Ready to *Write*

Municipal Assistance Program (MAP)

Thursday, July 17, 2025 | 12 - 1 PM

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Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development

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01

OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW

MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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Governor’s Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS)

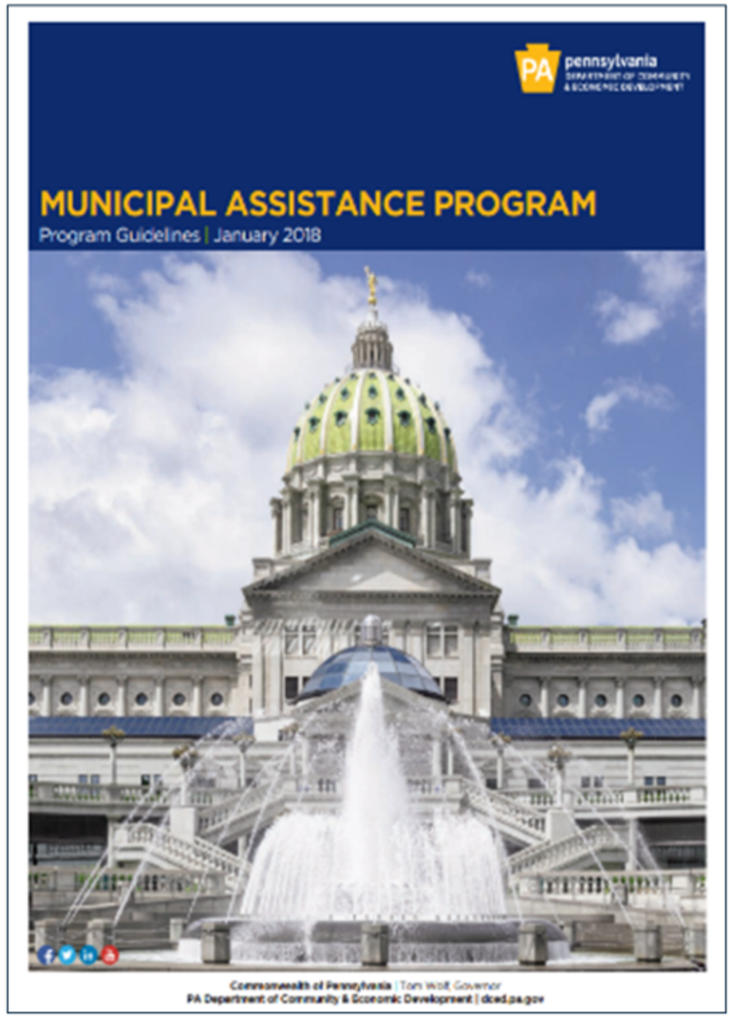
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Helping Build Successful Communities

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) is a one-stop shop for local government officials and provides a wealth of knowledge and expertise on all matters affecting local government operations throughout Pennsylvania

What Is MAP?



MAP provides funding to assist local governments to plan for and efficiently implement a variety of policies, programs, or projects, and soundly manage development with an emphasis on intergovernmental approaches.

Categories

1. Shared Services
2. Community Planning

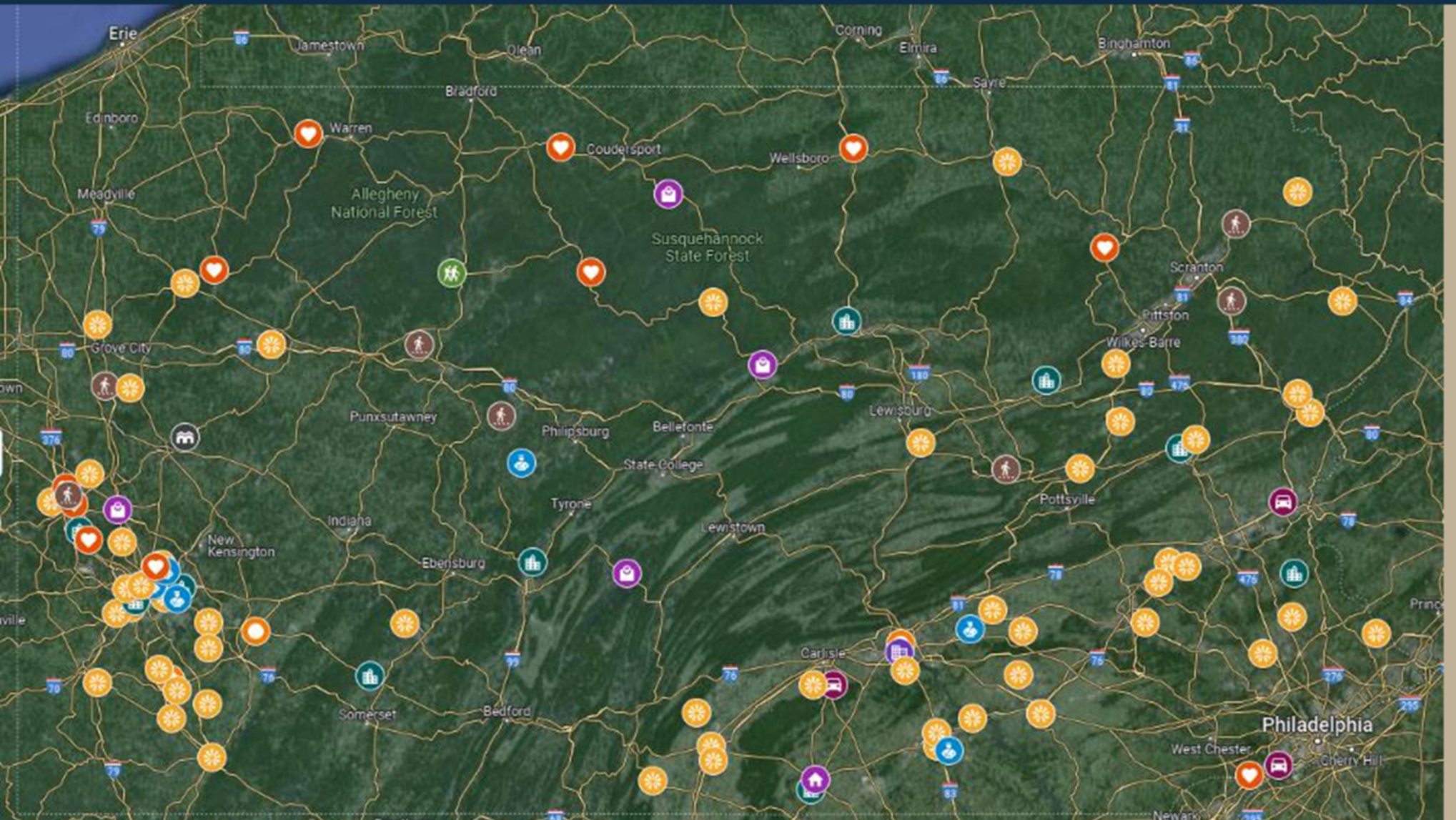
FY 2019-2023 Highlights

Over the last five years, MAP has

- **Issued 108** grants and **$4M** in funding
- **Impacted**
  - **221** municipalities
  - **48** counties
- **Funded**
  - **46** multi-municipal projects
  - **62** comprehensive plans
  - **6** emergency service projects
  - **20** zoning & SALDO updates
  - **12** Heart & Soul projects

Upcoming MAP Webinar

Pennsylvania
Department of Community & Economic Development



MAP Key
Emergency Services
Retail/Economic Development
Comprehensive Plan
Zoning
SALDO
Comprehensive Plan & Zoning
Heart & Soul
Transportation
Recreation
Downtown Plan
Water/Sewer Planning
Other

Eligible Applicants

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Any municipality or group of municipalities

- City
- Borough
- Town
- Township
- Home-rule municipality
- County





OR



Public or quasi-public organization duly authorized to act on behalf of one or more municipality

Eligible Projects

Shared Service Activities

- Regionalization, Consolidation, & Shared Services
- High Impact Projects
- Shared Capacity
- Boundary Change

Community Planning

- Community Plans
- Plan Implementation
- Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Studies
- AND MORE



Emergency Services Projects

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Local Government Services

Eligible Activities

- Merger, consolidation, or regional feasibility studies
- Cost analysis of emergency services
- Emergency services evaluation
- Emergency services management
- Apparatus & equipment

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Also Offer

- Technical assistance
- Peer consultants from current & former police, fire, and EMS professionals



Ineligible Projects

- ✕ Construction
- ✕ Renovation
- ✕ Purchase of new buildings or infrastructure
- ✕ Cost of general administration of MAP grant
- ✕ Costs of procuring lobbying services
- ✕ Paying fines or reparations resulting from lawsuits, citations, or regulatory actions



Funding

Up to a 50% Match



- Cash match requirements
  - General fund, participating municipalities, partner organizations
  - Labor costs (ex. college students)
- In-kind
  - Donated products/services (ex. GIS)
  - County services
- Reduced match
  - Usually reserved for Act 47, consolidation, merger, or boundary change
- Other grants
  - At least 25% of the total cost must be funded from non-state sources

What You Need to Apply

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Local Government Services

- ❑ Project description
- ❑ Budget
- ❑ Scope of work (planning activities)
- ❑ Resolutions from all participating municipalities
  - ❑ COGs: resolution and letter of certification on behalf of all municipalities
  - ❑ Partner or quasi-public: resolutions from organization and participating municipalities

For Planning ONLY

- ❑ County letter of support

Optional (*but encouraged!*)

- ❑ Support letters from other organizations
- ❑ Talk to your regional DCED planner

APPLICATIONS ARE ROLLING

REVIEW DEADLINE TO BE AWARDED IN FALL 2025:
SEPTEMBER 1

REVIEW DEADLINE (APPROXIMATE) TO BE AWARDED IN SPRING 2026:
MARCH 1

02

RISING TO THE TOP

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STAND OUT?

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DISCLAIMER

The tips and strategies provided by the SWPA Hub are for educational purpose only.

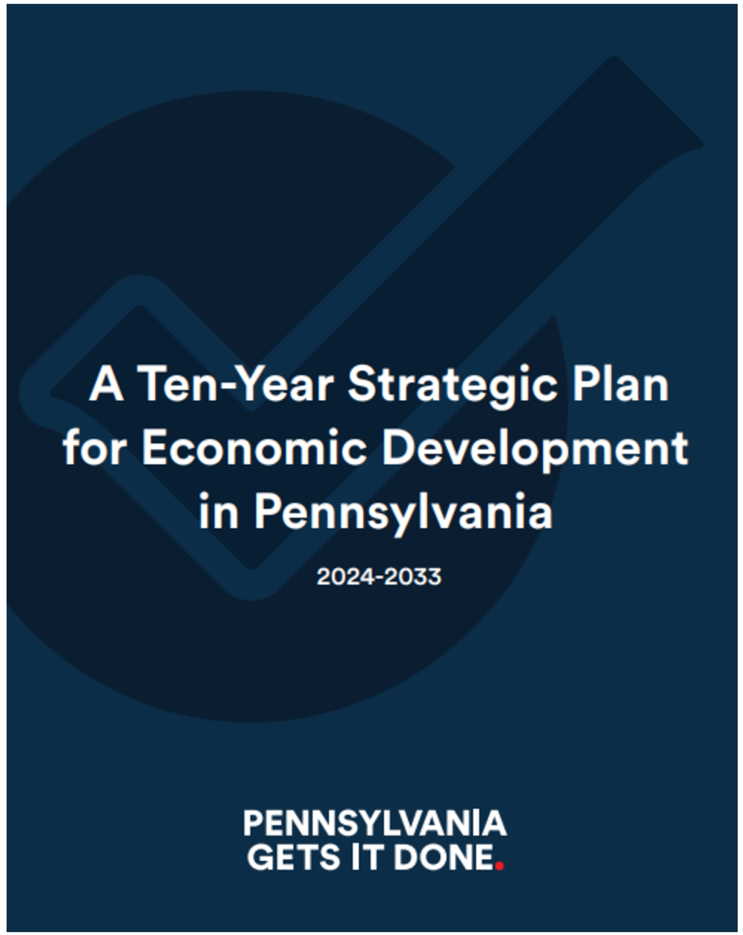
We do our utmost to provide practical and accurate assistance to help you increase the competitiveness of your grant proposals.

All funding decisions rest with DCED. The Hub's resources cannot guarantee funding outcomes and the Hub does not participate in decision-making.

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MAP Strategic principles and objectives

- Partnerships
- Competition
- Commitment
- Results
- Innovation
- Performance



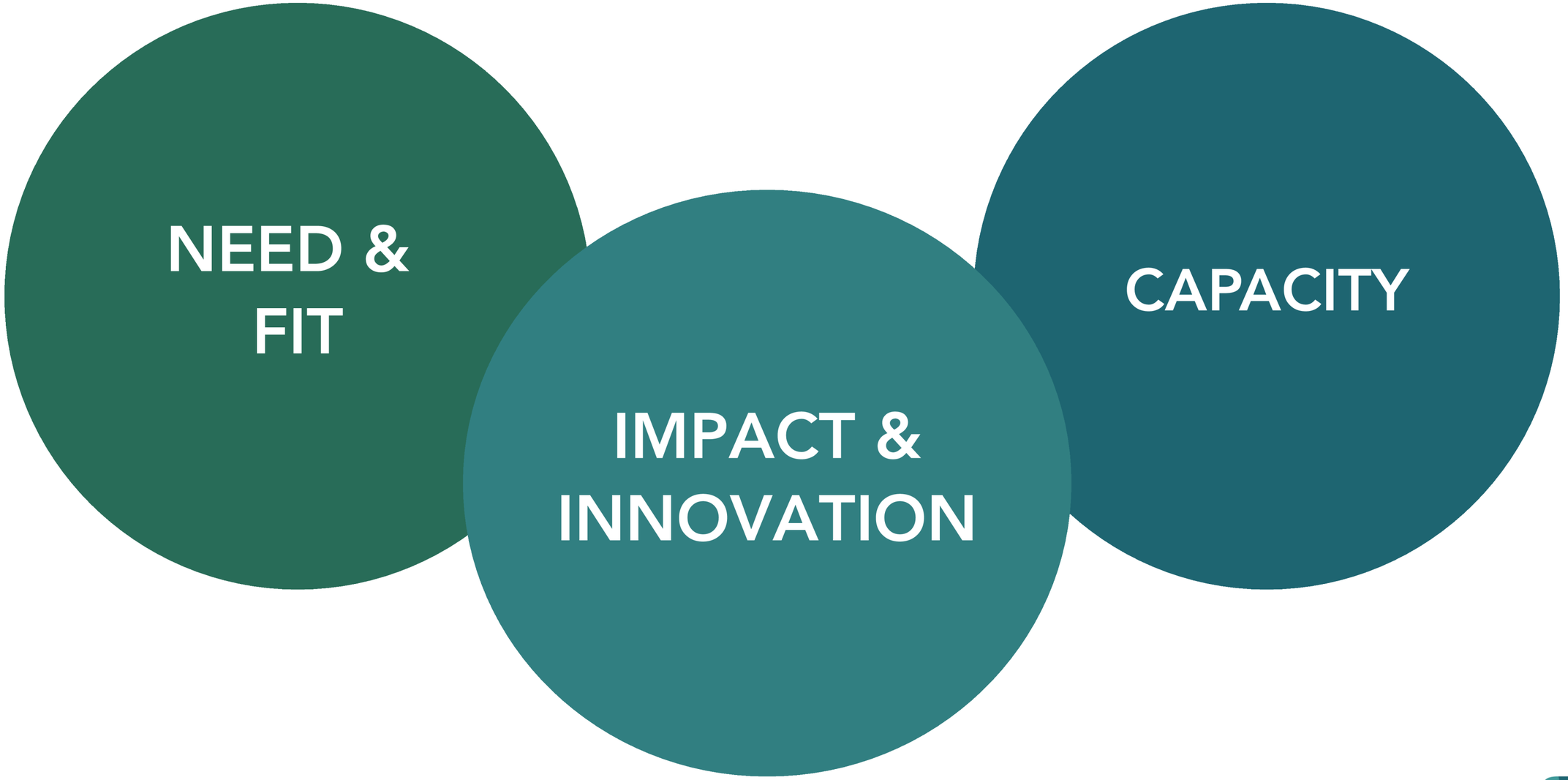
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MAP Review criteria

Need	Overall quality of project	Local commitment & partnerships
Funding adequacy, source, & timeline	Past performance	Financial disadvantage

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SYNTHESIZED PRIORITIES



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SYNTHESIZED PRIORITIES

NEED & FIT

The proposal is focused on a **significant need or opportunity** aligned to PA economic development priorities and is clearly backed up by data, plans, and community support.

The proposal **merits a significant investment in planning** and would benefit from expert assistance (e.g., a consultant) due to its potential to benefit a large area/population or yield critical results that would otherwise be unachievable.

The proposal benefits communities experiencing **fiscal distress** (as indicated by Act 47, the Survey of Financial Condition, or STAMP).

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SYNTHESIZED PRIORITIES

IMPACT & INNOVATION

Proposed activities will produce long-term measurable improvements to **financial efficiency (e.g., cost savings, cost avoidance), service provision (e.g., new, expanded, more efficient services), community attractiveness and livability, and/or sound land use practices.**

Proposed activities will produce long-term measurable improvements to **municipal decision-making, operations, and/or policy that enhance the implementability of plans**.

The proposal's **activities and schedule** are thorough, reasonable, and clearly linked to the stated need, outcomes, and budget.

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SYNTHESIZED PRIORITIES

CAPACITY

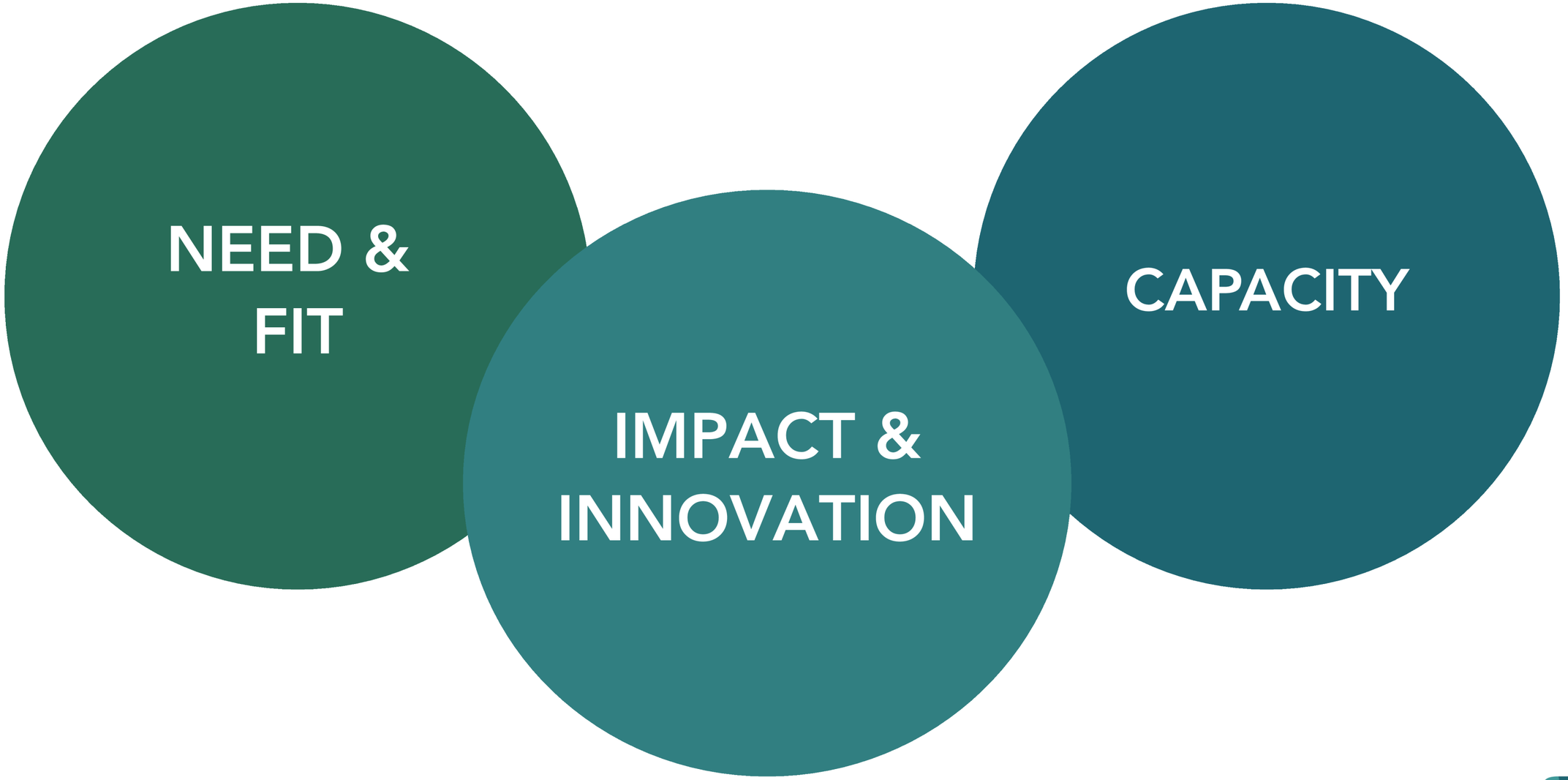
The project is supported by **strong partnerships** that will support long-term capacity and cooperation between two or more communities and/or sectors (e.g., local governments, agencies, nonprofits, and/or the private sector).

The proposed **expenses** are reasonable and can be supported by all applicants via adequate cash match.

The applicant has a **track record of success** in grant acquisition, implementation, and management.

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SYNTHESIZED PRIORITIES



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03

MAXIMIZING POINTS

TEMPLATES AND TIPS TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR PROPOSAL

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FREE RESOURCES

The Hub team has created a toolkit to help you address each part of the MAP application.

It includes checklists, sample responses, and templates. This toolkit links you to DCED resources and info and also provides technical assistance content generated by the Hub.

This resource is freely available. The Hub team and DCED staff will be available on Aug. 14 from 12 - 1pm for free office hours for more tailored assistance polishing your application.



PROJECT NARRATIVE QUESTION 1

What do you plan to accomplish with this project?

Checklist for all applicants

- Identify the problem/opportunity your proposal will focus on
- Identify how you will address this issue
- Note the extent of the issue/your proposed solution in terms of geographic area and/or population.
- Back up your argument with data (Census data, community survey, etc.)
- Describe a high level of community support for your project (community meetings, survey, etc)
- If your issue/project is recommended in a local or county plan (including state econ dev plan) state this explicitly
- If your project will benefit fiscally distressed municipalities, state this explicitly

Additional items based on project type

- Shared service projects: Take extra care to emphasize that your project will serve a large geographic area and/or population
- Planning projects: If you are a single applicant (i.e., your project does not include inter-governmental cooperation), you must justify this by arguing that your project scope is appropriately narrow, that a multi-municipal partnership is not workable, or give another compelling reason that is backed by evidence.

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PROJECT NARRATIVE QUESTION 1

What do you plan to accomplish with this project?

Sample City and Riverbend Borough are partnering to develop a Joint Downtown Revitalization Plan focused on enhancing local business vitality, improving recreational access, and creating more vibrant, walkable main streets. Both communities have experienced population loss (Sample City: -5%; Riverbend: -10% since 2020), rising storefront vacancies, and underutilized public spaces. Despite these challenges, they share valuable regional assets: a riverfront trail, historic town centers, and complementary business districts.

The plan will create a unified strategy to strengthen tourism, support small businesses, and align infrastructure investments across both municipalities. Together, the communities serve a combined population of over 12,000 and act as commercial and civic anchors for the surrounding rural region. This joint effort was recommended in the Sample County Comprehensive Plan (2023) and is strongly supported by local business associations, recreation groups, and both councils. Riverbend is classified as financially distressed under Act 47, further demonstrating the need for coordinated planning support.

PROJECT NARRATIVE QUESTION 2

How do you plan to accomplish it?

Checklist for all applicants

- List substantive, on-the-ground outcomes
  - Identify a quantitative metric for each outcome (e.g., 5 new businesses downtown)
  - If possible indicate improvement over baseline (e.g., X% increase in jobs downtown from 2020 baseline of X)
- List process-based outcomes that enhance capacity and implementability
  - Describe partnerships created
  - Describe any other ways you will increase capacity for implementation, with quantitative indicators where possible
- If you are claiming that your project will provide cost savings, explain how you calculated this in a supplemental doc to be attached in the application addendum.

Additional items based on project type

- Shared service projects: Emphasize outcomes related to reducing expenses and increasing revenue. If you are requesting equipment to provide services, clearly indicate that your partnership is capable of using and maintaining the equipment.

- Planning projects: Emphasize the implementability of your plan in the process-based outcomes. Touch on ordinances or other policies you will create, how you have or will build community ownership/support for implementation, organize the plan in an actionable fashion, and anything about your approach that is unique.

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PROJECT NARRATIVE QUESTION 2

How do you plan to accomplish it?

This joint plan will generate actionable strategies to increase business occupancy, improve public spaces, and connect recreational assets across both communities. Substantive outcomes include a target of 10 new downtown businesses between the two municipalities, a 25% increase in trail and park use, and a 15% reduction in storefront vacancies—benchmarked against 2015 data. The plan will also propose zoning updates and design guidelines to support cohesive, walkable districts.

Capacity-building outcomes include a formal intermunicipal collaboration agreement and a shared steering committee. The steering committee, supported by the county and local nonprofits, will oversee implementation. Public engagement including visioning workshops and asset mapping will be coordinated across both communities to build shared ownership. The final plan will include an implementation matrix tied to responsible parties, timelines, and funding sources. By aligning our efforts, we will build capacity to implement shared economic development priorities more efficiently and equitably.

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PROJECT NARRATIVE QUESTION 3

How do you plan to use the funds?

Checklist for all applicants

- Briefly list key expenses
- Justify the reasonableness of the expenses
- Outline plan for match
- Justify why MAP funds are essential
- State your successful track record related to grant aquisition, implementation, and management

Additional items based on project type

- Shared service projects: If you are creating a new position, submit a separate attachment to be uploaded to the application addendum that shows the job description and explains what measurable objectives will be achieved via the position
- Planning projects: n/a

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PROJECT NARRATIVE QUESTION 3

How do you plan to use the funds?

MAP funds will support four core activities: 1) baseline analysis of economic and physical conditions in both downtowns; 2) joint public engagement and visioning; 3) development of integrated revitalization strategies; and 4) preparation of shared implementation tools (e.g., zoning, capital improvement plan). These costs are based on a competitive RFP process jointly led by our partnership.

MAP support is essential given the limited staffing and fiscal constraints in both municipalities—especially Riverbend Borough, which is financially distressed. The joint planning focus makes MAP the best fit for this effort. Sample City and Riverbend Borough will jointly provide the 50% match: Sample City through general fund contributions and Riverbend through state grant funds and in-kind donated services. Both municipalities have successfully managed past planning and infrastructure grants, including C2P2 and MSM grants. This experience demonstrates our ability to steward MAP resources and deliver an implementable, regionally significant plan.

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NEXT STEPS

CHECK OUT OUR FREE TOOLKIT!

JOIN US FOR OFFICE HOURS ON AUG 14 FROM 12 -1PM TO FINE TUNE YOUR APPLICATION OR ASK MORE QUESTIONS

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04

QUESTIONS?

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LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

Email us at...

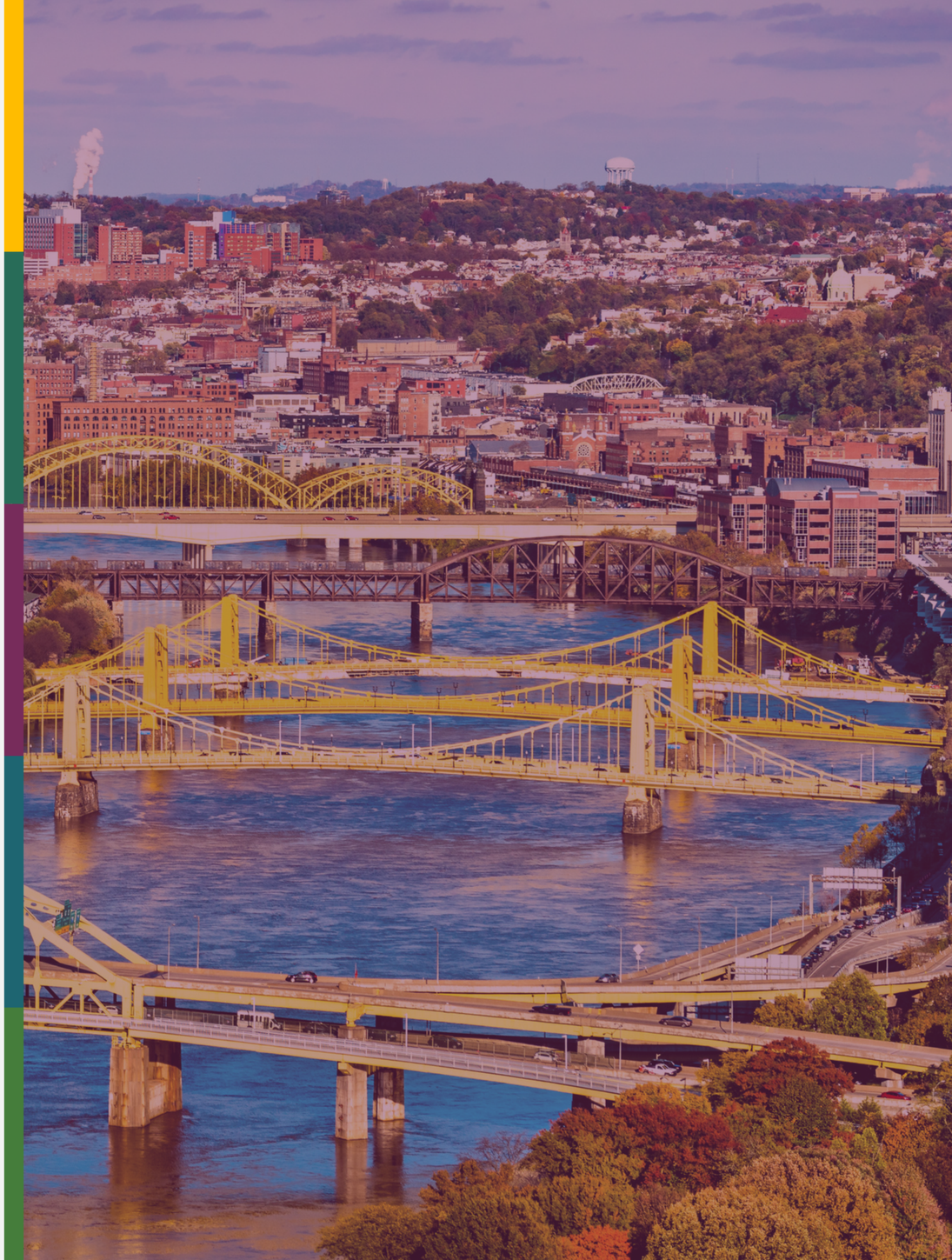
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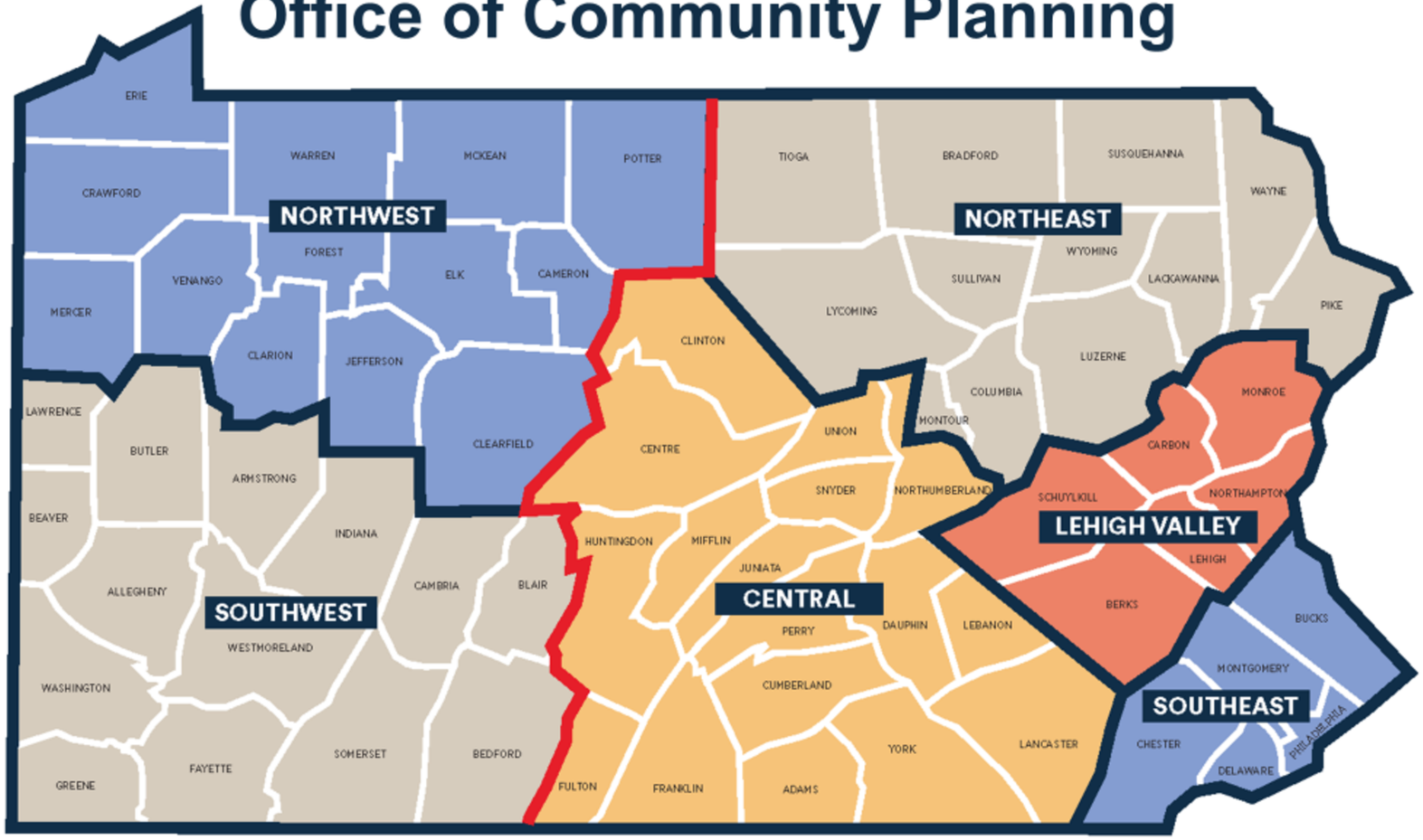
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EXTRA SLIDES

MAP Review Criteria

Need

Is there a significant need for the project, problem to be solved, or opportunity to be pursued? Is the need regional? Is MAP funding integral to making the project happen, or to yielding a critical level of results not achievable without MAP funding?

Overall Quality of Project

Does the project appear to be well planned and ready to undertake? Is it a sound, well-thought out, and workable plan for addressing the stated need? Will the project address longterm solutions?

Local Commitment & Partnerships

Will applicant municipalities be participating both financially and otherwise in the project? To what extent? What partnerships have been established as part of the project? Does the project reflect a broad community commitment to the proposed activity? Are documents included that reflect broad community/regional support for the project?

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MAP Review Criteria

Funding Adequacy, Source, & Timetable

Is the amount of money applied for and the grantee contribution a reasonable amount to complete the project? Are there alternative means or sources of funding available? Does the project outline an implementation time schedule? Is it a reasonable project within the contractual time frames of the program?

Past Performance

If the applicant has received previous DCED grants, how have the grants benefitted local municipalities? Have grant funds been spent properly? Have projects been implemented and completed in a timely manner?

Financial Disadvantage

Will the project benefit municipalities that are designated as distressed under Act 47 or experiencing a degree of fiscal distress as identified in the Survey of Financial Condition or through participation in DCED's Strategic Management Planning Program?

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MAP Review Criteria

SHARED SERVICES

- **Overall Quality of Project.** Will municipalities actually be working together rather than merely performing independent tasks concurrently? Will the project strengthen the capacity to provide municipal services or improve the quality of services? Will the project explore a new area of intergovernmental cooperation? Will the project address long-term solutions to service delivery issues?

- **Cost Savings Potential.** Can participating municipalities expect to reduce expenditures or increase revenues as a result of the project? Will it contribute to the financial efficiency of local government? Are actual or estimated project cost savings or cost avoidance provided? Does applicant describe methodology for estimating cost savings or cost avoidance?

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MAP Review Criteria

PLANNING

- **Practical Value, Implementation** – Will the planning activity produce critical information and/or workable plans and ordinances that will be put to use to achieve desired development or community improvements? What steps will the applicant municipality (and partner municipalities, if any) take to ensure the plan or ordinance prepared with MAP funding will be implemented? Applications will receive more favorable consideration if they utilize the "implementable plan" approach promoted by DCED.

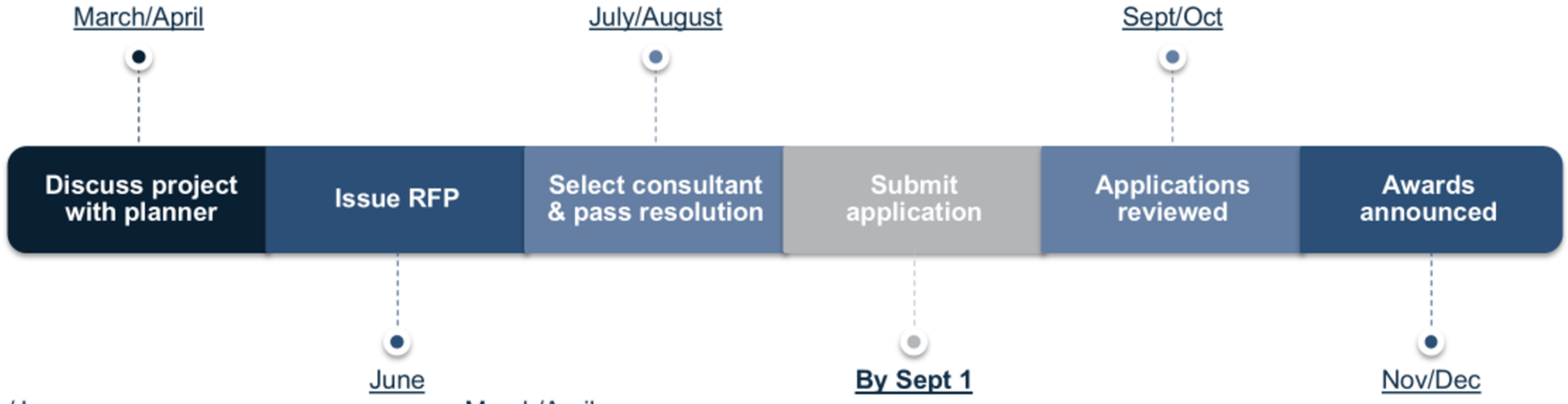
- Emphasis will be given to plans and ordinances that are **"entrepreneurial" or "innovative"** in provoking community and economic development and improvements to community assets.

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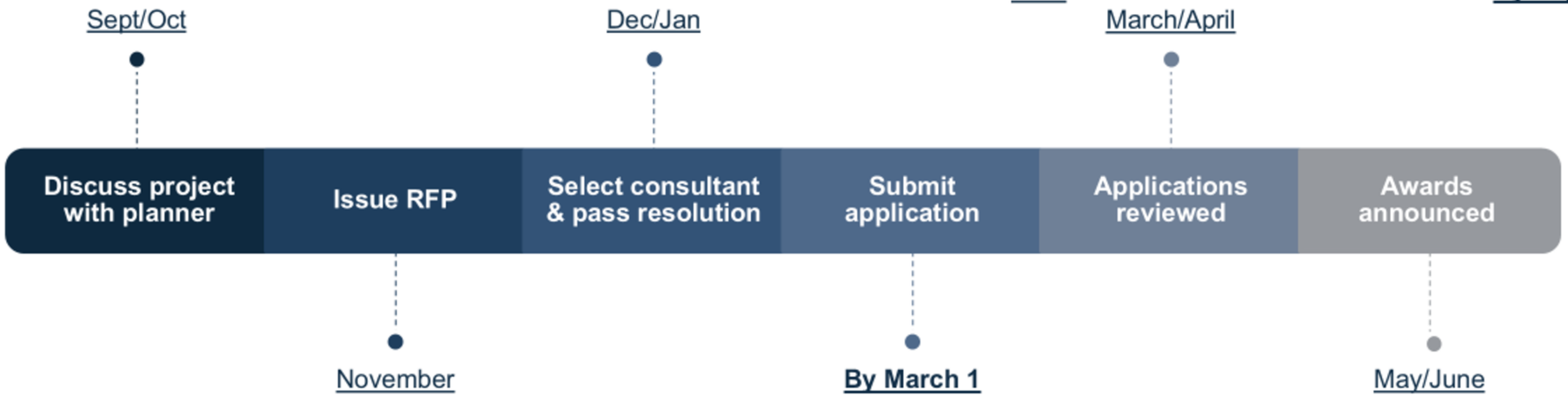
Typical Application Timeline

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Governor's Center for
Local Government Services

Fall Round



Spring Round



To be considered for spring 2025 award, all applications must be in by March 1, 2025

City of Sharon Downtown Strategic Plan

Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development



Sharon, PA
A Great Place to Live, Work & Grow
Community News

- Recently awarded MAP funds to complete a Five-Year Downtown Strategic Plan
- Seeking Main Street designation – downtown strategy requirement for designation
- Plan is on the heels of comprehensive plan & zoning updates
- Plan will seek to identify vacant/developable downtown properties
- Focus on wayfinding
  - Gateway signage
  - Directional signage to community assets
- Builds on an already rich public art scene
  - Sharon is home to many murals, sculptures, and pop-up art pieces
- Plan also focuses on utilizing river as revitalization mechanism
  - Sharon hosts one of the few WaterFire events in the country
  - Shenango River was named River of the Year in 2021
  - City has site control of large parcel on the river and main street that will become a “river landing” and anchor to the downtown

Chambersburg Borough Comprehensive Plan



- Implementable and user-friendly
- Goals around reinvestment, housing, sense of place, borough services, and transportation
- Highlights other borough plans and studies
- In-depth recommendations detailed with timeline, list of partners, and systematic budget range
- List of existing borough services and resources
- In-depth community profile
  - Housing data
  - Major area employers
  - Roadway classifications
  - Crash locations and congested areas
  - Identifies local, county, and state bridges
- Community-driven
- Applying for and receiving grants

Lackawanna County Regional Planning

- Three regionally-based comprehensive plans and zoning
  - Scranton-Abingtons Planning Association (SAPA)
    - Complete and implementing
  - Northern Lackawanna Planning Association (NORLACK)
    - Ongoing
  - North Pocono Planning Association (NPPA)
    - Ongoing
- County support via grant administration and funding assistance
- Opened pathways to shared services and unique zoning opportunities

