

Lawrence, Massachusetts Renewal Community

ID	Renewal Community Name	OLAS#	Population	Sq Miles	Poverty	Unemployment	Low-Income Households
81	Lawrence, MA	MA0009	23,071	1	42%	25%	82%

Residents, businesses and community organizations in the Lawrence RC have long faced difficult economic challenges, as has the entire City of Lawrence. Compared to the state as a whole, Lawrence residents are poorer, less educated, more likely to be unemployed and more likely to have health difficulties. These conditions are especially intense in the nine census tracts that comprise the Lawrence RC.

To address these challenges, the Lawrence RC has designed a Course of Action focusing on several important development strategies, including the following:

- Reducing tax rates within the RC. All the industrially-zoned areas within the RC are part of the Lawrence Economic Opportunity Area (a state program for distressed areas) and are eligible for tax incentives. Also, businesses that meet certain criteria are eligible for state tax credits. In the next year, the City of Lawrence plans to consider adopting special municipal brownfields tax abatements and a local historic preservation tax credit.
- Increasing local services. With the recognition that the cost of housing in Lawrence has been rising steeply and that transportation access and training deficits are significant barriers to employment, new programs have been initiated or are planned that are targeted particularly to the economically disadvantaged residents of the RC. In addition, existing and planned education and training programs, and programs for youth and child care, also address barriers to economic and self-sufficiency for residents of the RC.
- Implementing crime reduction strategies. The Lawrence RC will focus on collaborating with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, local government, neighborhood organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other community-based organizations. Lawrence is one of only seven cities nationwide receiving Justice Based After-School Program funding under the Department of Justice's Office of Community Policing Services. A new Weed and Seed program in the RC is another notable example of a community-based crime reduction program.
- Increasing involvement by community partners. The State of Massachusetts and the City of Lawrence collaborate with a wide and diverse group of for-profit and nonprofit community partners in economic development programs and projects within the proposed RC and will continue to do so in the future. These community partners include the following organizations:
 - The Lawrence Gateway Initiative
 - The Lawrence Small Business Center
 - The Lawrence Main Street Program
 - Small Business Revolving Loan Fund
 - The Lawrence Façade Improvement Program
 - Massachusetts Development Finance Agency
 - Massachusetts Community Development Finance Corporation