



Request for Proposals: Equity Workforce Training,
Equipment, and Infrastructure FY24 Grants
MASSCEC-WFD-11292023

Date of Issue: November 29, 2023
Proposals Due: January 19, 2024 and May 15, 2024

Anticipated Available Funding: \$10,750,000

All proposals must be submitted to
rfpworkforce@masscec.com
by 11:59 on January 19, 2024 and 11:59 pm on May 15,
2024

I. SUMMARY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is offering Equity Workforce Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure Grants (“Equity Training Grants”). The Equity Training Grants will increase access to modern, relevant training equipment and infrastructure and provide direct funding and technical assistance support to organizations that can build and scale career pathways leading to climate-critical priority occupations for:

- 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”).

Please refer to Section IV of this RFP for more complete definitions of the target populations.

Applicants may apply for Equity Training Grants for programming that falls within one (1) 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, Career Navigation, and Preparedness; or
- **Strand C:** Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training.

Depending on the type of request, applicants may apply for Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to One Million and Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,200,000) in funding for work completed over a period of one (1) to three (3) years.

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

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

Funds for Strand A and B of this program will be expended from Equity Workforce Training Funds, initially created through the March 2021 Climate Legislation, *An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy*¹ and re-defined by the August 2022 Climate Legislation, *An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind*.²

¹ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter8>

² <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter179>

Funds for Strand C of this program will be expended from certain federal funding made available to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”). Please see Section XIII below, regarding contracting requirements for more information.

II. 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 to promote the equitable distribution of clean energy's health and economic benefits and support a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry. MassCEC strives to lead and innovate in equitable clean energy and climate solutions.

III. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

Equity Workforce Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure Goals:

This solicitation is intended to help 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. These funds will enable applicants to:

- **Recruit 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** to explore and enter climate-critical priority occupations.
- **Create new and/or expand technical and job readiness training opportunities** to provide the skills necessary to attain placement in climate-critical priority occupations.
- **Develop and nurture new relationships with employers** in climate-critical sectors to develop job placements and identify avenues for career growth.
- **Establish and grow wraparound and retention support services** to address social and economic barriers and increase the likelihood of long-term career success.
- **Address common barriers to equitable access** to climate-critical careers through more intentional career awareness and navigation support.

- **Expand the availability and/or effectiveness** of climate-critical training by securing modern equipment and infrastructure resources for their programming.

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

- **Determining Occupational Focus** – Awardees must provide programming that prepares participants to enter and succeed in occupations critical to the Commonwealth achieving 2030 emission goals and net zero emissions in 2050. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the Massachusetts Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment, available at <https://www.masscec.com/resources/massachusetts-clean-energy-workforce-needs-assessment>, to identify and consider anticipated priority occupations.
- **Defining and Targeting Living Wages** – To advance Massachusetts’ clean energy workforce equity goals, applicants should design programming that expands workforce development pipelines and provides long-term economic stability to participants in the form of careers that offer living wages³. Certain climate-critical priority occupations start at lower hourly wages. However, they may still be appropriate target occupations for this program if they enable expedited entry into high-growth career pathways, so long as they offer wages more in line with living wages within a reasonable timeframe of six (6) to twelve (12) months.
- **Providing Transparent Career Fit Counseling** – To ensure the long-term success of training participants, potential recruits should be interested and able to work in the target occupations. Recruits should be aware of the job description, duties, work environment, requirements, salary range, and potential career pathway before applying for and enrolling in the program.
- **Designing and Delivering Quality Training** – Applicants who are in the process or intend to develop training curricula are encouraged to reach out to MassCEC to determine the availability of quality curricula to use as exemplars or as the basis for customization. Additionally, skills training should be informed by employer input and differentiated to meet the learning needs of the participant population.
- **Addressing Barriers** – From the initial outreach all the way through retention services, applicants are encouraged to design programming that mitigates barriers. Strong outreach plans will include ways to connect with individuals who may be difficult to reach via traditional avenues due to various factors, such as language barriers, lack of digital access, and distrust/cultural stigmas. Members of the target populations may lack prior support and experience to compete for initial job openings and advancement opportunities successfully. Thoughtful, engaging, accessible, and well-integrated work readiness or soft skill training components are critical to participant success. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to explore strategic usage of training stipends, paid on-the-job learning, and initial wage subsidies combined with ongoing mentorship and support service during the early period of placements.

³ The MIT Living Wage Calculator (<https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/25/locations>) is a helpful tool.

- Designing for Success** – Strong workforce development programs typically strive for at least 80% completion, 70% placement of participants in target occupations within thirty (30) days after completion, and 60% retention of participants in target occupations twelve (12) months after initial placement. For applicants seeking to serve participants with higher initial barriers, it is helpful to reference any comparable outcome data. In cases where the proposed target rates for a program are lower than 80%/70%/60%, applicants are encouraged to detail strategies and support that can lead to increased outcomes over the performance period of the grant.

Examples of Appropriate Programs:

MassCEC supports diverse approaches to achieving the goals of this solicitation. Some examples of appropriate proposed programs include, but are not limited to:

Strand	Examples
Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations	<p>A community college with an existing HVAC training curriculum works with an employer partner to develop an additional heat pump curriculum and partners with a community-based organization providing training stipends and wraparound support services to ensure that underserved individuals get access to the upskilled program.</p> <p>A for-profit solar energy company recognizes the need for more trained workers in customer service and installation roles, so it stands up an academy to provide this training. At the same time, the company engages local community-based organizations to ensure that underserved individuals from their constituent communities gain access to these career pathways.</p>
Strand B: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Navigation, and Preparedness	<p>A community-based organization that historically specializes in providing social services designs an awareness program with a parallel training pipeline to increase the number of disconnected youths from its underserved communities enter a retrofit training program offered by a local vocational high school, where there is a formalized partnership with the vocational school and placement pathways.</p> <p>A nonprofit with a history of providing career exploration programming to low-income and EJ communities through in-school and out-of-school time activities applies to integrate greater exposure to climate-critical career paths and relevant employer partners into their programming.</p>

<p>Strand C: Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training</p>	<p>A vocational high school with an existing auto technician training program proposes the equipment needed to expand their training to include preparation on electric vehicle repairs.</p> <p>The training center associated with a labor union focused on a climate-critical trade proposes additional equipment and access to an online training platform that will expand their apprentices’ knowledge of and exposure to new technology critical to the state’s decarbonization plans.</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 XIII: Disclaimer & Waiver Authority of this Solicitation regarding MassCEC’s discretion to accept or reject applications.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Environmental Justice Neighborhoods: Defined by the [Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs \(EEA\), Environmental Justice Policy](#) as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau census block group data for minority criteria, and American Community Survey (ACS) data for state median income and English isolation criteria) that meet one (1) or more of the following criteria:

- the annual median household income is not more than sixty-five percent (65%) of the statewide annual median household income;
- minorities comprise forty percent (40%) or more of the population;
- twenty-five percent (25%) or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
- minorities comprise twenty-five (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 and 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.
 - “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.
 - “English isolation” refers to households that are English Language Isolated according to federal census forms or do not have an adult over the age of fourteen (14) that speaks only English or English very well.
 - To see census block groups that meet the Environmental Justice definition, see [Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#).

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.

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

Climate Critical Priority Occupations: Occupations critical to the Commonwealth achieving 2030 emissions goals and net zero emissions in 2050. Applicants are encouraged to consult the MassCEC Clean Energy Needs Assessment, and the companion data workbook, both available at <https://www.masscec.com/resources/massachusetts-clean-energy-workforce-needs-assessment> for a comprehensive detailing of climate critical priority occupations. The list below provides examples of Climate-Critical occupations by MassCEC focus area. Applicants are welcome to make a case for additional occupations not listed here.

- High-Performance Building Sector Occupations (for retrofit and new construction): Electricians and Electrical Contractors with expertise in building service upgrade, knob, and tube removal and/or heat pumps; Insulation Workers; Weatherization Crew Chiefs and Supervisors; Energy Auditors; HERS Raters; HVAC/R Technicians with heat pump expertise; Carpenters and Construction Laborers; Hazardous waste removal specialists (especially for asbestos and vermiculite removal); Building Operators/Maintenance Mechanics; Plumbers and Pipefitters; Customer Service Representatives.
- Offshore Wind Occupations: Installation, Maintenance and Repair Workers; Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters; Wind Turbine Service Technicians; Metal and Plastic Workers, Assemblers and Fabricators; Customer Service Representatives.
- Net Zero Grid Occupations: Electricians and Electrical contractors specializing in solar, battery storage, grid upgrade, or time of use metering; Electric Power Line Installers and Repairers; Customer Service Representatives.
- Transportation Sector Occupations: Electricians and Electrical Contractors specializing in vehicle charging infrastructure; Automotive Technicians and Repairers with experience in electric vehicle maintenance or large vehicle retrofit; Logisticians and Fleet Managers; Customer Service Representatives.

V. 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 are jointly applying, one party should take on the role of leading 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 applicant (“Partner Applicant”) and listed in Section 1.1 of Attachment 2. Application Form. MassCEC may request further information about the qualifications of Partner Applicants 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 8 of Attachment 2 and indicate their past experience.

The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, the 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 CBOs) 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.
- Community Colleges, Colleges, or Universities, Comprehensive and Vocational High Schools, and Vocational Schools offering an after-hours or Career Technical Initiative evening training program.
- For-Profit entities such as for-profit training companies, trade associations, unions or other coalitions of businesses, clean energy installers, energy efficiency or home performance contractors, financial institutions, or other clean energy practitioners.
- Workforce Development Organizations, both non-profit and for-profit.
- MassHire Workforce Investment Boards and Career Centers.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Lead Applicants must have a Massachusetts office or staffing.
- Lead Applicant is currently in good standing with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and can provide a Certification of Good Standing (COGS)⁴. Please note that community

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dor-certificate-of-good-standing-andor-corporate-tax-lien-waiver-faqs>

colleges, public vocational-technical high schools, and public state universities serving as the lead applicant do not need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing.

- Applicants to Strand C must have received an Equity Workforce award before or submit a Strand A application to this current round. Interested entities unable to meet this requirement are encouraged to apply to the Climate-Critical Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure grant.
- Applicants are also eligible to apply for MassCEC’s Equity Workforce Training Planning Grants and Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Support Grants, so long as those applications are separate and distinct efforts from this Equity Workforce Training Implementation Grant application.
- 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.

VI. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding a total of \$10,750,000 in funds through the two deadlines being offered to applicants, with funds available until expended.

Grant Strand	Award Range	Duration Options
Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations	\$200,000-\$1,200,000	One (1) to Three (3) year award. (an additional year of post-program monitoring and metrics tracking is required after the proposed project is complete, so applicants should plan and budget for that obligation.)
Strand B: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Navigation, and Preparedness	\$50,000-\$600,000	One (1) to Three (3) year award. (an additional year of post-program monitoring and metrics tracking is required after the proposed project is complete, so applicants should plan and budget for that obligation.)
Strand C: Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training	\$50,000-\$750,000	One (1) year to Eighteen (18) month award.

At MassCEC’s discretion, applications for Equity Training Grants that are not detailed enough for initial award or need further development prior to implementation may be offered a planning grant or a capacity grant, and if funding is available, an opportunity to reapply in a later round of Equity Training Grants for implementation funds. Planning grants are intended

for the exploration, development, or refinement of innovative ideas for potential implementation initiatives to support individuals from target populations seeking to enter climate-critical occupations in the clean energy sector, while capacity grants are designed to enable organizations to add key capacity needed to support programming providing career pathway training or clean energy career awareness, exploration, navigation, or preparedness.

Additionally, MassCEC may elect to award a portion of Equity Training Grant funds requested by Applicants in their applications in the event a proposed project contains sufficient detail to merit an implementation grant versus a planning grant or capacity grant but does not have sufficient scope to justify the entire amount of the award requested by the applicant.

Depending on the structure of the final grant agreement, applicants may receive a portion of the funding upfront upon award. They will receive the remainder in amounts determined by the contract and terms agreed to by MassCEC and selected Applicants (see Attachment 4: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strands A & B and Attachment 5: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strand C: ARPA Funding, as examples). The sample agreement is provided as a resource, and MassCEC reserves the right to present awardees with grant agreements that differ from the example provided. Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application.

VII. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES:

For the Equity Workforce Training Implementation Grants, applicants must use funds to implement workforce development programs that lead to careers in the clean energy sector. Grant funds shall be used for activities including, but not limited to:

- Staff time devoted to the program, including outreach and recruitment, intake and assessment, training delivery, wraparound support services, job placement services, and retention services, or to general operating activities needed to launch and continue the program, where costs related to general operating do not exceed the stated indirect rate;
- Marketing, communications, and outreach activities related to recruitment for the program, such as design costs for marketing collateral, purchasing mass media spots, and website or social media costs;
- Subcontracting with training providers for curriculum delivery or with vendors providing specific training platforms or licensure testing services;
- Purchasing and installing specialized equipment and infrastructure for training;
- Leasing venue space, and other direct startup costs needed for training delivery;
- Training stipends and subsidized wages for on-the-job training/initial placements; and
- Supporting services to address barrier reduction, including transportation reimbursements, daycare subsidies, and equipment and gear subsidies.

Activities that are NOT eligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

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

VIII. ESTIMATED TIMELINE

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	November 29, 2023
Questions due to MassCEC via email to rfpworkforce@masscec.com	Ongoing through April 5, 2024
Questions with answers posted to the MassCEC website	Updated at least every month on the 2 nd Tuesday through April 5, 2024
Pre-Application Webinars	December 12, 2023, 3 pm March 12, 2024, 1 pm
Pre-Application Office Hours	TBA
Proposals Due	January 19, 2024, by 11:59 pm for review during February 2024 May 15, 2024, by 11:59 pm for review during May 2024
Interviews of Applicants (as needed)	TBD
Notification of Award	March 2024 if received by January 19, 2024 June 2024 if received by May 15, 2024

IX. 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/or utilize other informational resources offered (see below – Resources and Support for Potential Applicants).
4. Contact MassCEC with questions and/or 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 by 11:59 on January 19, 2024 or by 11:59 pm on May 15, 2024, with “Equity Workforce Training Implementation 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 Training Planning Grant Application Form
- Attachment 3: Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule
- Attachment 4: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strands A&B
- Attachment 5: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strand C: ARPA Funding

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 review and reference, unless the applicant is requesting changes to any of the language in the sample grant agreements; **if changes are requested to the grant agreement language, please note that in Section 11 of Attachment 2. Application Form and return an annotated version of Attachment 4 or 5, depending on which Strand you are applying to, as part of your application packet.** (Note: MassCEC has limited ability to change contract terms.) Supporting documents such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and Letters of Support 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.

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

1.1. Program Budget

On tab one (1), provide 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 described in Attachment 2. Application Form, and should not reflect lump sums for the associated tasks.** If multiple similar tasks are planned, each unique task with an assigned rate should be detailed on a separate line; for example, if two (2) different types of stipends are being offered to participants, each stipend should be reflected on a separate line under Support Services.

Applicants intending to designate Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) or more of the grant funds to a subcontractor for the work proposed must submit a separate detailed line-item budget for the subcontractors using a copy of the provided budget template, Attachment 3. Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule.

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. **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 invoices are preferred.**

Complete application submissions will be accepted through **11:59 PM EST on January 19, 2024** for review during February 2024 and **11:59 PM EST on May 15, 2024** for review during May 2024. Under no circumstances will MassCEC accept responses past the deadline. Awards will be made competitively and until available funds are expended.

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 is recommended. 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 that will provide program updates, including descriptions of potential applicants seeking part. Ifs if you are not on the Workforce listserv and would like to be added, email workforce@masscec.com.

MassCEC will offer a publicly accessible contact list of organizations seeking partnerships and their geographic and occupational 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 workforce@masscec.com or telephone Camilla Bacolod, Program Coordinator, at (617) 315-9319 to discuss accommodations.

X. SELECTION CRITERIA

All 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 had a strong track record serving the target population, demonstrated capacity for implementing workforce development programs, and a defined network of partners to provide comprehensive program services. • Applicants should highlight any history of providing unique or advanced approaches to program services.
<p><u>Target Occupations and Populations</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target occupations align with climate-critical occupations, and the target population(s) qualify under the terms of the grant. • The proposal demonstrates an understanding of both the assets and barriers that the target participants will bring to the training program. • The target occupation(s) are contextualized into multiple career pathways for advancement, and the proposed program provides direct or supported access to navigating these pathways.
<p><u>Employer and Industry Engagement</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants should maximize engagement with employer partners across the program, designing for their involvement at multiple junctures and using their guidance to ensure that proposed programming or equipment and infrastructure investment align with the current demands of the industry.
<p><u>Outcomes, Budget, Leveraged Resources, and Sustainability</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants propose strong outcomes, a program design that can achieve these outcomes, and data collection practices that support effective outcome tracking. • Applicants propose milestones, deliverables timelines, and resource allocations that align with programming and participant needs. • Applicants proposed budget results in a reasonable per-participant cost for the type and intensity of programming the applicant proposes. • Applicants demonstrate progress towards identifying appropriate funding supports to leverage in the initial award period and sustainable funding sources to continue programming beyond the grant period.
<p><u>Diversity of Approaches</u></p>	<p>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 the criteria for this but has not completed certification, applicants may offer a statement in this regard on the application form.</p> <p>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, etc.),</p> <p>Consideration may be given to proposals offering novel and impactful approaches to workforce development.</p>

Strand A: (Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations) will also be assessed on the following category:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Program Design</u> (<u>Training Delivery,</u> <u>Outreach, Support</u> <u>Services, Placement,</u> <u>Retention</u>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a comprehensive training plan with strong vocational and work readiness curricula designed to meet employer needs and maximize participant success. • Whenever possible, programs provide pathways to industry-recognized credentials or licenses and/or articulated higher education credits. • Training delivery models embrace innovative and proven strategies to increase participant success (e.g., on-the-job training at the employer’s location, pre-apprenticeships, virtual reality to maximize hands-on training time, etc.). • The program design includes case management and support services tailored to meet participant needs and promote completion, retention, and advancement. • Applicants have a comprehensive placement strategy that includes dedicated job development staff through the leader applicant or partner, employer partners with provided letters of support or MOUs, transparent communication with employers about the assets and barriers of the participant population, and alignment between training elements and potential employment placements.
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Strand B: (Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Navigation, and Preparedness) will also be assessed on the following category:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Program Design</u> (<u>Career Exploration,</u> <u>Navigation, and</u> <u>Support</u>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a comprehensive program design that incorporates relevant best practices for target population. • The program features a clear and thoughtful range of exposures and career pathway options, including clear access to next steps for participants. • Delivery models embrace innovative and proven strategies to increase participant success (e.g., work-based learning connected to employer partners). • The program design includes case management and support services tailored to meet participant needs and promote successful program participation and transition to next steps including training, internships, and direct employment.
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Strand C: (Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training) will also be assessed on the following category:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Program Impact on Training</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to increasing the availability/quality of climate-critical training in occupations indicated to have additional demand based on the Workforce Needs Assessment and/or through demonstrated employer demand. • Maximizes the increase of climate-critical skilled workers by increasing the number of students able to participate in an existing program or creating a new program to meet demonstrated demand. • Leads to the addition or significant improvement in the climate-critical skills supported by an existing training program, especially those that facilitate the reskilling or upskilling of workers/ trainees who would otherwise be focused on fossil-fuel technologies or non-high-performance building practices. • Demonstrates sustainability by showing evidence of the ability of the organization to sustain the training program after the initial award. • Leverages partnerships and resources by scoping a project that includes the input and collaboration of relevant stakeholders alongside additional funding from local, state, federal, and private funding. • Demonstrates a commitment to increasing access to environmental justice and disadvantaged communities and populations historically underrepresented in the target occupation. • Demonstrates capacity to manage the fiscal and administrative obligations associated with receiving federal funds.
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XI. 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 are in conformity to MassCEC standards prior to commencement of project work and disbursements of funding.

2. Attend Awardee Cohort Sessions and Training

Awardees will be required to send a representative to participate in regular webinars and meetings with other awardees from this round of the solicitation to check in, promote networking, synergize projects, share best practices, and overall strengthen the quality of the

workforce development ecosystem related to climate critical occupations. Cohort sessions and training sessions will be scheduled every quarter.

3. Consult with MassCEC Workforce Technical Assistance

MassCEC will provide technical assistance via staff with extensive workforce development and climate critical occupation-related experience and via the services of a subcontracted provider. Technical assistance will consist of guidance and support during implementation, networking opportunities and partnership development assistance, and promoting continuous improvement to ensure the success and quality of the programs. Technical assistance will be delivered on an ongoing and as-needed basis to be agreed upon between the technical assistance provider and awardee. Applicants are encouraged to consider the staff time required to participate fully when developing plans and budgets for proposed programming.

4. Provide Regular Reporting and Case Studies

MassCEC requires awardees to provide regular reports typically timed to coincide with scheduled invoices for payment, with a preference towards quarterly invoices and reports. Awardees will be asked to provide interim progress reports using templated forms and by attaching additional documentation for program-specific deliverables not captured within the templates. The templated reports capture general programmatic and participant data, including but not limited to demographic data, employment and wage data, dosage of service, and changes to status that signal progress towards program completion, placement, and retention.

MassCEC regularly features awardees in social media blog posts, reports, and other media. To facilitate these activities, awardees will be expected to provide case studies and the regular reports as agreed upon in the Scope of Work. At a minimum, case studies will be expected to include a one (1) page text description of a successful training participant and an appropriate accompanying picture, with additional information, statistics, and photographs potentially requested by the MassCEC Program Manager. It is anticipated that case studies will be required on at least an annual basis.

XII. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions on Equity Workforce Training Implementation Grants, please email rfpworkforce@masscec.com.

XIII. 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 RFP. If confidential information is submitted as part of the application and not clearly marked as confidential, such information may be made publicly available by MassCEC without further notice to the Applicant.

DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

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

This RFP has been distributed electronically using MassCEC's website. Applicants must 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 apply 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 for Strands A&B, and Attachment 5 for Strand C, that will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

PLEASE NOTE: Projects under Strand C will be funded through ARPA. Because of the federal funding behind the awards, Strand C projects will be subject to federal reporting and compliance requirements. Additionally, MassCEC is required to expend all ARPA funds awarded under Strand C prior to **December 31, 2026**, and therefore, will require final invoices to be submitted to MassCEC for these funds well in advance of the December 31, 2026 deadline. As a consequence of ARPA funding, there are federal pass-through requirements in the Sample Agreement in Attachment 5 that are unique to ARPA funding. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review all relevant provisions in the Sample Agreement in Attachment 5.

ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

Equity Workforce Training Implementation Grant (the “RFP”)

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the 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 have read and understand the RFP Requirements. The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that all of the terms and conditions of the RFP are mandatory.

The undersigned and each 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 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.

Applicant: _____

(Printed Name of Applicant)

By: _____

(Signature of Applicant or Authorized Representative)

Title: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 2: APPLICATION FORM

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 3: BUDGET AND PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 4: SAMPLE AGREEMENT FOR STRANDS A&B

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 5: SAMPLE AGREEMENT FOR STRAND C: ARPA FUNDING

Attached separately