



Notice of Intent to Fund: Climatetech Careers Fund

Date of Issue: May 20, 2025

Proposals Due: June 20, 2025, 11:59 PM

All proposals must be submitted to:

RFPWorkforce@MassCEC.com

1. SUMMARY

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (“MassCEC”) a public instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, announces its intent to accept the following unsolicited and best-value offer from Social Finance pending the results of the posting of this notice.

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center seeks to support the development and scaling of education and workforce programs for clean energy occupations. Social Finance, a national nonprofit organization and a Securities and Exchange Commission registered investment adviser (SF Advisors, LLC) with over a decade of experience designing and managing complex, long-term partnerships and investments in collaboration with the public, private, and social sectors has proposed to partner with MassCEC to create a Massachusetts Climate Careers Fund. The Fund would aim to help participants access and persist in high-quality training for in-demand climate careers like HVAC/R technicians, electricians, energy auditors, and EV mechanics, by flexibly covering individuals' specific needs.

2. ABOUT MASSCEC

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

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

3. JUSTIFICATION

Massachusetts is a global leader in clean energy and is home to the highest-earning clean energy workers in the country. Between 2010 and 2022, the clean energy industry grew by 80%, which accounted for more than 10% of all net jobs created in the state during that time.¹ Massachusetts has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions – first cutting emissions by 50% by 2030 and then achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 — policies that will further cement the state’s leadership in decarbonization and drive clean energy job growth at a rapid pace for decades to come. MassCEC’s [Powering the Future, A Massachusetts Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment](#) projected

¹ “2023 Massachusetts Clean Energy Industry Report,” <https://www.masscec.com/resources/2023-massachusetts-clean-energy-industry-report>

that the state's decarbonization plan will require the clean energy workforce to expand by a likely conservative projection of **29,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers** by 2030, or the **equivalent of 38,100 workers spending some or all of their time on clean energy projects**.

A robust, well-trained, and inclusive workforce is vital to achieving and sustaining the Commonwealth's climate goals. The Commonwealth, through various programs and agencies, deploys significant public funding to support the development and scaling of education and workforce programs for clean energy occupations. Although many of these programs fully cover tuition costs for participants and sometimes offer living stipends, many prospective participants forgo training or struggle to complete training programs due to cost-of-living barriers. These barriers can also impact job placement and retention for those participants who complete training but may struggle to transition to employment settings, which often offer fewer or no support.

The creation of a dedicated fund with the capability to provide zero-interest, zero-fee loans for living expenses and tuition gaps could help participants access and persist in high-quality training for in-demand climate careers like HVAC/R technicians, electricians, energy auditors, and EV mechanics, by flexibly covering individuals' specific needs. The Massachusetts Climate Careers Fund as proposed by Social Finance would represent a first-of-its-kind fund that not only could help build a robust skilled workforce that drives economic growth for the Commonwealth and advance the Commonwealth's climate objectives, but also could serve as a blueprint for other states aiming to accelerate the clean energy transition and invest in economic opportunity. Given its track record of successfully collaborating with public and private sector entities to establish funds analogous to the Fund in other sectors, MassCEC believes Social Finance is uniquely qualified to establish the Fund.

MassCEC is posting this Notice rather than conducting a full grant solicitation process because MassCEC believes this opportunity represents the best value and is utilizing this notice posting to ensure that the process is open, fair, and competitive.

The intent of this posting is to determine if there are any other interested and qualified entities prepared to make a comparable or better offer. Any such entities must submit documentation that they can provide a comparable or better offer.

4. INSTRUCTIONS

All interested offerors must submit a response to this notice containing evidence of their qualification and interest.

To apply, Applicants should follow the below steps:

- 1) Review this Notice of Intent to Fund to develop an understanding of the justification and proposed program;
- 2) Review *Powering the Future: A Massachusetts Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment*²;
- 3) Submit any questions about this Notice of Intent to fund to rfpworkforce@masscec.com by June 11, 2025 and review answers to any potential applicant questions, which will be regularly added to the Q&A section of the notice of intent webpage;
- 4) Develop a proposal submission that demonstrates the ability of the Applicant to provide a program that would represent a comparable or better value

² Workforce Needs Assessment can be accessed at <https://www.masscec.com/resources/massachusetts-clean-energy-workforce-needs-assessment>

- 5) Submit a complete application by June 20, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time via email to the contact address below. Responses will not be accepted after the deadline. Email submissions should contain the subject line “Best Value Grant Notice of Intent – Massachusetts Climatetech Careers Fund – [Respondent Entity Name]”.

A complete application must include:

1. Full contact information about the lead applicant, including address, phone number, and email address
2. A thorough overview of the program proposed, including organizational qualifications, approach to climatetech workforce development, and leveraged funds that will support the execution of the program.
3. General scope of work detailing the proposed project stages, timelines, and key outcomes.
4. Annual organizational operating budget, including the lead applicant’s revenue and expenses, as well as top-level expense categories such as salaries, operational expenses, and administrative overhead
5. Proposed project budget that includes a standard line-item project budget representing the full term of the proposed project, including staff salaries, direct program costs, subcontracting costs, indirect costs, and fringe costs. Each line item should include rates and units/quantities, as well as detailed narratives that align with the proposed activities. Detailed subcontractor budgets must be included for any subcontractors receiving over \$25,000 or responsible for conducting a core part of the proposed program
6. Three references that can attest to the applicant’s ability to execute the proposed program

If, after the posting deadline has passed, interest is generated by this Notice, MassCEC will review all Responses and will determine whether they will:

- (i) withdraw the notice and not accept the Offeror’s offer (and cancel the Notice of Intent) or
- (ii) accept the offer from the Offeror or
- (iii) accept an offer from another Respondent offering a comparable or better value than the Offeror in their Response.

Contact Information:

Jennifer Applebaum
Workforce Development Department
Massachusetts Clean Energy Center
294 Washington Street, Suite 1150
Boston, MA 02108
rfpworkforce@masscec.com

5. SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

The Opportunity

The Commonwealth, through programs administered by MassCEC and the Executive Offices of Education and Workforce and Labor Development, deploys significant public funding to support the development and scaling of education and workforce programs for clean energy occupations. Though

many of these programs fully cover costs of tuition for participants, and sometimes offer living stipends, many prospective participants forgo training or opt out of education due to cost-of-living barriers. The creation of a dedicated fund with the capability to provide 0% interest, no origination fee loans for living expenses and tuition gaps could help participants access and persist in high-quality training for in-demand climate careers like HVAC/R technicians, electricians, energy auditors, and EV mechanics, by flexibly covering individuals' specific needs.

The Social Finance Offer

Overview

Social Finance proposes to partner with MassCEC to fund a \$10 million pilot phase of the Massachusetts Climate Careers Fund (the "Fund") to be launched in 2025. Social Finance asks MassCEC to commit \$5 million in the form of a conditional grant to the Fund. In conjunction with the Commonwealth's funding commitment, Social Finance will utilize its resources, experience, and expertise to unlock a 1x or greater philanthropic match. To date, Social Finance has engaged national and local foundations, corporate philanthropies, and family offices and has secured both confirmed and pending commitments for the Fund.

The Fund will provide 0% interest, no origination fee loans for living expenses and tuition gaps to participants engaged in high-quality training for in-demand climate careers. The grant funds from MassCEC would be used exclusively to fund loans to eligible Massachusetts borrowers and would not be used to fund any operational or administrative expenses of Social Finance or of the Fund. All operational and administrative expenses of the Fund will be covered by philanthropic funds.

Fund Design

Social Finance proposes, through the Fund, to facilitate partnerships with a variety of training providers, including community colleges and other Title IV institutions, vocational and technical schools, community-based organizations, and unions – serving residents across the Commonwealth. Loans would be made available only to eligible individuals enrolled in pre-selected training programs approved by MassCEC preparing individuals for jobs in the climatetech sector. Loan applicants will be required to provide: documentation of their enrollment in an eligible training program; an identity document that demonstrates they are above the age of majority and reside in Massachusetts; Social Security Number or documentation that demonstrates authorization to work in the United States; and self-attestation of family income below 75% of the state median by family size. We anticipate that, if a grant is awarded to Social Finance, the parties would later sign a grant agreement describing how eligibility would be determined in greater detail.

Under the terms of the loans, participants who do not achieve employment success will have the opportunity to benefit from certain downside protection features. Those earning below a minimum income threshold (i.e., annualized earnings of at least \$47,000) will be eligible to apply for income-based deferment of their loan payments. Unlike with traditional loans, participants will only be required to repay if they achieve successful outcomes, and any loan repayments from participants would be recycled by the Fund to finance additional individuals. To support job placement and retention, the Fund will engage employers who may provide loan repayment assistance for those they employ and retain. Borrowers who remain in good standing at the end of their initial loan repayment term (which varies by loan size, up to a maximum of 60 months) will be eligible for loan forgiveness of their remaining loan balance. The Fund will implement servicing policies that limit negative impacts to borrowers in

delinquency or default and does not anticipate engaging the services of any third-party debt collection agencies to recover outstanding debts from defaulted borrowers.

Fund Structure

The Fund will be operated via a special purpose vehicle with the benefit of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. The initial disbursement of grant funds from MassCEC would include start-up capital of \$250,000 plus an amount equivalent to the philanthropic funding raised to date that is subject to binding funding commitments. Subsequent disbursements of grant funds from MassCEC, up to a cumulative total of \$5 million, would be provided as additional funds are raised from philanthropic funders that are subject to binding funding commitments. In the event the Fund has not raised binding commitments of \$5 million or greater from philanthropic donors and commenced lending by June 30, 2027, MassCEC will have the right to terminate the grant agreement. In the event the Fund ceases operations prior to deploying the full amount of grant funding from MassCEC, the Fund will return all unobligated public funds to MassCEC.

The Fund will not have a specified term of operations and is intended to operate on an ongoing basis as a revolving fund. The pilot stage of the Fund is anticipated to deploy \$10 million over a five-year investment period. Under its proposal, Social Finance would commit to using its best efforts to deploy the initial committed capital efficiently in order to maximize the recycling of funds. The 2,800 individuals the Fund anticipates serving in the pilot phase represents 40% more individuals than could be served without a repayment component that provides a pay-it-forward benefit and expands the impact of the Fund. As the Fund scales over time, the number of individuals served would increase dramatically as a portion of the original funds are recycled more times and continue to provide resources to more participants. For example, at \$20 million, the Fund is anticipated to support 6,000 individuals, representing an increase of 50% more individuals than could be served without a repayment component.

Post-launch Fund Management

Following the launch of the Fund, Social Finance will actively track key programmatic and impact metrics (e.g., enrollment, completion, job placement, income gains, repayment compliance) to assess the effectiveness of program partners and the outcomes experienced by participants. Furthermore, Social Finance proposes to leverage the robust operational infrastructure it has built across its portfolio of workforce funds to perform key fund management responsibilities, including: fiscal administration of public and philanthropic funds to hold and deploy funds for loans and associated operating expenses; in-depth financial reporting to funders and government stakeholders, including annual independent audits (with audited financials to be provided to MassCEC annually); regulatory compliance and risk management, including monitoring new regulatory developments; and facilitation of governance meetings with fund partners to assess and improve program operations and with an executive steering committee to explore and implement strategic shifts in program design or policy. The Fund will engage service providers (e.g., originators, servicers, banks, custodians, auditors) on an arms-length and commercially reasonable terms and no service providers will be affiliated with Social Finance. Any service providers required to be licensed to provide services to the Fund in Massachusetts will be duly licensed and in good standing in Massachusetts.

Social Finance also anticipates sharing learnings from the Climate Careers Fund with external audiences to help drive increased investment in innovative financing models to support education and workforce development.

About Social Finance

Social Finance is a national nonprofit organization and a Securities and Exchange Commission registered investment adviser (SF Advisors, LLC) with over a decade of experience designing and managing complex, long-term partnerships and investments in collaboration with the public, private, and social sectors. Since its founding in 2011, Social Finance has mobilized more than \$400 million in new investments designed to help people and communities realize improved outcomes in economic mobility, health, and housing. These investments include several place-based and/or sector-based workforce funds similar in structure and design to the Massachusetts Climate Careers Fund. For example, Social Finance designed and continues to manage the New Jersey Pay It Forward Program, which launched in 2021 in partnership with the State of New Jersey and the New Jersey CEO Council to prepare individuals for in-demand jobs in the healthcare, IT, and clean energy sectors. Initially launched with \$5 million of state funding and \$4.8 million of corporate philanthropy from eight CEO Council companies, the New Jersey Pay It Forward Program has increased in size to \$24.1 million with additional annual contributions from the state. Social Finance is leveraging best practices and lessons learned from the New Jersey program and other similar workforce funds in designing the Massachusetts Climate Careers Fund.

6. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified in 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 Notice of Intent to Fund. If confidential information is submitted as part of the application and not clearly marked as confidential, such information may be made publicly available by MassCEC without further notice to the Applicant.

DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

This Notice of Intent to Fund 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 a modification of the application, negotiate with all qualified Applicants, cancel or modify the notice in part or its entirety, or change the application guidelines when it is in MassCEC's best interests.

NOTICE OF INTENT DELIVERY METHOD

This Notice of Intent has been posted in "MassCEC Funding" section of MassCEC's public website at <https://www.masscec.com/funding>. It is the responsibility of every Respondent to check MassCEC's website for any addenda or modifications to Response requirements. MassCEC accepts no liability and will provide no accommodations to Respondents who fail to check for amended requirements and submit inadequate or incorrect Responses