

MACDC Success in the FY08 House Budget

On to the Senate

The primary budget priority for MACDC in the Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) Budget is ensuring funding for the **Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program (line item 7007-0334)**. Governor Deval Patrick proposed in the administration's version of the FY08 Budget to fund the program at \$2.25 million instead of the original \$2 million from the 2006 Economic Stimulus Law which created the program. However, when the House Ways and Means version of the budget came out in early April, the TA Program was not included.

Representative Daniel Bosley (D-North Adams) was the lead sponsor for the amendment to restore the program. Through the hard work of MACDC members and allies, 25 Representatives co-signed with Chairman Bosley. They were: Representative Willie Mae Allen, Representative Stephen DiNatale, Representative Jennifer Flanagan, Representative Gloria Fox, Representative Paul Frost, Representative Anne Gobi, Representative Mary Grant, Representative Kevin Honan, Representative John Keenan, Representative Paul Kocot, Representative Elizabeth Malia, Representative Sarah Peake, Representative Anthony Petruccelli, Representative Denise Provost, Representative Angelo Puppolo, Representative Michael Rodrigues, Representative Jeffrey Sanchez, Representative John Scibak, Representative Carl Sciortino, Representative Frank Israel Smizik, Representative Ellen Story, Representative Walter Timilty, Representative David Torrissi, Representative Martin Walsh and Representative Martha Walz.

This impressive list of Representatives could only have been brought together by the hard work of each member who personally called or wrote their legislator and asked for his or her support. You made the TA Program relevant to them and strengthened the support for the program.

Chairman Bosley's amendment was accepted into the final House version of the budget. Even though there were fiscal constraints he was able to secure \$1.5 million for the TA Program.

Now on to the Senate. The Senate Ways and Means committee is expected to release their version of the FY08 Budget the week of May 21st. We will need to see if the TA Program is included in their version. If it is we will thank the Senate leadership for their support of the program. If it is not, then we will need to file an amendment to include the program in the budget.

Once the Senate budget debate is completed, a conference committee comprised of three Representatives and three Senators, will reconcile the differences between the two budgets during the month of June.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts on behalf of CDCs throughout Massachusetts. By making your work known to your legislators, you are ensuring we are being supported by policy makers.

If you have any questions, thoughts or concerns about the state budget process or other advocacy issues, please contact Allison Staton, MACDC Director of Advocacy at allisons@macdc.org or 617-426-0303 ext 24.

On April 25th MACDC held its Annual Legislative Action Day - also know by long-time participants as Lobby Day. All of the planning for the day, which began last November, paid off. Over 350 members, friends and allies came to the Great Hall in the State House for an array of activities. Participants networked with CDC staff and leaders from across the state, learned about MACDC's LIFT campaign at three briefing sessions, viewed the displays of twenty-six CDCs, met with their legislators, heard from community leaders and Governor Deval Patrick.

Cosme Lantigua, an organizer from the Jamaica Plain NDC spoke about the importance of involving community leaders in both local, organizational decision making and advocating for statewide policies to strengthen communities. Ana Luna, executive director of Arlington Community Trabajando (ACT), spoke about the impact of foreclosures in her neighborhood of Lawrence and what we need to do locally and statewide to address the problem.

Governor Patrick also spoke about foreclosures and what his administration is doing about this rapidly growing problem. He endorsed the bill sponsored by Senator Barrios and Rep. Torrisi that is part of MACDC's LIFT campaign and announced plans to implement recommendations adopted by the Banking Commissioner's Foreclosure Task Force. Governor Patrick also cited CDC's "work to expand the economic and housing opportunities for people all over the Commonwealth (that) has made a profound difference in the lives of all of us."

We want to thank all those who helped make the day such a success. Our presence in the State House was clearly felt. On April 27th the House included the Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program in their budget. Please see the article included about small business TA in this month's newsletter.

If you have not yet filled out our survey on Lobby Day please do so. Your input will help us make next year's event even better:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=375073784914>

MACDC and Partners Advance Ambitious Small Biz TA Project

BOSTON - On the morning of Tuesday, May 15th, at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, MACDC played a leading role in breaking ground on an exciting new initiative to strengthen underserved small businesses throughout Massachusetts. The Small Business Technical Assistance Collaborative is a concept to develop an integrated statewide network of nonprofit, community-based technical assistance resources that support underserved, very small businesses.

For this initiative, "small business" is defined as a sole proprietor or a business having less than 20 employees and being less likely to have the access or wherewithal to contract private consultants for technical assistance. As very small businesses are a critical part of the local economy in many cities and towns through Massachusetts, the Collaborative is aimed to be part of a broad economic development strategy.

The Collaborative concept grew out of the work of a unique coalition of stakeholders in the health of the state's small business sector, the Massachusetts Small Business Assistance Advisory Council. Enacted by the State Legislature in 2003, the Council consists of representatives from a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, the Mass. Small Business Development Centers, quasipublic agencies, nonprofit organizations, banks, community-development financial institutions and think tanks.

The Council has advanced the Collaborative initiative by recently holding regional forums in Springfield, Taunton, Boston and Lowell to present and discuss the concept and the context from which it arose. The Council recognized that context as the needs of many small businesses and entrepreneurs for a high-quality, highly-accessible, transparent and integrated system of technical assistance that would facilitate business stabilization, growth and even start-up.

On May 15th at the Boston Fed, MACDC and its partners on the Council convened a diverse array of stakeholders, reported a summary of responses from the regional forums, and moved the Collaborative from concept closer to reality. This Collaborative kick-off event presented a great opportunity to shape the development of the three main components of the Collaborative: a web-based Common Practices Guide, a Member Community with peer site visits and forums for networking and knowledge sharing, and a Knowledge Management System to integrate resources statewide. For more information about the Collaborative, contact Chris Harris, MACDC's Senior Policy Advocate for Economic Development: chrish@macdc.org, 617.426.0303 ext. 29.