



Request for Proposals: EmPower Massachusetts Program: Fiscal Year 2025 Innovation and Capacity Building Grants

Date of Issue: August 19, 2024

Proposals Due:

Applications Accepted on a rolling basis through April 3, 2025.

See Section 7 for further details.

Award Amounts Available: Applicants are eligible for grants ranging from \$5,000-\$25,000 (requests for up to \$50,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis). See Section 4 for more details.

All proposals must be submitted to:

empower@masscec.com

Note: MassCEC is offering a parallel Request for Proposals for 2025 Implementation Grants; see the [EmPower website](#) for details.

1. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is launching a fourth year of opportunities for the EmPower Massachusetts Program (“EmPower Mass” or “the Program”). The Program is an initiative aimed at the exploration, development, and implementation of innovative program models or projects that will provide access to the benefits of clean energy or reduce energy burden for previously underserved or vulnerable populations in the Commonwealth. For purposes of this RFP, such populations are collectively called “Priority Groups” and a complete definition of Priority Groups can be found in Section 3 of this RFP.

Stakeholder outreach and engagement is a core component of EmPower Mass’s program design and operation. As part of the application process, MassCEC will offer workshops, office hours, and optional application review for potential Applicants. See Section 8 for more details on resources and support for potential Applicants.

The Program has two (2) funding opportunities:

- Innovation & Capacity Building Grants (this RFP); and
- Implementation Grants.

Through this RFP, MassCEC seeks applications for **Innovation and Capacity Building Grant funding** from community-based organizations, individuals, and other groups with a history of working with Priority Groups (see Section 6 for a complete definition of the term “Applicants”). This opportunity will provide seed funding for Applicants to **explore innovative ideas** for potential program models or projects and to **build organizational capacity** to support future program models or projects. The goals of each program model or project should be increasing access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reducing energy burden to Priority Groups. Further details about the Program are outlined in Section 3.

MassCEC anticipates awarding grants of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) through this RFP (grants of up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) will be considered on a case-by-case basis (see Section 4 for more details)). Applications will be accepted on a **rolling basis** through April 3, 2025. Accepting applications on a **rolling basis** means that once the RFP is released applicants can apply at any time, up through the April 3, 2025 deadline, and do not need to wait until the final deadline. See Section 7 for further details.

2. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a quasi-state economic development agency dedicated to accelerating the growth of the clean energy sector across the Commonwealth to spur job creation, deliver statewide environmental benefits and to secure long-term economic growth for the people of Massachusetts. MassCEC works to increase the adoption of clean energy while driving down costs and delivering financial, environmental, and economic development benefits to energy users and utility customers across the state.

MassCEC's mission is to accelerate the clean energy and climate solution innovation that is critical to meeting the Commonwealth's climate goals, advancing Massachusetts' position as an international climate leader while growing the state's clean energy economy. MassCEC is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where everyone is welcomed, supported, respected, and valued. We are committed to incorporating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all aspects of our work to promote the equitable distribution of the health and economic benefits of clean energy and support a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry. MassCEC strives to lead and innovate in equitable clean energy and climate solutions.

3. EMPOWER PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

EmPower Massachusetts' Overall Program Goals:

Empower communities, organizations, and stakeholders to:

- **Identify innovative solutions** for increasing access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reducing energy burden to Priority Groups.
- **Increase organizational capacity** to support long-term ability to identify and implement these solutions.
- **Implement innovative solutions** and continue long-term engagement strategies in Priority Groups.

Funding Opportunity Structure:

Applicants should understand the entire structure of support under the Program to determine which aspect best suits their organization, which grant they should apply for, and how the opportunities can supplement each other. EmPower Mass has two (2) funding opportunities:

1. **Innovation & Capacity Building Grants (this RFP):** MassCEC will provide seed funding for:
 - i. the exploration, development, or refinement of innovative ideas for potential program models or projects; or
 - ii. building organizational capacity to conduct community-based programs or projects.

This RFP is specifically for applications for the Innovation and Capacity Building Grants. All applications should increase access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reduce energy burden to population Priority Groups.

2. **Implementation Grants:** MassCEC will provide funding for place-based (e.g., within a Municipality or specific neighborhood) or network-based (e.g., a statewide membership organization) programs or projects that increase access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reduce energy burden to underserved or vulnerable population Priority Groups, as defined below, and are ready for implementation. This is a separate funding opportunity ([found here on the EmPower website](#)) and you do not need to receive the Innovation & Capacity Building funding to be eligible. **This RFP is not for Implementation Grants; MassCEC will release a separate request for proposals for EmPower Mass Implementation Grants.**

Through the Program MassCEC also intends to:

- Facilitate communication and relationship-building between interested and/or participating organizations or individuals;
- Inform participants about relevant opportunities or programs at MassCEC or from other agencies;
- Deepen MassCEC's relationships with community-based organizations or individuals and other organizations with a demonstrated history working with Priority Groups;
- Create and maintain an inclusive process and program structure that supports Priority Groups (as defined below) and Federally Recognized and State Acknowledged Tribes (as defined below);
- Lower barriers to access clean energy or other environmental justice related grant opportunities, including education on clean energy and barriers to accessing clean energy; and

- Utilize stakeholder engagement to inform future programming and policy.

Program Definitions:

- **Priority Groups:** For the purposes of this RFP and in accordance with the Program goals, MassCEC defines “Priority Groups” to include the following:
 - “Environmental Justice Populations” as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy.
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download>.
 - “Environmental Justice (EJ) Population” means (A) a neighborhood that meets 1 or more of the following criteria: (i) the annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income; (ii) minorities comprise 40% or more of the population; (iii) 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency; or (iv) minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income; or (B) a geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.
 - “Minority” refers to individuals who identify themselves as Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, Asian, Indigenous people, and people who otherwise identify as non-white.
 - “Low-income” means median household income at or below 65% of the statewide median income for Massachusetts, according to federal census data.
 - “English isolation” refers to households that are English Language Isolated according to federal census forms, or do not have an adult over the age of 14 that speaks only English or English very well.
 - Environmental Justice Map Viewer: <https://arcg.is/1i9Hqn0>

- Renters (primarily residential).
- Communities or individuals disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, by the fossil-fuel based energy system, or other environmental hazards (e.g., air quality or heat).

If you believe you know of a population or group you believe should be considered a Priority Group and is not listed above, especially for the purposes of ensuring eligibility to apply to this grant, please reach out to Lisa Dobbs, Program Manager, at empower@masscec.com to discuss your option.

- **Capacity building:** For the purposes of this RFP, “capacity building” is defined as efforts to increase the capacity of an organization to better fulfill its mission or broaden its impact. This may be done by (though is not limited to) hiring/increasing staff, offering training opportunities, or providing technical support.
- **Clean energy:** For the purposes of this RFP, “clean energy” is defined as technologies that generate renewable energy (e.g., solar PV, solar thermal), provide electrification opportunities (e.g., air source heat pumps), or reduce energy usage/load (e.g., energy efficiency). Other methods, practice, or measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) or improve resiliency may also be considered “clean energy” for purposes of this RFP if they have a connection to clean energy (e.g., green infrastructure, battery storage). Access to the benefits of clean energy could take the form of direct adoption of clean energy (e.g., installing solar PV on your roof), or it take a less direct form (e.g., utility bill savings through participating in a community solar project).
- **Energy burden:** For the purposes of this RFP, “energy burden” is defined as percentage of gross household income spent on energy costs.
- **Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes:** Federally Recognized Tribes are defined by the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs as an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Massachusetts’ Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) assists Native American individuals, tribes, and organizations in their relationship with state and local government agencies, and more information can be obtained from their website and office support line.

4. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding grants of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000). MassCEC may award limited Innovation and Capacity Building Grants up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to projects that:

1. Meet the eligible funding uses for this grant opportunity (see Section 5 below), and
2. Require a higher level of funding to successfully achieve the targeted outcome.

MassCEC encourages Applicants interested in a higher level of funding to start by reviewing the requirements of the [Implementation Grants](#) and reaching out to MassCEC staff to determine if they qualify for that funding opportunity. If Applicants do not meet the requirements for an Implementation Grant and believe that they require a higher level of funding (up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000)) to accomplish the targeted outcome of their Innovation and Capacity Building Grant, they should complete the section of the Application that outlines what the Applicant could accomplish with Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) versus Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000). **Note: all Applicants submitting a proposal for up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) are still required to fill out a proposal for up to Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000).**

If selected, Applicants can elect to receive a portion of the funding upon contract signing and will receive the remainder in amounts determined by the contract based on deliverables agreed to by MassCEC and selected Applicants (see Attachment 3 Sample Agreement for examples). Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application. Applicants may seek funding through this RFP to supplement a program or project that is also receiving other incentives, grants, or investments. This includes previous awards under EmPower Mass. There will be an opportunity to clarify this in the Application. A listing of complementary funding opportunities that we are aware of are listed in the Resources section of our website: <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts>.

5. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES

For the Innovation and Capacity Building grant opportunity, Applicants must propose activities related to:

- a. the exploration, development, or refinement of innovative ideas for potential program models or projects; or
- b. building organizational capacity to conduct community-based programs or projects.

Proposed activities must build toward program or project implementation. Innovation and Capacity Building funding is intended to go toward activities that will be completed quickly (i.e., within two to three months following execution of a Grant Agreement); the expectation is that these funds would be utilized within two (2) years at the longest. Applicants may seek funding through this RFP to supplement or build organizational capacity to apply for EmPower Mass's Implementation Grants in the future and/or seek other clean energy awards or grants, such as federal funding opportunities. A listing of complementary programs or awards we are aware of are listed in the Resources section of our website:

<https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts>.

All program models or projects must serve Priority Groups.

MassCEC anticipates these grants shall be utilized for costs including, but not limited to:

- staff or individual time devoted to program model or project concept development or refinement;
- costs associated with initial and/or ongoing Priority Group engagement, especially direct payment to participants;
- technical support needed to move program model or projects forward;¹ and
- compensation for a grant-writer, accountant, lawyer, or other professional services.

Note: Innovation and Capacity Building Grants cannot be used for direct capital costs for clean energy system installation.

¹ In-kind technical services from MassCEC: depending on the type of program applicants propose, and upon request, MassCEC may offer in-kind support instead of all or part of a cash grant. This option is meant to help Applicants for whom procurement of technical services may be challenging. Possible in-kind technical services MassCEC could provide include technical assistance for seeking an installer partner for your program, more in-depth clean energy training, resource development, and feasibility studies. **Applicants must discuss this with MassCEC prior to application and must submit for all in-kind support through the application process.**

For the Innovation and Capacity Building Grants, MassCEC is interested in funding a range of proposals for innovative program models, projects, or opportunities for organizational capacity building. Below is a list of focus areas for this funding:

- Leveraging existing incentive programs such as:
 - Massachusetts-based opportunities: [SMART](#), [Mass Save®](#) incentives (rebates, home energy assessments and weatherization, HEAT Loan & barrier remediation grants, ConnectedSolutions, income-eligible programs), [Clean Peak Standard](#), [Commercial-PACE](#), or [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#), or [Department of Agriculture Grants](#), MassCEC's [Internship & Vocational Internship](#) programs and [Workforce Equity](#).
 - Massachusetts-based Solar for All programs: Solar for All (“SFA”) programming, currently in development, is supported by a federal award and is focused on increased access to solar in low income and disadvantaged communities.* Programming is anticipated as a series of financial support and technical assistance programs to reach solar focus areas such as on-site small residential, on-site affordable multifamily, and community shared solar. More information on specific offerings under SFA will be released in the coming months; for high-level information on initiatives that will take place under the program, visit the Department of Energy Resources (“DOER”) [webpage on Massachusetts’ SFA application](#).
 - Federal opportunities: There are numerous federal opportunities that may be applicable to Applicants. [Justice40](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), and DOE [Department of Energy](#) are resources that may provide relevant opportunities. Reach out to MassCEC if you would like additional support navigating potential federal funding opportunities. Reach out to MassCEC if you would like additional support navigating potential federal funding opportunities.
- Addressing renter populations through solutions that target landlord investments.
Note: Program models or projects should seek to minimize the displacement of existing populations.
- Testing innovative finance or partnership models, including on-bill financing, methods for taking advantage of tax incentives, green leasing, or revolving funds.
- Providing public health and air-quality (indoor or outdoor) benefits, especially in populations that suffer from disproportionate negative public health outcomes such as asthma.

- Exploring approaches that provide additional benefits beyond access to the benefits of clean energy, such as job training opportunities or increasing resilience in communities with Priority Groups.
- Providing language access opportunities to assist English-isolated communities in connecting with clean energy resources.
- Building capacity and/or exploring solar PV related opportunities related to upcoming SFA programming. *Please note:* As most SFA offerings will not be launched until early 2025, we encourage potential applicants to consider proposing ICB projects based on SFA focus areas (e.g. small residential serving low income and disadvantaged community* residents, affordable multifamily solar access, and community shared solar) with the intention of subsequent activity and/or launch a project/program that may interact with or leverage financial assistance provided by SFA. Any grants funded through this RFP does not guarantee eligibility/availability of Implementation or SFA funds.
 - Example projects that could be eligible under EmPower include:
 - Feasibility analysis and other planning around the delivery of savings and impact to residents for a solar PV array on affordable housing to potentially be followed by leveraging SFA’s multifamily financial assistance to implement a project and/or augment with other components such as community education;
 - Developing capacity, frameworks and/or tools and resources for residents to learn about solar PV and program offerings under SFA, to potentially be followed with SFA engagement funding to conduct extensive outreach promoting tools/resources, educate about solar, and encourage site assessment sign-ups;; or
 - Initial efforts and planning (e.g. legal, logistical, organizing) around innovative community solar approaches that deepen community benefits and impact (such as cooperative models), with the intent of potentially leveraging financial assistance under SFA for community shared solar (“CSS”) and/or workforce development assistance to encourage local hiring.
 - Please see the [DOER webpage on Massachusetts’ SFA Application](#) for more details on the kinds of assistance that will be provided under the program.

For details on successful applications to EmPower Mass, visit <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts> which contains the awardee story map for EmPower funded projects to date.

If you are unsure if your project idea or proposed usage of funding is appropriate for this grant opportunity, you would like to clarify whether your target population is considered a Priority Group, or have additional questions regarding the grant process, please contact Lisa Dobbs, Senior Program Manager, at empower@masscec.com.

*Important note: SFA programming utilizes federal guidelines for qualification using the term “low-income and disadvantaged communities” which is a different definition than our termed Priority Groups. If you are interested in pursuing a project that will utilize SFA, please see the SFA website note above or contact MassCEC staff so that we can guide your understanding of qualification under SFA in the future.

6. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Organizations, individuals, or a partnership/team are eligible to apply and are collectively termed “Applicants.” If there are multiple parties that are jointly applying, one (1) party should take on the role of leading the application team (“Lead Applicant”). If a single organization or individual is applying for this opportunity, that organization or individual would also be the Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, contract with MassCEC (if selected), and receive funds from MassCEC. The following entities are eligible to serve as a Lead Applicant with the following conditions:

- Organizations and entities with a demonstrated history of engaging and supporting Priority Groups such as community action partnerships, neighborhood revitalization organizations, advocacy groups, affordable housing providers, affordable housing developers, and non-profits (“Community-Based Organization” or “CBO”).
 - Note: CBOs do not need to be incorporated non-profits to participate, but if your organization is not an entity with the ability to hire staff or receive funds, consider forming a partnership with another group that can act as a fiscal agent and Lead Applicant for the application. If you need assistance in finding a fiscal agent, contact MassCEC to see if we can assist. Note: fiscal agent fees are capped at no more than 10% of the proposed budget.
- Other non-profit entities that are not CBOs. Examples include a non-profit entity that provides technical expertise or a non-profit focused on clean energy without ties to a

Priority Group. *Note: Non-profit entities without ties to a Priority Group must partner with at least one (1) non-profit CBO. Unique or specific modifications to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis – please contact program staff.*

- Individuals with a demonstrated history of engaging Priority Groups, including those that may be members of a Priority Group themselves.
- Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes.
- Public entities such as municipalities (including municipal lighting plants) and regional planning agencies. *Note: Public entities must partner with at least one (1) non-profit CBO. Unique or specific modifications to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis – please contact program staff.*
- For-profit entities such as clean energy installers, energy efficiency, or home performance contractors, technical or workforce training organizations, financial institutions, or other clean energy practitioners. *Note: For-profit entities must partner with at least one (1) non-profit CBO. Unique or specific modifications to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis – please contact program staff.*
- Any Applicants may choose to form additional partnerships beyond what is required above.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Applicants must have a demonstrated history of working or living within, and/or engaging with at least one (1) of the Program’s Priority Groups.
- Applicants are not required to have experience in clean energy.
 - Applicants without prior experience in clean energy are encouraged to review this [Clean Energy 101 primer](#) and review our resources on the EmPower Mass website.
 - This does not apply to clean energy installers or contractors, who must meet industry and state standards for their relevant clean energy technology.
- Business entities (e.g., corporations, limited liability companies, nonprofit corporations) must be registered to do business in Massachusetts.

- Applicants to this grant opportunity may apply to the parallel grant opportunity under the Program, [Request for Proposals: EmPower Massachusetts Program: Implementation Grants](#). However, each Application must be focused on a different program model or project. For example, you and/or your team may have a project ready for implementation and may also have a separate idea you would like to explore for future implementation.
- Grant awardees for the Innovation and Capacity Building Grants are eligible to apply for future EmPower Mass Implementation grants to implement the program model or project developed with this grant funding.

7. ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR INNOVATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

Accepting applications on a **rolling basis** means that once the RFP is released applicants can apply at any time, up through the final April 3, 2025 deadline, and do not need to wait until the final deadline. While applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the final April 3, 2025 deadline. If an application is time-sensitive (e.g., an application for funding for hiring a grant writer for a grant with an upcoming deadline), they should note this on their application and request an expedited review. MassCEC cannot guarantee but will aim to accommodate these requests.

Release of RFP	August 19, 2024
Questions due to MassCEC via email to empower@masscec.com	Ongoing; MassCEC will respond directly to inquiries, and may post important updates on website or update the RFP, if needed
Pre-Application Office Hours	Schedule updated periodically on EmPower Website.
Optional Pre-Application Review Deadline	Ongoing (MassCEC will aim provide feedback within three (3) weeks of draft submission.)
Proposals Due	For the FY25 round of EmPower, Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through 11:59 pm on April 3, 2025
Follow up Questions to Applicants	Within one (1) month of application
Notification of Award	Approximately eight (8) weeks after receipt of a completed application, unless an expedited review is requested

Applicants are eligible to re-apply if not selected at first application attempt. MassCEC will offer debriefs to non-selected Applicants at Applicant's request.

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC's discretion.

8. HOW TO APPLY

To apply:

- 1) First, review this RFP (and the [Implementation Grant RFP](#)) to develop an understanding of the Program and opportunities.
- 2) (Optional but encouraged) Take advantage of the resources and support for potential Applicants outlined below.
- 3) If applicable, reach out to MassCEC to indicate and discuss interest in any in-kind technical services from MassCEC (as described in section 5).
- 4) Complete the Attachment 1: EmPower Mass FY25 Signature and Acceptance form.
- 5) Complete the Attachment 2: EmPower Mass FY25 Innovation and Capacity Building Grant Application Form, either as a Word document or through the [online application](#). This includes confirming review of Attachment 3: EmPower Mass FY25 Template Grant Agreement.
- 6) If completing the Application as a Word document, submit the Application by email to the EmPower Mass team at empower@masscec.com with **"EmPower FY25 Innovation & Capacity Building Grant Application – Your Lead Applicant Organization Name"** in the subject line. If completing the Application online, submit through MassCEC's online portal, making sure to attach Attachment 1: EmPower Mass FY25 Signature and Acceptance form.

Complete application submissions will be accepted on a **rolling basis** through 11:59 PM on April 3, 2025.

MassCEC's Resources and Support for Potential Applicants:

All potential Applicants are encouraged to work with MassCEC and utilize our support when preparing an application. Applicants are encouraged to:

- **Participate in Workshops:** MassCEC will host workshops for potential Applicants to learn about clean energy solutions, brainstorm ideas that could work in their communities, and network. The workshop dates will be listed at <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts> as they are finalized.
- **Attend Office Hours:** MassCEC will offer an opportunity for one-on-one conversations with MassCEC staff during virtual office hours. Office hours dates will be listed at <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts> as they are finalized and updated on an ongoing basis.
- **Submit for one-time pre-application review:** Applicants will have a one-time opportunity to get a review of their draft application. Please see timeline above for submission details and timeline.
 - o The pre-application review is optional.
 - o **Note:** Feedback will not indicate the likelihood that an application will be selected for funding. Addressing some or all review feedback, comments, or suggestions does not guarantee selection.
- **Explore Resources:** Resources are available on MassCEC's website to learn more about capacity building, clean energy, community engagement, identification of Priority Groups (e.g., environmental justice map viewer), available incentives & programs, and complementary grant opportunities. Applicants new to clean energy are especially encouraged to review our [Clean Energy 101 primer](#). See resources at: <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts>
- **Join our Email List:** MassCEC will maintain an opt-in listserv that will provide program updates, including descriptions of potential Applicants seeking partners. If you are not on the EmPower Mass listserv, and would like to be added, email empower@masscec.com. MassCEC may also seek to facilitate relationships directly upon request.

As the program evolves other opportunities may arise and will be shared on the website or through the listserv. If you have a suggestion about other types of support we can offer, let us know!

Electronic Accessibility:

If accessibility to a computer, the internet or software may prohibit you from submitting an electronic application, in general, or by any deadline, or if there are other challenges with accessibility such as language or writing barriers, our team is available to discuss alternative options such as video application. Please call Lisa Dobbs, Senior Program Manager, at 617-315-9367 or email empower@masscec.com.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<u>Experience and Qualifications</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants have a demonstrated history of engaging and working with one (1) or more Priority Groups.• Applicants have experience in successfully developing programs or projects to support one or more Priority Groups. Previous program or project experiences do not need to be connected to clean energy.
<u>Innovation and/or Capacity Building</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Idea for a program model or project concept is reasonably new and untested, needs assistance to become viable, or overcome barriers in new/innovative ways; and/or• Application clearly identifies need for requested funding to build capacity to realize targeted program model or project concept.
<u>Completeness of Proposed Approach</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan clearly identifies Priority Groups that will be served by the program model or project.• Plan includes timeline and concrete milestones to track progress.• When applicable, the role and function of any partner is clarified.• Plan includes stakeholder engagement with Priority Groups (when applicable).• Plan identifies the target funding source for the realization or continuation of the proposed program model or project, including the EmPower Implementation Grant.
<u>Budget</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants have proposed a clear plan for how funds will be used to assist in idea/concept, program model or project development, or capacity building, including how much funding will be allotted to each project partner (if applicable).• Proposed budget amounts are reasonable, and expenses are eligible.

<p><u>Priority Group Benefits</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program model or project idea/concept provides a viable direct path to increase access to the benefits of clean energy or to meaningful reduction in energy burden for identified Priority Groups. • Program model or project idea/concept offers additional non-energy related co-benefits such as workforce development, job creation, improved health outcomes, or community resiliency. Note that proposals that provide non-energy related co-benefits are encouraged but not required.
<p><u>Diversity of Approaches</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic, Technology & Idea/Concept: Consideration may be given towards awarding applications from a representative spread of communities across Massachusetts, a variety of clean energy technologies, and diverse idea/concepts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: MassCEC will consider the awardee pool for the entirety of the Program to date when considering whether an application provides a diversity of approaches to the projects funded through the Program. • Diverse Applicants are encouraged to apply, especially organizations led by individuals that fall into the RFP defined Priority Groups themselves. Applicants may offer a statement in this regard on the application form.

10. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions on EmPower Massachusetts Grants, please email empower@masscec.com.

11. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, any documentary material, data, or other information received by MassCEC from an Applicant is a public record subject to disclosure. Applicants shall not send MassCEC any confidential or sensitive information in response to this RFP. If confidential information is submitted as part of the application and not clearly marked as confidential, such information may be made publicly available by MassCEC without further notice to the Applicant.

DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

This RFP does not commit MassCEC to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. MassCEC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, modify the anticipated timeline, request modification of the application, negotiate with all qualified Applicants, cancel, or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.

This RFP has been distributed electronically using MassCEC's website. It is the responsibility of Applicants to check the website for any addenda or modifications to an RFP to which they intend to respond. MassCEC accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date RFP document.

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Upon MassCEC's authorization to proceed with the proposal, MassCEC and the awarded applicant(s) will execute a contract, substantially in the form of the Sample Agreement attached hereto as Attachment 3, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

EmPower Massachusetts Program: Innovation and Capacity Building Grants (the “RFP”)

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Lead Applicant named below. The undersigned has read and understands the RFP requirements and acknowledges and confirms that the Applicant and each member of its team has read and understands the RFP Requirements. The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that all of the terms and conditions of the RFP are mandatory.

The undersigned and the Lead Applicant and each member of its team acknowledges and agrees that (i) all materials submitted as part of the application are subject to disclosure under the Massachusetts Public Records Law, as explained in the RFP; (ii) that the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) has no obligation, and retains the sole discretion to fund or choose not to fund the application set forth herein; and (iii) that MassCEC’s receipt of the application does not imply any promise of funding at any time.

The undersigned and each member of the Lead Applicant’s team understands that, if the Application is selected by MassCEC pursuant to this RFP, the Lead Applicant will execute and deliver an agreement to be provided by MassCEC that shall set forth the terms and conditions, together the respective roles and responsibilities of the Lead Applicant, and each member of its team, and MassCEC, with respect to the project described in the RFP.

I certify that the statements made in this Application, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct.

Lead Applicant Organization: _____

Authorized Representative: _____

(Printed Name of Authorized Representative)

(Signature of Applicant or Authorized Representative)

(Title)

Date: _____

**ATTACHMENT 2: EMPOWER MASSACHUSETTS INNOVATION AND CAPACITY
BUILDING APPLICATION FORM**

Attached separately.

ATTACHMENT 3: SAMPLE GRANT AGREEMENT & PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

Attached separately.