



Request for Proposals:
Equity Workforce Planning and Capacity Grants 2025
(Training and MWBE Support)

Date of Issue: October 9, 2024
Proposals Due: Accepted on a rolling basis
through May 19, 2025

Total Funding Available \$1,200,000
(additional funding may be added as resources become available)

All proposals must be submitted to:
RFPWorkforce@masscec.com

1. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is offering Equity Workforce Planning Grants (“Planning Grants”) and Equity Workforce Capacity Grants (“Capacity Grants”). The Planning and Capacity Grants are designed to help provide direct funding and technical assistance support to organizations interested in planning or adding key capacity for programming focused on supporting one or more of the following populations¹:

- Existing or emerging Massachusetts-based Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (“MWBEs”) companies operating or expanding into climate-critical fields;
- Individuals from Environmental Justice (“EJ”) Neighborhoods or low-income communities;
- Members of federally recognized or state-acknowledged tribes;
- Members of underrepresented communities in the clean energy workforce; and
- Current or former workers from the fossil fuel industry (“Fossil Fuel Workers”).

Applicants may apply for a Planning Grant, which prepares applicants for full implementation of a workforce development project via a comprehensive planning process supported by MassCEC technical assistance resulting in a comprehensive implementation plan informed by workforce development best practices, or a Capacity Grant, which is intended for capacity building which may include hiring of additional staff, procurement of necessary equipment or infrastructure to implement, developing a curriculum and program components needed for full implementation, or adding additional resources needed to enhance the program components or supportive services of existing workforce programming. Where full implementation is not necessary to achieve program goals or where a pilot will inform final plans prior to implementation, capacity grants may involve smaller-scale implementation activities to provide direct service, training, or support to eligible target populations.

Applicants shall focus programming on one or more of the following categories:

Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations

Strand B: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, and Preparedness for Adult Learners and Job Seekers

Strand C: Development of a MWBE Support Program leading to the creation or expansion of MWBEs in Climate-Critical Fields

(Please note that MassCEC is in the process of transitioning the MWBE Support program into a

¹ Please refer to Section 5 of this RFP for more complete definitions of the target populations and entities.

Statewide Hub and Spoke Model and applicants for planning and capacity grants should be prepared to work with MassCEC staff to align program designs and offerings to cohere with this model.)

MassCEC will evaluate and award qualified applicants on a rolling basis until the available funds are expended. While applications will be accepted until the deadline, receipt of applications prior to two priority deadlines will expedite review and determination. Depending on the type of request, applicants may apply for \$20,000 to \$150,000 in funding for work completed over six months to two years.

Details about the range of acceptable funding requests across the various grant options are outlined in Section 6. Budget.

Details about the application process are outlined in Section 9: How to Apply.

Funds for this program will be expended from Equity Workforce Funds, initially created through the March 2021 Climate Legislation, *An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy*² and re-defined by the August 2022 Climate Legislation, *An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind*.³ Should additional relevant funds become available through the Equity Workforce Fund or other sources, MassCEC may add funding to this RFP.

2. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a 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 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 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 in order 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. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

² <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter8>

³ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter179>

Equity Workforce Program Goals:

The Equity Workforce Program seeks to expand access to career and business opportunities in climate-critical fields. A robust, well-trained, and inclusive workforce is vital to achieving and sustaining the Commonwealth’s climate goals, including Net Zero in 2050. The equity workforce programs address the need to grow Massachusetts’ clean energy workforce by prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across the full spectrum of economic opportunity, aiming to produce both an increasingly diverse bench of highly trained new workers and a wider array of thriving minority and women-owned business enterprises to help lead climate-critical work.

In addition, this cycle of the Planning and Capacity grants seeks to build on the work of the MWBE Support Grantees. Through several cycles of solicitations, MWBE Support Grantees have developed and launched programs to provide varying suites of services and support to MWBEs entering and growing in the clean energy sector. To ensure effective and equitable access to opportunities in the clean energy sector by MWBEs across the Commonwealth, regardless of region, the Equity Workforce Program seeks to establish a statewide framework, with a “hub and spoke” model, enabling more-uniform delivery of services and support to MWBEs entering and growing in the clean energy sector.

To be viewed favorably, Strand C applicants must indicate a commitment to determining how the proposal would evolve to include program model compatibility with the future statewide hub and spoke framework. Applicants may propose supporting the design of the statewide framework including formalization of the uniform baseline suite of services to be offered to all MWBEs out of regional hubs and/or pivoting their existing program or designing a new program to act as a primary regional service provider, i.e., hub, or as a specialized secondary service provider offering additional services or support beyond the uniform suite of hub services, i.e., spoke.

To ensure the success of organizations working towards the goals of the solicitation, Planning and Capacity grants are geared toward applicants seeking funding to conceptualize a project or build capacity to implement future programming. Planning and Capacity funds are not typically used to support or implement existing programming or for infrastructure needs, except where implementing activities directly inform the design of the implementation plan or where program goals can be achieved without additional implementation funding beyond the capacity grant. Capacity grants can also be utilized to enhance existing workforce development programs to directly addressing specific identified barriers to program success. The tables below demonstrate appropriate program focuses. For all applicants, projects should lead to and/or expand initiatives focused on the following areas:

Strand	Relevant Program Focus
Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations	Build job training and support capacity to fill gaps in the workforce for climate-critical sectors while creating opportunities for underserved individuals most impacted by climate change who are typically excluded from

	opportunities in these sectors.
Strand B: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparedness for Adult Learners and Job Seekers (Programs in this strand may include, but are not limited to, the following models: Career Exposure, Career Navigation, Pre-apprenticeship, Work-Based Learning Programs, and Learn and Earn models)	Provide effective programming to expand awareness of access to climate-critical careers among individuals from EJ Neighborhoods or low-income communities, individuals from federally recognized or state-acknowledged tribes within the Commonwealth, members of underrepresented communities in the clean energy workforce, and Fossil Fuel Workers while providing clear off ramps into next steps to access those opportunities.
Strand C: Development of a MWBE Support Program leading to the creation or expansion of MWBEs in Climate-Critical Fields	<p>Establish a statewide framework to provide uniform and equitable access to baseline services and supports to MWBEs via regional hubs, with additional specialized services via referral to spokes.</p> <p>Create new MWBE firms in critical climate fields and support the healthy long-term growth of those firms.</p> <p>Increase the expertise, business activity, revenue, headcount, and long-term growth strategies of existing MWBEs that operate in climate-critical business fields.</p>

Examples of Appropriate Programs:

MassCEC supports diverse approaches to achieving the goals of this solicitation. Planning grants should focus on establishing new programming and partner development. Capacity awards should augment established programming through program expansion and staff hiring to increase positions in Clean Energy and Climate Critical Occupations. Capacity-building would also include addressing support services gaps necessary to overcome socioeconomic barriers to participant completion, placement, and retention.

Some examples of appropriate proposed programs include, but are not limited to, those presented in the table below:

Planning or Capacity Project Leading to Implementation or Pilot		
Strand	Planning Grant Example	Capacity Grant Example

<p>Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations</p>	<p>The lead applicant is a growing solar, storage, and heat pump contractor with an in-house electrician apprenticeship training program. The applicant pairs with a community-based organization serving multiple EJ neighborhoods and a support services organization, and they propose to develop a plan for a multi-year career pathway training program which will include math skill classes, work preparedness training, customer service training, mentorship, and support services in preparation and alongside access to the electrical apprenticeship program.</p> <p>A Community Development Corporation with workforce development programming experience partners with a local Career and Technical Vocational High School’s evening HVAC program to focus on employing program completers with HVAC firms specializing in heat pump installation. The applicant team plans to recruit from EJ neighborhoods and focus on underemployed or unemployed adults. The applicant applies for a planning grant to expand and solidify employer partnerships, ensure the instructors get curriculum and training, and solidify key parts of program design, such as recruitment and support services.</p>	<p>A post-secondary institution with an existing HVAC training program that serves a significant share of individuals from EJ and low-income communities seeks funds to add additional program capacity by embedding a heat pump curriculum, provide professional development to instructors, and work with clean energy employer partners to ensure the expanded program meets employer needs.</p> <p>A non-profit organization with a history of working with EJ communities and clean energy employers has studied the need for more trained employees across the solar industry. They have an initial plan for connecting residents to training and employers. Still, they must add staff capacity to establish all the relevant partnerships and refine the recruitment and placement strategies.</p> <p>A non-profit providing HERS Rater training to underrepresented populations identifies through completed cohorts that participants need support taking driver’s education and obtaining a driver’s license required by employers hiring HERS Raters.</p>
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<p>Strand B: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Pre-apprenticeship, and Work-Based Learning Programs</p>	<p>A labor union identifies the need for expanded pre-apprenticeship programming in a specific region. It applies for a planning grant to work with the MassHire Workforce Board, a community-based organization, and local vocational training programs to develop a plan to launch a pre-apprenticeship program that will work to expand access to climate-critical union apprenticeships for women and people of color.</p> <p>A non-profit with a history of providing career exploration programming to low-income and environmental justice communities applies for a planning grant to develop a multi-year plan to integrate greater exposure to climate-critical career paths into their programming.</p>	<p>An organization that runs a work and learning program for the formerly incarcerated and their family members recognizes the opportunity to add off-ramp opportunities in climate-critical training programs and work opportunities. They apply for a capacity grant to augment their curriculum, establish clear referral partnerships with relevant training programs, and engage employer partners who can provide entry-level positions to their program participants.</p> <p>An industry association providing career exposure to underserved adults identifies the need to offer additional translated materials, translation services, and ESOL contextualized classes to participants as prior enrollment resulted in a high ratio of non-native speakers.</p>
<p>Strand C: Development of a MWBE Support Program leading to the creation or expansion of MWBEs in Climate-Critical Fields</p>	<p>A non-profit devoted to providing business support services to small businesses proposes a plan to design a framework for standardized regional MWBE support program.</p> <p>A local chamber of commerce applies for funding to plan a cohort model for helping local MWBEs focused on the growing electric vehicle charging services market that would interface with the statewide system as a secondary service provider, or spoke.</p>	<p>An industry association with an annual event that supports clean energy small business development opportunities in the transportation electrification sector applies for a capacity grant to hire staff needed to launch and administer newly-designed ongoing networking opportunities to increase MWBE access to procurement pipelines and to establish a referral pipeline from all hubs enabling participants to access the opportunity.</p> <p>A non-profit agency focused on providing a broad suite of back office support services to MWBEs applies</p>

		<p>for a grant to undertake program planning and development and hire staff necessary to sustainably expand the suite of services to become a regional hub.</p> <p>A non-profit offering entrepreneurial boot camps to MWBE subcontractors in the high-performance building sector proposes establishing additional stipends to defray childcare costs to enable single-parent business owners to attend boot camps.</p>
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Note: The Hypothetical Examples presented above are provided as an illustrative tool and do not necessarily reflect projects that MassCEC would commit to funding – see Section 13 – Disclaimer & Waiver Authority of this solicitation regarding MassCEC’s discretion to accept or reject applications.

Program Outcomes and Metrics:

As part of the planning and capacity process, grantees will be expected to consider program outcomes and metrics that MassCEC requires implementation grantees to track and report within the design of final implementation plans. Grantees administering any direct service to participants via a Capacity Grant will be required to track and report outcome metrics using MassCEC templates and standards. Outcome metrics are designed to reflect successful progress to the overall goals of the Equity Workforce Fund and include, but are not limited, to the categories noted below:

For grantees supporting MWBEs, the overarching goal is to support diverse companies emerging in the clean energy sector and support wealth grow for underrepresented populations through business growth. Typical metrics MassCEC uses to track these outcomes include:

- Completion rate of programming by participants (e.g., number of enrollees graduating from entrepreneurial boot camp, number of participants provided a base threshold of mentorship, or percentage of MWBEs attaining certifications); and
- Additional MWBE growth metrics related to the programming provided (e.g., change in net revenue, increase in contracts, or addition of staff).

For grantees providing career pathway training to participants entering the clean energy sector, the goal is to enable underrepresented individuals to obtain and retain employment in high-

quality climate-critical occupations and to attain career growth. MassCEC tracks the outcomes of training programs using metrics including:

- Enrollment rates of target populations;
- Demographic details of participants served;
- Completion rates for individuals enrolled in training programs;
- Placement rates for individuals completing training programs;
- Retention rates for individuals post-placement for at minimum six (6) months; and
- Changes in salary/hourly wages.

For training programs, completion, placement, and retention rates are typically expected to be at minimum eighty (80) percent, seventy (70) percent, and sixty (60) percent, respectively, except in cases where the targeted population are known to experience significant barriers and challenges.

For grantees providing career awareness and exploration programs to participants considering entering the clean energy sector, the goal is to provide career exposure to underrepresented individuals to encourage and enable those individuals to enter the clean energy sector and take advantage of the opportunities presented by starting on a pipeline to obtain employment in a high-quality climate-critical career. While the overall reach and impressions obtained by the programs are major goals of career awareness and exploration programs, programs with clear actionable off ramps following exposure, such as direct pipelines into specific pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs, training programs, or internships, are viewed favorably. The success of career awareness and exploration programs are measured using metrics including:

- Enrollment/engagement rates of target populations;
- Completion rates for individuals taking part of specific career awareness and exposure activities; and
- Placement rates/rates of individuals successfully navigated into an accepted off ramp (e.g., number of participants entering a climate-critical training program, number of participants accepted to apprenticeship programs, or number of participants obtaining employment in a climate-critical occupation).

4. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Organizations or a partnership/team are eligible to apply and are collectively termed “Applicants.” Partnerships are strongly encouraged and may be looked upon more favorably when scored on selection criteria to the extent that partnerships can provide a range of expertise and experience to deliver a comprehensive proposal. If multiple parties jointly apply,

one party should lead the application team (“Lead Applicant”). If a single organization is applying for this opportunity, that organization would also be the Lead Applicant.

In the context of this solicitation, any organization or individual anticipating receiving a portion of the grant funds for their activities related to the proposed work, through a subcontract or other formalized agreement, should be considered a partner organization (“Partner Organization”) and listed in Section 1 of Attachment 2. Application Form. MassCEC may request further information about the qualifications of Partner Organizations during the review process.

The Applicant is encouraged to list other organizations and individuals not receiving a portion of the grant funds but contributing to the proposed work as proposed partners in Section 1.4 of Attachment 2 and indicate their past experience.

The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, sign a 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:

- Community-based entities (often referred to as community-based organizations) such as community action partnerships, environmental justice organizations, neighborhood revitalization organizations, advocacy groups, affordable housing providers, affordable housing developers, and non-profits.
 - Note: If Applicant 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.
- Post-secondary educational institutions, K-12 School Districts, Comprehensive and Vocational High Schools, Middle schools, and Vocational Schools offering a Career Technical Initiative evening program.
- For-profit entities such as for-profit training companies, trade associations, unions, or other coalitions of businesses and clean energy businesses.
- Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes.
- Workforce Development Organizations, Non-Profit and For-Profit.
- Massachusetts Workforce Investment Boards and Career Centers/Mass Hire Organizations.

Applicants may choose to form partnerships. Partnerships may be advantageous relative to scoring criteria if all the partnership members add to the project’s success.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Lead Applicants must have a Massachusetts office and must be able to submit a Certificate of Good Standing (COGS) from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. For more information and to obtain your COGS, please visit:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dor-certificate-of-good-standing-and-or-corporate-tax-lien-waiver-faqs>

- **Note:** COGS requested through the mail may take up to four (4) to six (6) weeks; plan accordingly. Public K-12 schools and public post-secondary institutions are exempt from this requirement.
- Applicants who have received prior funding or are pursuing separate funding opportunities from MassCEC are eligible to apply for this funding so long as the proposed work is sufficiently distinct and does not lead to the same project being funded, except for additional capacity-building support services, which work will necessarily overlap with a previously funded opportunity but should expand upon the same in accordance with the purpose of increasing impact of supportive services.
- Applicants who are currently or previously funded via solicitations under the Equity Workforce Fund must be in good standing with MassCEC and have submitted to the Workforce team during the course of their project completed progress reports substantiating outcomes and need for additional support services. Applicants with existing grants from the Equity Workforce Fund must consult with their assigned MassCEC Program Manager for approval prior to submitting an application requesting additional support service funds. Applicants funded by external funding sources should anticipate that MassCEC may request progress reports and other substantiation related to the proposed project.
- Applicants who have already received equity workforce planning grants may apply for a capacity grant to execute preliminary work related to future implementations.
- Applicants will be expected to disclose any potential conflicts of interest created through partnerships or subcontracts with related family members, current and recent employers, or any other involved parties that may create such conflicts of interest and to detail the review and selection processes used by the Applicants to ensure selection of the best parties to perform the related work.

5. PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

- **Environmental Justice Populations** : As defined by the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), [are “segments of the population determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources, or are especially vulnerable”](#).
 - “Environmental Justice (EJ) Neighborhood” means a census block group where:
 - Twenty-five percent (25%) of the households have an annual median household income that is equal to or less than sixty-five percent (65%) of the statewide median income; or
 - Forty percent (40%) of its population is Minority; or

- Twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the households lack English language proficiency; or
 - Minorities comprise twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed one-hundred fifty percent (150%) of the statewide annual median household income
 - “Minority” refers to individuals who identify themselves as Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, Asian, Indigenous people, and people who otherwise identify as non-white (see additional definition below).
 - “Low-income” means median household income at or below sixty-five percent (65%) of the statewide median income for Massachusetts, according to federal census data. ⁴
 - To see census block groups that meet the Environmental Justice definition, see [Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#).
- **Gateway Community:** Defined by the Massachusetts Legislature as twenty-six (26) mid-size urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state that face social and economic challenges but retain many assets with unrealized potential. These communities are municipalities with a population greater than 35,000 and less than 250,000 with a median household income below the Commonwealth’s average, and rate of educational attainment of a bachelor’s degree or above that is below the Commonwealth average.

These communities include Attleboro, Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Peabody, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield and Worcester.

- **Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE):** MWBE means a business at least 51% owned and dominantly controlled by an adult (18 or older) minority or women principals who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. MWBEs may already have Massachusetts, federal, or other city specifications. MWBEs may also already have the ownership structure in place to gain certification but need assistance to gain federal, state, or other certifications. Other MWBEs may need support to create a business entity that would be able to gain certification once established. Early-stage start-up companies with minority founders in executive roles are also included in this definition, regardless of the equity stake in the company or the demographics of the other shareholders of the company.

⁴ This is the definition that MassCEC uses to track organization-wide program impact. Programs can propose to use a different definition, that takes into account local area income, cost of living and household size, but grantees opting to use a more nuanced definition must be prepared to report metrics based on both the definitions.

- **Minority is defined as a person who meets one or more of the following definitions:**
 - (a) American Indian or Native American means: all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who are recognized as an Indian by a tribe or tribal organization.
 - (b) Asian means: All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian sub-continent, or the Pacific Islands, including, but not limited to, China, Japan, Korea, Samoa, India, and the Philippine Islands.
 - (c) Black means: All persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, including, but not limited to, African-Americans, and all persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Cape Verdean Islands.
 - (d) Eskimo or Aleut means: All persons having origins in any of the peoples of Northern Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Eastern Siberia.
 - (e) Hispanic means: All persons having their origins in any of the Spanish-speaking peoples of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central or South America, or the Caribbean Islands.
 - (f) Portuguese means: All persons having Portuguese origin. Portuguese persons shall only be included in the definition of minority if specifically set forth in programs funded by state transportation bond statutes, including such persons as eligible participants Group.

- **Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes:** Defined by the [US Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs](#) as a federally recognized tribe that is 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.

- **Climate critical priority occupations:** Occupations that are critical to the Commonwealth achieving 2030 emissions goals and net zero emissions by 2050. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - High-Performance Building Sector Occupations (for retrofit and new construction): Electricians/Electrical Contractors with expertise in building service upgrade, knob, and tube removal, heat pumps; Insulation Installers, Weatherization Crew Chiefs and Supervisors; Energy Auditors; HERS Raters; HVAC installers and Service Technicians with Heat Pump Expertise; High-Performance Carpenters and Construction Laborers; Hazardous Material removal specialists (especially for asbestos and vermiculite removal); Sheet Metal Worker/Ducting specialist; High-Performance Building Operators/Maintenance Mechanics; Mechanical Engineers designing high-performance HVAC systems; Green Building Consultant/Energy Model Professional; High-Performance Architect/Designer; Building Envelope Specialist/Commissioning Agent

- Offshore Wind Occupations: Offshore Wind Construction Laborer; Crane and Tower Operator; Pile Driver; Sheet Metal Worker/Welding Professional; Wind Turbine Service Technician.
 - Net Zero Grid Occupations: Electricians/Electrical contractors specializing in solar, battery storage, grid upgrade, or time of use metering; Solar or Battery Storage Installer; Solar or Battery Storage salesperson
 - Transportation Sector Occupations: Charging station salesperson, Electric Vehicle Salesperson, Large Vehicle Retrofit Technician/Mechanic, Fleet Manager, Electrician/Electrical Contractor specializing in charging infrastructure, Charging Station troubleshooting Technician, Electric bicycle Manufacture and Repair, Car Share salesperson.

- **Climate critical fields and businesses** mean fields (and businesses operating in fields) that are critical to the Commonwealth achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Examples of businesses and relevant fields include, but are not limited to:
 - Companies supporting building decarbonization (Insulation and Home Performance Contractors, HVAC companies with heat pump expertise, high-performance construction and remodeling companies, electrical contractors, hazardous material mitigation companies as part of building retrofits, high-performance window specialists, refrigerant management specialists, high-performance building operations management)
 - Companies supporting renewable energy utilization and grid modernization (solar component manufacture, solar and wind installation and maintenance, smart meter installation, offshore wind supply chain, battery storage installation, and utilization, time of use electricity support)
 - Companies supporting vehicle electrification and reduction of vehicle trips (electric vehicle components manufacture, electric vehicle retrofit, electric vehicle maintenance, and charging station maintenance. Fleet management for electrification, charging network and infrastructure, electrical contractor, electric vehicle car share companies, electric bicycle manufacture and repair, electric vehicle sales)

- **Fossil Fuel Workers**: Current and former workers from the fossil fuel industry, including but not limited to oil and propane dealer employees, including fuel delivery truck drivers; oil, gas, and propane heating technicians, sales, and administrative staff; gas station attendants; gas station equipment repair staff; gasoline car repair staff, and natural gas pipeline contractors.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Initiatives**: Targeted support to disadvantaged business entities (DBE) such as Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), underrepresented founders, clean energy workers, etc.

- **Low/Moderate Income Initiatives:** Initiatives that serve low and/or moderate-income populations. “Low income” generally is defined as earning 60%-65% of the statewide median income. “Moderate income” varies more; defined as earning 60%-80% to 80%-120% of statewide median income. If your organization uses another definition for low/moderate income than above, please provide your definition on the application form.
- **‘Hub-and-Spoke’ program model** refers to a model that arranges service delivery into a network consisting of an anchor organization (hub) that coordinates a full array of services, complemented by secondary partner organizations (spokes) that offer more limited or focused services within a specific geography or region.

6. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding a total of \$1,200,000 across the Planning and Capacity grants. MassCEC reserves the right to make additional awards if funding becomes available. The table below details the options for award amounts and durations.

Grant Type	Award Range	Duration Options
Planning or Capacity Project Leading to Implementation or Pilot		
Planning	\$20,000-\$50,000	Six or Twelve-month award
Capacity	\$30,000-\$150,000	One or Two-year award

Based on research and a review of key activities completed among past grantees, MassCEC staff have determined that most Planning Grant recipients can successfully complete the planning process for \$30,000 or less. Applicants requesting more than \$30,000 for planning must explain through their application form the necessity and impact of the funding exceeding \$30,000 and reflect this additional expenditure in their budget. Applicants requesting this level of funding will be expected to clearly define the additional milestones and deliverables anticipated to result from these additional funds. For example, an Applicant proposing to dedicate significant staff or subcontractor time to extensive business development efforts to form a large network of official partners should be prepared to include many memorandums of understanding documents as a key deliverable.

Applicants intending to designate thirty (30) percent or more of the proposed budget to subcontractor expenses must provide the detailed budget for subcontractors using a copy of the provided budget template, Attachment 3. Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule.

Upon award and signing of a grant agreement, Applicants will receive the funding in amounts determined by the contract, based on deliverables agreed to by MassCEC and selected Applicants (see Attachment 4. Sample Agreement, as an example). Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application.

7. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES

For the Equity Workforce Planning and Capacity Grants, Applicants must use funds to design and augment clean energy workforce development, career awareness, and MWBE support programs that lead to increased access, inclusion, and advancement for the target populations outlined in this application. Funds may also be used to supplement, create, and/or increase participant-facing support services associated with existing career pathway training, career awareness, and MWBE support programs. Grant funds shall be used for activities including, but not limited to:

- Staff or individual time devoted to program planning and capacity-building activities;
- Consultant support for key components of planning or execution;
- Technical support, which is necessary to move projects forward;
- Training and coaching aimed at building program capacity; and
- Costs associated with designing effective outreach, marketing, and educational assets, including curriculum design and translation services.
- Addressing critical support gaps and barriers to long-term success and retention of program participants, including but not limited to driver’s license training, child care support, and testing fees.

Activities that are **NOT** eligible for funding include:

- Costs associated with preparing this proposal;
- Purchase or lease of venue space or equipment intended for general operating purposes; and
- Activities that occur before or following the term of an awarded grant.

8. ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR PLANNING AND CAPACITY GRANTS

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC’s discretion. Notification of Award timelines may vary based on the number of applications and time of year.

Release of RFP	October 9, 2024
Questions due to MassCEC via email to rfpworkforce@masscec.com	Ongoing

Questions with Answers Posted to MassCEC Website	Ongoing
Pre-Application Webinar	October 23rd, 2024, at 12 PM
Pre- Application Office Hours	Thursday, October 24 at 5:30PM Tuesday, October 29 at 12 PM Thursday, November 7 at 12 PM Tuesday, November 12 at 5:30 PM Tuesday, November 19 at 12 PM Tuesday, December 3 at 12 PM Thursday, December 12 at 5:30 PM Thursday, December 19 at 12 PM Thursday, January 2 at 5:30 PM Tuesday, January 7 at 12 PM Thursday, January 9 at 5:30 PM Tuesday, January 14 at 5:30 PM Thursday, January 16 at 12 PM
Applications Due To MassCEC via email	Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through 11:59 PM on May 19, 2025
Priority Reading dates for MassCEC	Applications received by: December 6 th by 11:59 PM (to be reviewed the week of December 9 th) February 28 th by 11:59 PM (to be reviewed the week of March 3 rd)
Interviews of Applicants	Scheduled as needed
Notification of Award	Approximately 6-10 weeks after submission

9. HOW TO APPLY

To apply:

1. Review this RFP to understand the opportunity, requirements, and MassCEC’s objectives.
2. Review all RFP forms and attachments.
3. Attend MassCEC informational webinars and utilize other informational resources (see below – Resources and Support for Potential Applicants).
4. Contact MassCEC with questions and to discuss your idea(s) via email at rfpworkforce@masscec.com.

5. Complete all RFP forms and attachments, adhering to word limits, format requirements, deadlines, and other instructions listed within this RFP and each attachment.
6. Submit all completed RFP forms and attachments by email to rfpworkforce@masscec.com upon completion and before 11:59 pm on May 19, 2025, with “Equity Workforce Planning/ Capacity Grant Application” in the subject line.

A complete application packet will include the following:

- Attachment 1: Authorized Applicant’s Signature and Acceptance Form
- Attachment 2: Equity Workforce Planning/ Capacity Grant Application
- Attachment 3: Budget, Milestones, and Deliverables
- Attachment 4: Sample Milestone Grant Agreement
- Attachment 5: Sample Cost Reimbursement Grant Agreement
- Attachment 6: Decision Chart (To assist Applicants with determining whether the proposed programming fits the adult training and MWBE focus of this RFP)

Attachments 1 and 2 must be submitted as **separate** documents in PDF or Word format. Attachment 3 must be submitted as an individual Excel file with all tabs filled out. Attachments 4 and 5 need not be returned and are strictly for reference, except in situations where the Applicant is requesting changes to the general terms and conditions set forth within the MassCEC standard grant agreement. Changes requested to these sections are subject to the review of MassCEC, must be signaled at the point of application submission to be considered during contract scoping negotiations, and may impact the eligibility of an Applicant for funding.

Milestone Grant Agreements (Attachment 4) will be utilized for all Planning Grants. A Cost Reimbursement Grant Agreement (Attachment 5) may be considered for Capacity Grants that will be running a program with participants that may experience attrition during program delivery.

Supporting documents such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs), Letters of Support, and Certificate of Good Standing (COGS) should be integrated into Attachment 2, but Applicants may also submit these as distinct attachments. Additional attachments will **not** be considered during review and scoring.

Attachment 2 asks for anticipated recruitment demographics for program participation if full implementation is realized. Using the program participant definitions under Section 5 and historical recruitment patterns, give best estimates of the percentages of participants from DEI categories, including EJ Neighborhoods, Low-Income Communities, and Gateway Cities. Please provide figures based on statistics drawn from historical service to the proposed geographic area and target populations.

Using Attachment 3, provide the program’s proposed budget, cost center breakdown, and payment schedule.

1.1. Program Budget

On tab one (1), provide a standard project budget, including staff salaries, direct program costs, subcontracting costs, indirect costs, and fringe costs.

1.2. Proposed Payment Schedule with Milestones and Deliverables

On tab two (2), provide a proposed payment schedule. During the fulfillment of the grant, MassCEC responds to timely invoices that provide documentation of deliverables to disburse grant funds; for this grant, MassCEC does not accept cost reimbursement invoices, except for the noted specific limited subset of Capacity grants. **Applicants must provide a payment schedule proposing chronological invoice dates, where each invoice date is associated with clear milestones and deliverables related to defined tasks within the Scope of Work. Quarterly schedules are preferred. Please refer to the example in tab two and the task number reference chart.**

1.3. Organizational Budget

On tab three (3), provide a standard annual organizational budget, including staff salaries, direct program costs, subcontracting costs, indirect costs, and fringe costs. Organizational budgets will also be accepted as an attachment.

Complete application submissions will be accepted on a rolling basis through **11:59 PM EST on May 19th, 2025**. Under no circumstances will MassCEC accept responses past the deadline.

While responses will be accepted until the May 19th deadline, applications submitted by the listed priority reading dates of December 6^h and February 28th will be read and reviewed on a more expedited timeline. Applications will be reviewed until funding is expended. Applications reviewed on an expedited timeline will still be notified approximately six (6) to ten (10) weeks after submission.

Resources and Support for Potential Applicants:

All Applicants are encouraged to work with MassCEC and utilize MassCEC support when preparing an application—attendance at the pre-application webinars and office hours. Links to helpful resources and past webinars will be provided on the MassCEC website, along with the links to the funding opportunity documents.

Additionally, Applicants are encouraged to leverage MassCEC networks to seek partnerships. MassCEC will maintain an opt-in listserv to provide program updates, including descriptions of potential Applicants seeking partnerships. If you want to be added to the workforce listserv, email workforce@masscec.com.

MassCEC will offer a publicly accessible contact list of organizations seeking partnerships and their geographic and relevant interest areas for those seeking partnership opportunities. MassCEC may also seek to facilitate relationships directly upon request.

Electronic Accessibility:

If accessibility to a computer, 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, alternative options may be discussed, such as video application. Please email rfpworkforce@masscec.com or telephone the Workforce Equity Program Administrator at (617) 315-9300, option 7, option 2, to discuss accommodations.

10. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<p><u>Applicant and Partner Experience and Qualifications</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have a strong track record serving the target population, demonstrated capacity for implementing relevant programs in workforce development, career awareness, or business support, and a track record of partnering effectively to plan and execute programming. • Applicants should highlight any history of providing unique or advanced approaches to program services
<p><u>Target Occupations, Businesses, and Populations</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As relevant, the proposed target occupations align with climate-critical occupations, the target businesses and fields align with the climate-critical businesses, and the target population(s) qualify under the terms of the grant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional consideration will be reserved for projects that address occupations and businesses in the Energy Efficiency, Demand Management, and Clean Heating and Cooling Sector. This sector is by far the largest clean energy sector, with 74,305 workers in 2022, equivalent to over 70% of the clean energy workforce in the state. Modeling from MassCEC’s workforce needs assessment anticipates an additional 18,000 jobs to be added to this sector by 2030. ○ Career Awareness Applicants may choose to scope the work to include occupations beyond those listed as climate-critical so long as they pertain to clean energy and so long as the career awareness effort also includes climate-critical occupations. • The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the target participants' assets and barriers. It presents the planning and

	<p>capacity concepts in the context of how these proposals connect with participant assets and address barriers.</p>
<p><u>Initial Vision of Program Design</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a compelling vision of the type of equity workforce programming they want to create or augment and substantiate the need for this project. • Applicants clearly outline preliminary steps, including roles and responsibilities of staff and partners, to complete planning or capacity-building, add additional support services, or launch professional development for clean energy employers.
<p><u>Impact of Program</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants connect how the proposal will meet the core goals of the relevant program strand and offer innovative ideas about how to support the identified target populations. • Applicants propose a reasonable number of participants or businesses directly impacted by the project results. • Applicants present trackable outcomes and metrics that will signal successful impact of the project.
<p><u>Commitment to Maximizing Partnerships, Resources, and TA</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant explains the plans to establish needed partnerships and identify resources to execute the programmatic vision. • Applicants propose milestones, deliverables timelines, and resource allocations that align with the proposed project. • Applicant describes a clear plan for how they intend to utilize the TA provided, including information about which staff members on the proposed project will participate in various components of TA.
<p><u>Diversity of Approaches</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Applicants and Applicant Teams are encouraged to apply, especially those certified by the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office or equivalent body. If you believe your organization meets these criteria but has not completed certification, Applicants may offer a statement on the application form. • Additional factors that will be considered include geographic diversity, target sector/occupational diversity, and support of additional categories of populations (e.g., residents of Gateway Cities, low-income populations, limited English/ESOL individuals, immigrants/refugees, returning citizens, opportunity youth, persons with disabilities, neurodivergent individuals, etc.),

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional priority will be reserved for efforts that address electrification careers and priority occupations such as heat pump installers and electricians. • Additional priority will be reserved for efforts that support job seekers and contractors who speak languages other than English. • Consideration may be given to proposals offering novel and impactful approaches to programming.
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11. EXPECTATIONS FOR GRANT AWARDEES

In addition to fulfilling milestones and deliverables described in the Scope of Work, to be agreed upon and finalized upon award, awardees will be expected to satisfy the following responsibilities:

1. Finalize Grant Agreement

Awardees will work with the MassCEC Program Manager to develop and finalize their grant agreement to ensure that the statement of work, milestones and deliverables schedule, payment schedule, and other terms conform to MassCEC standards before the commencement of project work and disbursements of funding.

2. Actively Participate in Cohort and Individual Technical Assistance (TA) Offerings

Awardees must send at least one representative to participate in regular webinars and meetings to promote networking, synergize projects, share best practices, and strengthen the quality of the workforce and business development ecosystems related to climate-critical occupations. In addition to group offerings, each grantee will be assigned a dedicated technical assistance provider who will advise them on any relevant planning processes and how best to ensure that deliverables and outcomes meet or exceed the expectations of the grant. Individual TA will be delivered on an ongoing and as-needed basis to be agreed upon between the TA provider and awardee. As part of the contracting process, MassCEC staff will provide any required templates that grantees must adhere to in order to meet the grant’s terms. Additional tools and resources will be provided throughout the TA process as resources for success.

For budgeting purposes, Applicants should consider that active grantees will likely need to participate in at least 20 hours of TA every six months the grant is active. MassCEC will host one in-person full-day TA session each fall and spring, and Applicants should consider the associated travel cost. Applicants may plan for multiple people to participate in the various TA offerings, especially if it will provide opportunities for staff from various partner organizations to advance the efforts of the grant.

3. Contribute to Program Promotion and Reporting:

MassCEC regularly features awardees in social media blog posts, reports, and other media. Additionally, MassCEC is required to release an annual report detailing the activities related to the Equity Workforce Funding. Awardees will be expected to contribute to these efforts not only by adhering to the outcomes reporting requirements but also by participating in interviews with MassCEC staff who are working on drafting relevant collateral and reports. Additionally, Equity Workforce Capacity Awardees must provide relevant case studies as agreed upon in the Scope of Work. At a minimum, case studies will be expected to include a one-page text description of the project and its results and an appropriate accompanying picture. It is anticipated that case studies will be required at least annually. Finally, MassCEC welcomes additional opportunities to collaborate with grantees on media opportunities.

4. Submit a Final Plan/ Report

All planning grantees must submit a final plan detailing the projected implementation plan. This step is meant to position the partnership for additional multi-year funding from MassCEC Equity Workforce Implementation Funding rounds, other state workforce funding, local funding, or foundation grant funding. All capacity grantees will be required to complete a final plan that details the work completed during the grant period and the relevant outcomes. The final milestone payment for these grants will be paid after the review and approval of the plan or report by each grantee's assigned TA provider.

Future Equity Workforce Implementation Grants: MassCEC will continue to offer annual funding opportunities for larger-scale, multi-year support of equity workforce programming. These separate funding opportunities will be announced as they become available. Applicants will not need to receive Planning or Capacity Grant funding to be eligible for these future opportunities.

12. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions on Equity Workforce Development Planning Grants, please email rfpworkforce@masscec.com.

13. 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.

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

Equity Workforce Training Planning 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: APPLICATION FORM

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 3: BUDGET, MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 4: SAMPLE MILESTONE GRANT AGREEMENT

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 5: SAMPLE COST REIMBURSEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 6: DECISION CHART (TO ASSIST APPLICANTS WITH DETERMINING WHETHER THE PROPOSED PROGRAMMING FITS ADULT TRAINING AND MWBE FOCUS OF THIS RFP)

Attached separately