

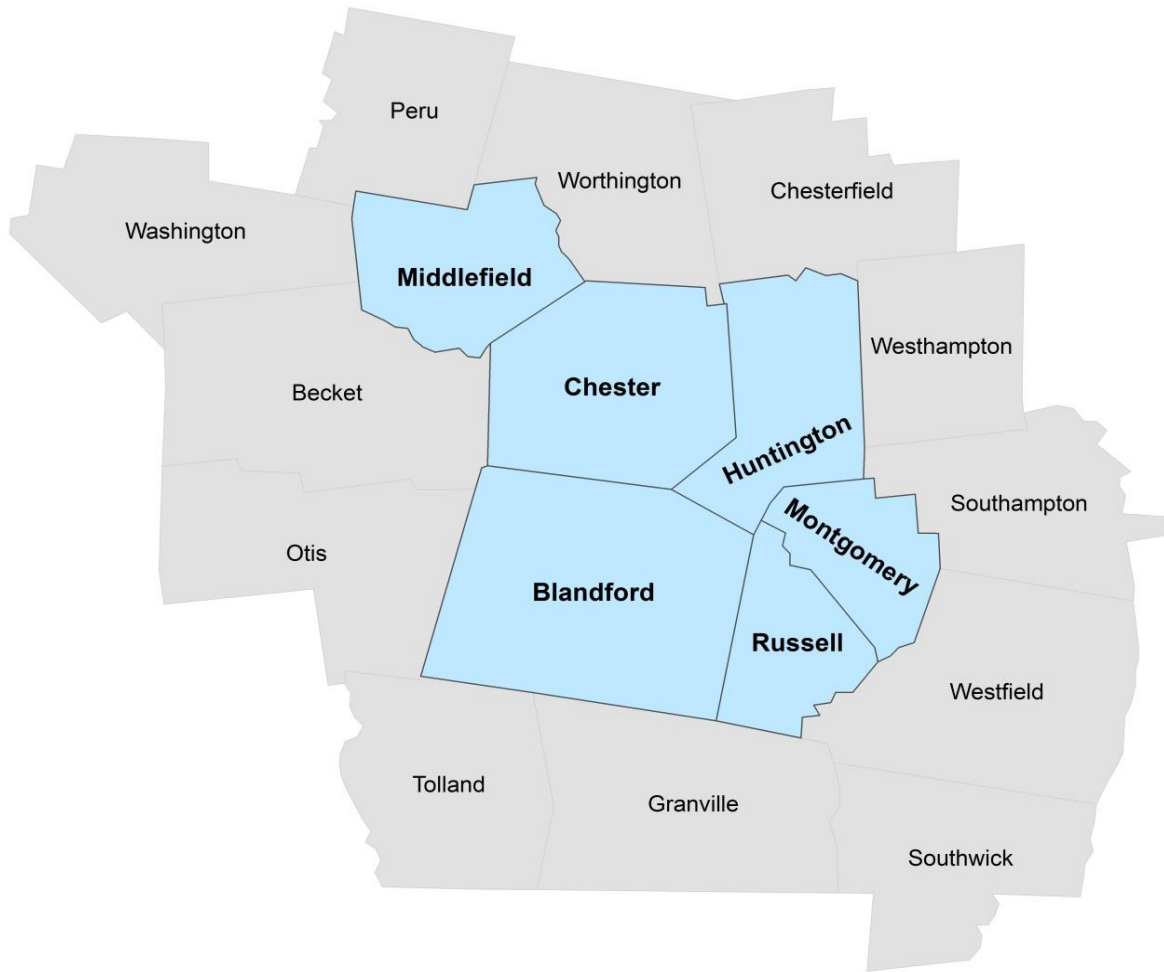
# Hilltown Collaborative

Russell, Huntington, Montgomery, Blandford, Chester, Middlefield

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## JOB DESCRIPTION

### Rural Economic Development Coordinator



#### Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Position Profile / Job Description

Rural Economic Development Coordinator

Gateway Hilltown Region

*Catalyst for Regional Progress*

# PVPC

The six-town Gateway Region has retained services of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to assist in recruitment of a Rural Economic Development Coordinator.

# Job Description in Search of Ideal Candidate

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## **General:**

The Hilltown Collaborative, a representative body of the Gateway Hilltown Region, is seeking a professional Rural Economic Development Coordinator to serve as a full time staff person and provide economic development services to the six-town gateway region.

The Gateway Hilltown Region is comprised of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell. With an approximate population of just below 8,000, today these communities reflect both rural agricultural, as well as classic New England industrial, heritages - varying within and across town borders.

The ideal candidate will help with coordination and implementation of the Gateway Hilltown Region's shared long- and short-term economic development strategies as outlined in the recently completed Economic Development Plan. In coherence with the plan, the Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating community development initiative planning and implementation; indentifying and fostering new growth opportunities; promoting the region; securing funding that support economic development activities and programs; and provide technical support to policy, advisory, and recipient groups that have to do with land management and development.

## **Responsibilities:**

- Seek direction and report to the Hilltown Collaborative (Steering Committee for town Selectboards of the Gateway Hilltown Region);
- Serve as the business community liaison and first point of contact for both existing business owners as well as owners of businesses who wish to locate to the Gateway Hilltown Region, providing a general overview of the respective steps involved in starting a business in the region - including explaining prospective towns' permitting processes for tenant build-outs and special permits;
- Work with local leadership to implement initiatives, projects and programs in accordance with the priorities outlined in the shared economic development plan;
- Work with the Jacob's Ladder Business Association (JLBA) and the Hilltown Community Development Corporation to promote hilltown businesses;
- Advise Selectboard members on complex, often confidential, economic development plans or policy issues;
- Work with local leadership to analyze any proposed economic development projects;
- As necessary, apply for and receive grants for the purpose of carrying out the duties described herein;
- Represent the Gateway Hilltown Region at various governmental levels (regional, state, national) to assist in formulation of economic development policies and legislation;
- Collaborate with local municipal committees regarding economic development and zoning policy and regulations - prepare preliminary analytical research reports and make recommendations regarding policy, regulation and ordinance changes;
- Work with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) efforts and other PVPC available resources that will help with economic development goals;
- Perform other related duties as required.

## JOB DESCRIPTION: Rural Economic Development Coordinator

### **Ideal Candidate**

The Hilltown Collaborative seeks a Rural Economic Development Coordinator who is willing to commit to a multi-year tenure to ensuring the towns' sustainable pathway towards growth. The Gateway Hilltown Region requires a coordinator who can help set the stage for community-wide, cross-border approach to addressing the regions needs. The Rural Economic Development Coordinator must be comfortable working in small towns where relationships date back generations and community business is often conducted on a face-to-face basis.

### **Personal and Professional Attributes:**

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with officials and residents;
- Able to communicate effectively and build consensus;
- Able to work cooperatively with the Selectboards of each of the municipalities - updating them on progress, and actively participating in discussions related to economic growth opportunities;
- Knowledge of small rural communities;
- Able and willing to play a visible role in the community. The ideal candidate must participate broadly across the leadership structure and town borders, and be a champion of the Gateway Hilltown Region;
- Familiar with highly participative local government environments;
- Self motivated, goal oriented person;
- Ability to network with communities, economic development professionals and a wide variety of other organizations;
- Comfortable and effective at public speaking and making presentations;
- Able to devise and deliver persuasive arguments and mobilize supportive parties;
- Demonstrable understanding of land use planning, real estate development, zoning and municipal infrastructure;
- Strong understanding of state and local government;
- Able to be a vocal and positive spokesperson for the Gateway Hilltown Region in public forums to advance the regions economic development interest;
- Availability and willingness to work flexible schedule including evenings and weekends.

### **Education and Experience**

The Rural Economic Development Coordinator must fulfill the following qualifications or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job:

- Bachelor's degree with a concentration or specialization in economic and community development or related field.
- Three or more years experience in economic, business or community development.
- Or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience to provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

### **Salary Range, Schedule, and other related information**

Salary range for this benefited fulltime position is \$45,000 to \$60,000 annually depending on qualifications and experience. The typical work week is Monday through Friday. The desired start time for this position is July 5, 2017.

This position is funded for one year (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018) through a state grant made available by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Administration and Finance. Throughout the grant year, the participating Towns of the Hilltown Collaborative will be seeking to allocate local resources to sustain the shared cost for this regional position beyond the grant period, starting July 1, 2018.

The qualified candidate will be contracted for employment with the Town of Chester (the Host municipality of the regional agreement) and supervised by its Town Administrator with direction from the Hilltown Collaborative.

## Challenges and Opportunities

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The following are the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the successful candidate:

### **Challenges**

- This is a low population region of six unique towns that are experiencing a protracted decline in economic growth (Total population approximately 8,000);
- Each of the six towns has operated independently for many decades;
- High speed internet has not been implemented in all areas of the region;
- There is a need for the six towns and the regional school district to work more closely together on long term plans and budgets (the school system is over half of each town's budget);
- When the Mass Pike (I-90) replaced Route 20, in 1959, as the major east/west highway, it limited access to economic activity and helped cause the demise of the mill industry (major employers of the region);
- When the railroad discontinued stops in Russell, Huntington and Chester in 1960, it further limited economic activity;
- The demographics of age distribution has changed significantly in the past 50 years – gaining more senior citizens and losing school age children.

### **Opportunities**

- Realizing there is strength in numbers, the six towns have agreed to work together to plan for economic growth;
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recognizes the need to support small rural towns to help revitalize their economic health – the Governor's Office instituted the Community Compact Program, which the six towns signed on to share resources for efficiency and economic development;
- The regional area is rich in natural resources of open space, beautiful countryside, crystal clear rivers, streams and lakes, fresh air (no pollution), no traffic congestion, miles and miles of hiking

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trails, dozens of fresh produce farms, historical homes and sites, renowned cultural venues, friendly small town businesses and healthy lifestyles;

- Although this area has many assets, it has never been promoted;
- Property values are very competitive with other areas of the state, and business tax rates are currently in parity with residential rates;
- Growth opportunities include: outdoor activities, tourism, B&B's, restaurants, business services, anchor businesses, organic farms, second homes, senior services and youth activities.

## How to Apply

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Applications are preferred electronically. Please send resume with a cover letter and 3 professional references - addressing the job requirements to this email address: [jgarcia@pvpc.org](mailto:jgarcia@pvpc.org). Submitted applications are to be to the attention of Joshua A. Garcia, Municipal Services Manager, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Please combine all your documents in a single pdf file, if possible. **Gateway Hilltown** and the applicant's **Last Name** must be included in the subject line. Closing date for all applications is May 22, 2017, 5:00 PM - position will remain open until filled.

Members of the Hilltown Collaborative will review applications immediately after submission deadline date. Should you have any questions regarding this opportunity, or a recommendation of a colleague, please contact: Joshua A. Garcia, PVPC Municipal Services Manager at 413.781.6045 or [jgarcia@pvpc.org](mailto:jgarcia@pvpc.org).