

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3418**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*Denise Andrews*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying:

An Act relative to regional collaboration and long-term economic development in small communities of high need and opportunity.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Denise Andrews</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Anne M. Gobi</i>	<i>5th Worcester</i>
<i>John V. Fernandes</i>	<i>10th Worcester</i>
<i>Cory Atkins</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>

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By Ms. Andrews of Orange, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3418) of Denise Andrews and others for legislation to establish a program within the Department of Housing and Community Development to assist small communities in development needs. Community Development and Small Businesses.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

An Act relative to regional collaboration and long-term economic development in small communities of high need and opportunity.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 Chapter 23B is hereby amended by adding the following section:--

2 Section 31. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context  
3 clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:--

4 “CDBG”, the federal Community Development Block Grant awarded by the federal  
5 Department of Housing and Community Development.

6 “CDF I”, a certain grant program administered by the department using CDBG funds  
7 known as Community Development Fund I.

8 “CDF II”, a certain grant program administered by the department using CDBG funds  
9 known as Community Development Fund II.

10 “Community-wide needs score”, a score determined by the department that incorporates  
11 individual factors such as the number of low and moderate income persons and unemployment  
12 rates and community factors such as the age and the cost of housing and the tax burden.

13 “Department,” the department of housing and community development.

14 “Entitlement community”, a municipality designated as an entitlement community by the  
15 federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

16 “Mini-entitlement municipality”, a municipality that meets the following criteria: (i) a  
17 community-wide needs score over 28, (ii) a population over 12,000, and (iii) a poverty rate  
18 higher than the state average.

19 “Mini-entitlement region”, a group of municipalities within 20 miles of each other that  
20 agrees to collaborate as a region and that meets the following criteria: (i) a community-wide  
21 needs score over 28 in each municipality; (ii) a combined population over 12,000; and (iii) an  
22 average poverty rate higher than the state average, calculated by adding the poverty rate in each  
23 municipality and dividing it by the total number of municipalities agreeing to collaborate as a  
24 region.

25 (b) There shall be within the department a program to help mini-entitlement  
26 municipalities and mini-entitlement regions improve conditions for their low-income and  
27 moderate-income residents through comprehensive planning and predictable funding for a broad  
28 range of community development needs in housing, business development, physical  
29 development, downtown revitalization, and public social services. The program shall support  
30 CDBG-eligible activities and encourage applicants to develop comprehensive, creative solutions  
31 to local problems.

32 To qualify for the program, the department shall require mini-entitlement municipalities  
33 and regions to approach CDBG projects in a comprehensive and integrated manner and shall  
34 direct them to target their CDBG funds to particular geographic areas in order to impact and  
35 effect change within neighborhoods. Housing rehabilitation programs may be designed to allow  
36 up to 20 per cent of the funds to be used for emergency purposes outside the target area.

37 The department shall offer technical assistance to mini-entitlement municipalities and  
38 mini-entitlement regions, including planning, priority setting, and project evaluation and  
39 development.

40 Applications for the program shall contain an 18-month implementation and cash flow  
41 plan. Program grantees shall comply with standards for timely expenditure and available  
42 program income as determined by the department.

43 (d) The following requirements apply to the program:

44 (i) Projects shall be identified through meaningful community-based planning and  
45 priority setting processes as described by the department. Each program grantee shall submit a  
46 community development strategy that includes how the municipality or region will plan for and  
47 implement projects that are consistent with the commonwealth’s sustainable development  
48 principles.

49 (ii) The applications shall describe how CDBG funds shall be allocated and include goals  
50 and performance measures for each activity; shall demonstrate compliance with a federal  
51 national objective and all federal and state requirements; and shall include a management plan.

52 (iii) All activities that are eligible under Section 105(a) of Title I of the Housing and  
53 Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, shall be considered for funding with the  
54 exception of organizational activities of downtown partnerships.

55 (iv) A program grantee may not join with CDF I or CDF II communities as joint  
56 applicants.

57 (v) A program grantee shall remain eligible for a period of three years, even if changes to  
58 its community-wide needs score, its population, or its poverty rate would otherwise make it  
59 ineligible.