, into its own facility on Chelmsford Street in Lowell. Meanwhile, since joining Lowell Makes in 2019, James Hildreth has been a prolific member of the wood shop. James’ works include custom turned-wood and acrylic pens, which he sells, donating 100% of the proceeds to the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. He has also created ornate display boxes and laser-engraved pieces for donation to service men and women of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division.

The Hive Makerspace – Greenfield

In case you are wondering whether a collaborative workspace needs to have formally opened its doors to make a difference in its community, FY2020 seed grantee, The Hive Makerspace, provides an emphatic answer. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, while still in its feasibility phase, The Hive was able to build community buy-in through a series of events including a holiday makers’ market, live music series, pop-up arts events, and open forums on the role of a makerspace in a revitalized downtown Greenfield. The Hive furthered its relationships with Greenfield Community College, Greenspace Cowork, and Another Castle, enabling the collaborative to secure an Urban Agenda Grant that will sponsor student and community memberships for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) entrepreneurs to The Hive, as well as an organizational membership for We Are Makers, a network of women, queer, and under-represented makers. In March 2020, when supply chains for PPE struggled to meet demand, The Hive mobilized a group of makers within its network to prototype, test, and fabricate PPE for local health care professionals and frontline workers. In collaboration with several local schools, The Hive produced and distributed over 1,000 face shields to meet a critical need in its community.
Approved Projects FY2020

Old Stone Mill Center
Adams
$75,000

Belchertown Cultural Alliance
Belchertown
$10,000

BevArt (Miranda's Hearth)
Beverly
$12,910

Endicott College - Ginger Judge Science Center
(Declined Grant)
Beverly
$30,000

Gathr Work (Declined Grant)
Beverly
$100,000

Artists for Humanity
Boston
$100,000

Midway Artist Studios
Boston
$125,000

The Record Co.
Boston
$125,000

The Stationery Factory
Dalton
$100,000

Narrows Center for the Arts
Fall River
$125,000

Urban Fork
Fitchburg
$160,000

Wheelhouse Cowork
Gloucester
$23,500

Another Castle
Greenfield
$3,500

Greenspace CoWork
Greenfield
$25,000

The Hive Makerspace
Greenfield
$25,000

Loophole Brewing Services
(3 Keys Cahoots)
Holyoke
$20,200

60 Vibe
Lawrence
$4,800

Revolving Test Kitchen/
Lawrence Partnership
Lawrence
$125,000

Inc.Ubate Coworking
Lynn
$100,000

The Brickyard Collaborative
Lynn
$4,000

Stockpot Malden
Malden
$108,000

BoroBot
Middleboro
$15,000

CEDC of Southeastern MA
New Bedford
$15,000

Quest Center for Innovation
New Bedford
$125,000

Lever, Inc.
North Adams
$24,000

LaunchSpace/Orange Innovation Center
Orange/Athol
$100,000

Framework Pittsfield Coworking
Pittsfield
$7,000

Provincetown Commons
Provincetown
$50,000

Make-It Springfield
Springfield
$125,000

Food rEvolution
Stoneham
$20,000

The Vault - Worcester IdeaLab (Declined Grant)
Worcester
125,000

Worcester Clean Tech Incubator
Worcester
$25,000

Worcester Public Library Innovation Center
Worcester
$15,000