

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Eligibility

Private schools

Can a private school apply?

This funding is limited to public schools.

Low income criteria

How firm is the 40% low income criteria? If a school district doesn't qualify as low income, can it still apply for the grant for a single school facility within the district that does meet the low-income criteria?

The 40% criteria is a firm threshold. This can be met based on the school or district population anytime in the last three school years. If the criteria is not met district-wide but is met at individual schools, projects at those schools are eligible to receive funding.

I have multiple schools, but one of them surpasses the low income criteria. Does it make sense to only apply with the one with the highest low income percentage?

The percentage of students that are from low income families is one of many selection criteria that may make your proposal more competitive. Districts may submit multiple proposals if they would like.

Last year, we purchased a new school building that we would like to enroll in the grant. Although the school is not listed in DESE's listing of schools, the population in the school will be the same population listed in an eligible DESE-listed school. Can we submit a proposal for this school and note in our narrative how the student population meets the eligibility criteria?

Yes, if you describe in the narrative how this school will meet the criteria and provide data.

Comprehensive building assessments

Do we need a complete decarbonization plan to apply?

For applicants requesting awards equal to or greater than \$1 million, MassCEC expects a plan for full school decarbonization has been or will be created (e.g. the applicant has or will



complete a comprehensive building assessment or equivalent, and/or has integrated decarbonization into capital planning).

Does an existing study we have for the school meet the requirements of a comprehensive building assessment? *We received multiple questions re: specific types of studies and plans.*

We are looking for a study or capital plan for the building that considers decarbonization in a strategic way. Existing studies schools or districts have done may meet the requirements, depending on the scope. If an applicant has already completed what they believe to be a full school decarbonization plan they may submit it with the grant application. MassCEC can then determine if it meets our requirements. If the plan isn't sufficient, the applicant can still enroll to complete a CBA through our TA services.

Eligible project types and costs

Can you enter into a PPA for solar with a BESS and roof repairs or do you have to own the solar?

A PPA is an eligible project. Roof repairs are also eligible, as long as they are part of a larger decarbonization project.

Can the funding be used for new construction under the eligible categories?

If there is a renewable energy component of a new school that is at risk of being cut, the school is eligible to apply for funding. However, the focus of this grant is decarbonizing existing schools.

Hoping your grant could support us going deeper in new construction with MSBA — planning to do ground source heat pumps but would like to do more with solar. Might that be eligible?

This is an eligible project. We are planning to prioritize projects that can start in summer 2026. You may have to consult with MSBA on whether additional scope can be added.

If a building management system is proposed along with electrification of a domestic hot water system, does that meet the requirement of “being a part of a broader electrification project”?

Yes. We encourage you to include context in the narrative as to how the building management system will benefit the school’s electrification/decarbonization.



Can a solar grant also support a new roof?

Yes, this is an eligible project type: "Roof repair and window replacements may be funded if they are part of a broader energy efficiency, electrification, decarbonization, resilience, or clean energy project." One of our selection criteria is whether MassCEC's funding fills a gap that other funding sources don't cover. There is an MSBA program for roof replacement, so that may be an option to consider depending on the details of the project.

Is a fossil fuel powered technology eligible for grant funding?

No, we will not be funding technologies that are fossil fuel powered. However, if you are applying for Green School Works funding for a technology that uses electricity (e.g. a heat pump) and leaving fossil fuel powered technology as a back up, that is an eligible project. Please note this information in your narrative.

For the soft costs at 15% does that include Overhead and Profit on the construction project?

MassCEC does not consider the price to install or construct a project as part of the soft cost cap.

Multiple projects in one district

Our school is eligible; we're debating between two large scopes (oil boiler to heat pump conversion vs old roof+solar). Both are early in scope development. Is it possible to apply for both?

Yes, districts are able to submit multiple proposals.

2. Award rounds and levels

Will all the implementation money be awarded now or will there be other rounds of RFPs?

We are expecting to award all available funding in this round, but it will depend on the application pool.

How much of the \$60 million is set aside for construction projects and TA support?

\$52.5 million is set aside for the implementation grants, and \$5 million is set aside for the TA support.

Can districts receive more than \$5 million in funding?



Yes, it's possible we may award more than \$5 million in funding to one district if they have several strong proposals. As stated in the RFP, MassCEC may give consideration towards awarding a diverse set of projects, including those representing communities across Massachusetts, but that is only one consideration in our selection criteria.

3. Timeline

If awarded, when does the funding need to be spent by? When do projects need to be completed?

We don't have a firm deadline for when funding needs to be spent. MassCEC will prioritize implementation projects that can begin construction within one year of contract signing and achieve project completion within three years of contract signing.

We are doing phase one of the project we are submitting this summer. When do you envision signing contracts? It may make sense to do some of the GSW work this summer as school is vacant and it will prep for bulk of our GSW work to be done summer 2026.

We encourage you to submit an application and flag the time sensitive nature of the request.

Our district is seeking to replace the district high school, but it is a long process, and we are working with MSBA (school complete 2029). How likely is it to be awarded a grant?

We understand that these projects take time depending on the proposal and technology. Whether it's awarded will depend on how competitive it is with other applications. MassCEC will prioritize implementation projects that can begin construction within one year of contract signing and achieve project completion within three years of contract signing.

4. How to Apply

Who signs the application? The select board or the school?

Whoever has authority in your municipality or whoever is taking financial responsibility for the school (either the school district or the municipal leadership) will be accepted as the signatory.

Should I be doing 2 separate applications for different projects or one all encompassing?



If a project is a connected and/or coordinated multi-school effort, please submit one application. If there are separate projects at multiple schools or sites in your district, please submit separate applications for each project.

What is considered a connected/coordinated multi-school project? For example, if a municipality is pursuing the same measure at multiple school buildings, like ventilation upgrades, could that be submitted under one application or should it be multiple applications for each school?

It seems this could be co-delivered by the same designer and contractor. If that's the case, it would make sense to combine them under one application.

Some of these questions are best addressed with a spreadsheet. Is it ok to attach a spreadsheet for the budget for example?

Yes, but we would strongly request that applicants match the formatting of our application tables so that we can compare your application to the rest of the applicant pool. If information like a budget is formatted differently, we may need to follow up with questions.

Will the grant deadline be extended?

Unfortunately, we will not be extending the deadline.

5. Technical assistance

Is the TA specifically for schools eligible for Green School Works? (e.g., those that meet the 40% LI threshold)

Yes, the low-income eligibility for schools and districts to receive TA services is the same as for implementation grants. Districts can receive either or both.

How will we know when we can apply for the technical assistance?

We are expecting the technical assistance enrollment to open in May for eligible schools, districts, and collaboratives.

How is the request for qualifications for technical assistance vendors related to these implementation grants?

The TA program is a separate program, one is not contingent on the other and one is not required for the other. However, if you are applying for more than \$1 million and you do not



have a comprehensive building assessment, a way to meet that criterion is to enroll in the technical assistance program.

Is there a list of ESCOs to assist with design, audits, planning etc.?

We will not be providing a list, but we will be providing a list of pre-qualified vendors for technical assistance. We do ask if you are partnering with an ESCO that you provide an explanation on the budget.