



Request for Proposals:
Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Support
2022 Implementation Grants- Round 2

Date of Issue: December 28, 2022
Proposals Due: March 10, 2023

Total Funding Available: \$4,000,000
Applicants are eligible for grants up to \$1,000,000
See Sections 3 and 5 for more details.

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

1. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) continues a Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (“MWBE”) Support Program (“the Program”) in climate critical fields.¹ The Program is an overarching initiative aimed at the exploration, development, and implementation of innovative support for Massachusetts-based MWBE companies to assist their entry, creation, and expansion into fields that are critical to meeting the Commonwealth’s ambitious climate goals of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. Proposed support and training initiatives may be aimed at facilitating Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office, DCAMM or other certification of new MWBE’s in climate critical fields, creation of new MWBEs, as well as supporting existing MWBE’s to grow and excel in clean energy and climate critical fields. A more complete definition of “Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE)” and “climate critical business fields” can be found in Section 3 of this RFP.

This funding opportunity is for MWBE Support Implementation Grants of up to \$1,000,000 for up to 3 years of work to help MWBEs grow and excel in climate critical fields.

Details about the Program and participation requirements are outlined in Section 3 and 5. All applicants will be required to attend mandatory webinars (or certify they have watched recordings) before submitting an application.

Applications for MWBE Support Implementation Grants are due by March 10, 2023.

2. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a state economic development agency dedicated to accelerating the growth of the clean energy field 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 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.

¹ A more complete definition of “Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE)” and “Climate Critical fields” can be found in Section 3 of this RFP.

3. MWBE SUPPORT PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

Funds for this program will be expended from Equity Workforce Training Funds, created through the March 2021 Climate Legislation, *An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy* (the “Act”). The Act allocates \$12 million annually in funding to MassCEC to support:

- Small business enterprises that are minority and women-owned
- Other businesses or communities underrepresented in the clean energy workforce or clean energy industry
- Individuals residing within an Environmental Justice or low-income community
- Current and former workers from the fossil fuel industry
- Federally recognized and state acknowledged tribes within the commonwealth.

Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Support Program Goals:

Funding in this RFP is intended to organization that can support Minority and Women Owned Businesses Enterprises and the creation of MWBEs in Massachusetts for the following goals:

- **Increase MWBE business activity** in climate critical business fields,
- **Increase expertise of MWBE’s** in climate critical business fields,
- **Grow employment and revenue of existing MWBEs** that operate in climate critical business fields and continue long-term growth strategies
- **Create new MWBE firms** in climate critical fields and support healthy long-term growth of those firms
- **Tie together relevant existing support for small businesses and fill gaps in support** for MWBEs focusing on climate critical business fields

This funding is **not intended to benefit a single MWBE**, but instead is intended to support an organization that can help several different MWBEs grow and excel in climate critical business sectors.

For the minimum award amount of \$250,000, MassCEC expects that applicant organizations should be supporting at least 5 MWBEs. MassCEC does not expect applicant organizations proposing to spend more than \$50K per MWBE supported to score competitively unless there is a very strong rationale and evidence of transformative outcomes.

Key Considerations in Program Design: While by no means exhaustive, the list below highlights relevant design considerations and best practices:

- **To effectively address specific barriers to success**, strategies to support MWBEs must be tailored to the specific challenges, mindful of the stage of business development, and transparent about how the model may or may not fit the needs of different businesses and individuals.
- **Support organizations can maximize impact by addressing both “supply” and “demand” needs.** For example, working with MWBEs to ensure that they are certified by the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office has greater effect when organizations

also work to increase the demand for certified MWBEs and help their stakeholders understand how best to access these procurement opportunities.

- **Tailor recruitment, retention services, and resources to the specific types of MWBEs that you aim to serve.** Depending on the sector and stage of businesses that organizations seek to support, different models and service offerings are likely to have variable success and impact. Stakeholder engagements to inform a needs assessment process and model development can ensure that organizations have a clearer idea of whether offerings like MWBE incubators/ accelerators, communities of practice, business advisory services, industry-specific programming, or other strategies are going to be the most beneficial.
- **Comprehensive support and wraparound services for program participants** can improve retention and extend the capacity of MWBEs to engage fully in your programming. Building these supports into the design and budget of your program in advance not only prioritizes the needs of the participants, but it also normalizes that entrepreneurs can be successful and still need additional support in the form of access to transportation, training stipends, extended career counseling, and referrals for other services.
- **Partnering is essential for the success of individual programs and the growth of the broader support ecosystem.** Business support needs span so many categories and services that is important for support organizations to clearly delineate which services they are best equipped to offer internally, which ones they want to partner to offer, and which services can only be offered through referral to other organizations.

Program Definitions:

For the purposes of this RFP and in accordance with the Program goals, MassCEC is defining the key terms as follows:

- **“Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE)”** means a business at least 51% owned and dominantly controlled by adult (18 or older) minority or women principals who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. MWBEs may have Massachusetts, federal or other city specific certifications in place already. MWBEs may also have the ownership structure in place already to gain certification but need assistance in order 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 equity stake in the company or the demographics of the other shareholders of the company.
- **“Minority”** means 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 which include 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 fields and businesses"** means 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:
 - 1) 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)
 - 2) 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)

- 3) 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)

MassCEC intends to further define climate critical fields and businesses through a workforce needs assessment. Please see the strategies outlined in the [MA Decarbonization Roadmap](#), the sector-specific reports, and the Economic and Health Impact Report for additional context.

4. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding four (4) to seven (7) MWBE Support Implementation grants of \$250,000 to One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000). All awarded support initiatives must be completed within three (3) years of grant award and should budget for a year of monitoring and metrics tracking after the proposed project is complete.

At MassCEC's discretion, applications for Implementation Grants that are not detailed enough for initial award or need further development may be offered a MWBE Support Planning Grant, and if funding is available, an opportunity to reapply in a later round of MWBE Support Implementation Grants. MWBE Support Planning Grants are intended for the exploration, development, or refinement of innovative ideas for potential implementation initiatives to conduct MWBE support projects.

Additionally, MassCEC may elect to award a portion of MWBE Support Implementation Grant funds requested by Applicants in their applications in the event a proposed project contains sufficient detail to merit a MBWE Support Implementation Grant versus an MWBE Support Planning Grant but does not have a sufficient scope to justify the entire amount of the award request by the applicant.

Applicants may receive a portion of the funding upfront 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 Statement of Work as an example). 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. There will be an opportunity to clarify this in the Application.

5. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES

For the MWBE Support Implementation Grant opportunity, Applicants must propose the implementation of innovative projects. All projects must focus specifically on support of MWBEs or the creation of MWBEs in climate critical business fields. The expectation is that MWBE Support Implementation funds would be utilized within three (3) years of contract execution for active programs, with an additional one (1) year of outcome and metric monitoring. MassCEC anticipates these grants shall be utilized for activities such as (without limitation):

- staff or individual time devoted to program, or project preparation and implementation; including one-on-one business counseling, strategic business introductions, assistance navigating government procurement processes, assisting with recruitment and retention of employees, and support accessing capital;
- marketing activities & expenses commonly associated with outreach initiatives such as purchasing marketing collateral, renting space for events, promotional mailers, and website or social media hosting costs;
- technical support needed to move projects forward;
- field specific training and coaching;
- training stipends to address anticipated losses of wages or revenue that MWBEs may incur while participating in extended training offerings;
- ongoing costs for accountants, lawyers, or other professional services; and/or
- costs associated with initial and/or ongoing MWBE engagement, including translation services.

Activities that are NOT eligible for funding include:

- costs associated with preparing a proposal; and
- support activities for MWBEs which have been undertaken prior to execution of a grant.

6. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Organizations or a partnership/team are eligible to apply and are collectively termed “Applicants.” If there are multiple parties that are jointly applying, one 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 a contract similar to Attachment 3, 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:

- Non-profit organizations including Chamber of Commerce organizations, trade associations, clean energy incubators/accelerators, environmental justice organizations, and organizations representing tribes
- Academic institutions with a business support program

- 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.

Additional eligibility notes

- Lead Applicants must have a Massachusetts office or staffing.
- Applicants are not required to have experience in clean energy or climate critical business fields.
- **Reminder:** This funding is not intended to benefit a single MWBE, but instead is intended to support an organization that can help several different MWBEs grow and excel in climate critical business sectors.

7. ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR MWBE SUPPORT GRANTS

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC’s discretion, and notification timelines may vary based off the number of applications. All workshops and webinars will be recorded and be available on MassCEC’s workforce page.

Release of RFP	December 28, 2022
Pre-Application Webinar: How To Apply for MWBE Support RFP	January 12, 2023 at 1 pm
Pre-Application Office Hours	January 31, 2023 at 12 pm February 9, 2023 at 5:30 pm February 13, 2023 at 12 pm February 23, 2023 at 5:30 pm February 28, 2023 at 12 pm
Questions due to MassCEC via email to workforce@masscec.com	Ongoing through February 20, 2023
Questions with answers posted to MassCEC Website	Updated at least every month on the 2 nd Tuesday through February 21, 2023
First Round of Proposals Due	March 10, 2023 by 11:59 pm
Potential Interviews of Applicants	March and April of 2023 as needed
Notification of First Round of Awards	May 2023

8. HOW TO APPLY

To apply:

- Review this RFP to develop an understanding for the Program and opportunities.
- Attend MassCEC’s informational webinars or replay them, and/or utilize other informational resources offered.
- (Optional, but encouraged) Reach out to MassCEC at Workforce Office Hours to discuss your idea(s) or via email (workforce@masscec.com).
- Submit pdf of all application materials in one document to the MassCEC Workforce team at workforce@masscec.com with “**MWBE Support Grant Application**” in the subject line.
- A complete application will include:
 - a. Attachment 1: Authorized Applicant’s Signature and Acceptance Form
 - b. Attachment 2: Application Form
 - c. Attachment 3: Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule
 - d. Attachment 4: Sample Grant Agreement, and

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. Attachment 4 need not be returned and is strictly for reference. Additional attachments will **not** be considered during review and scoring.

Using Attachment 3, provide the program's proposed budget and payment schedule.

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.

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. **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.**

Complete application submissions will be accepted through **11:59 pm on March 10th of 2023.** Successful applicants will be notified of status by approximately May 2023.

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:

- **Explore Resources:** Resources are available on MassCEC’s Equity Workforce website to learn more about business sector growth based on the Commonwealth’s goal of net zero emissions by 2050, existing support services for MWBE in Massachusetts, available MassSave incentives & programs, and complementary grant opportunities.
- **Review Related Reports:** Several reports related to climate critical occupations and business opportunities are available as background material and may help with portions of your application.

Author/Organization	Year	Geography	Title of Report
NYS Just Transitions Working Group	2021	NY	2021 Jobs Study
MassCEC	2021	MA	Massachusetts Clean Energy Report
MassSave	2020	MA	Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Workforce Development Needs Assessment
State of Massachusetts	2022	MA	MA Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025/2030

- **Use MassCEC to Engage in Networking & Seek Partnerships:** MassCEC will maintain an opt-in listserv that will provide program updates. If you are not on the Equity Workforce list serve, and would like to be added, email workforce@masscec.com or subscribe at the [MassCEC Equity Workforce page](#). Office Hours will be held regularly as the application date approaches. Applicants may drop in at office hours to get feedback on their ideas.

If you have a suggestion of other types of support MassCEC can offer, let us know!

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<p><u>Experience and Innovativeness</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants or applicant teams have a demonstrated history engaging and supporting MWBE or small businesses and have a network established to attract existing or MWBEs or minority and women entrepreneurs interested in creating new MWBEs. • Applicants propose innovative ways to provide support services that help overcome typical barriers for MWBEs such as language services, bridge and startup capital, introductions to procuring agencies, or starting bonus grants to attract new employees. • Applicant teams have a successful track record and approach and use data such as completion rates, scale/size, participation rate to demonstrate historical success. • Applicant has experience/knowledge of climate critical business fields. This experience is not required.
<p><u>Demonstration of Market Opportunity</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has defined a climate critical business field/s to focus work on and uses data or research about importance of growth of this field/s in meeting state climate goals. • Applicant has strong tie to workflow and customers integrated into the project so that trained MWBEs have pipeline of work available at completion. • Applicant has clearly outlined gaps in current services for MWBE and has strong plan and strategy for how to fill gaps and needs. • Applicant clearly identifies MWBEs that will be served or be created by the project.
<p><u>Program Design and Completeness of Statement of Work</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a comprehensive program design with specific services, strategies, and training offerings that align with their stated goals for supporting MWBEs. • Applicants carefully match outreach, engagement, and program design elements to the needs of the specific segments of MWBEs that they aim to serve. • The program design and delivery are organized to maximize benefit to the supported MWBEs and to allow the support organization to affectively capture data outcomes to continuously improve programming. • Statement of Work and Proposed Milestones and Payment (in budget worksheet) includes reasonable timeline and concrete milestones to track progress.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Work includes specific goals and/or target outcomes for success. • Statement of Work is thorough, specific, logical, and consistent with MassCEC Program goals. • When applicable, role and function of any partners/subcontractors is clarified.
<u>Budget/Cost</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget provides competitive \$/MWBE support considering types of support services and training provided. • There is an itemized budget for subcontractors/partners (> \$50K), if applicable and budget is sufficiently detailed. • Cost is competitive when compared to costs of other comparable proposals and/or projects run outside of MassCEC. • Applicants have proposed a clear plan and budget for how funds will be used to assist in implementing project.
<u>Leverage resources and long-term success</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal leverages and takes advantage of existing government and other MWBE support and workforce resources such as Small Business Administration, Supplier Diversity Office, State Workforce Board, MassHire Organizations, or EOLWD Workforce programs. • Proposal leverages other funding or organizations to amplify effort (not required). • Applicant has the resources (human and financial) to be able to complete the project. • The proposal would benefit MWBEs past the time of the project being offered.
<u>Diversity of Approaches</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Applicants and Applicant Teams are encouraged to apply, especially those certified by the Massachusetts' Supplier Diversity Office. If you believe your organization meets the criteria for this but has not completed certification, Applicants may offer a statement to this regard on the application form. • Geographic Diversity: Consideration may be given towards awarding applications from a representative spread of communities across Massachusetts, a variety of climate critical business field focuses, and diverse project plans. • Sector Diversity: Consideration may be given towards awarding applications from a variety of high priority climate critical business sectors that have high growth opportunity in MA.

10. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions related to this MWBE Support Grant RFP, please email workforce@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.

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 4, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Support 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 Lead 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 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 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: _____