



Request for Proposals: Climate-Critical Underrepresented
Business Support Grants FY26
MASSCEC-WFD-10152026

Date of Issue: December 1, 2025
First Deadline: January 16, 2026
Proposals Due: April 17, 2026

Anticipated Funding Available: \$6,050,000.00

All proposals must be submitted to:
CUBSBusinessSupport@masscec.com
by 11:59 pm ET on January 16, 2026
by 11:59 pm ET on April 17, 2026

1. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) announces the availability of funding under the second Climate-Critical Underrepresented Business Support (“CUBS”) grants Request for Proposals (“RFP”). Funded through the Equity Workforce Program, the CUBS Grants program builds upon the foundation established by MassCEC’s Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprise (“MWBE”) Support Grants, expanding services through a Hub-and-Spoke service model (“Hub and Spoke”), regional coordination, and sector-specific business pathways.

CUBS Grants fund initiatives that assist Massachusetts-based MWBEs and other underrepresented businesses (“Underrepresented Businesses”) entering and expanding in fields that are critical to meeting the Commonwealth’s climate goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. New and expanding Underrepresented Businesses focused on the design, manufacture, installation, and maintenance of clean energy and decarbonization projects are crucial to meeting the Commonwealth’s climate goals. These businesses put climate solutions into practice, foster environments that attract and support a diversified workforce, and pave the way to an equitable energy transition for environmental justice communities.

Underrepresented Businesses face barriers to entry and growth. Regardless of sector, Underrepresented Businesses are denied access to capital at a much higher rate, face selection bias for projects, and often start with less personal wealth and social capital—all of which exacerbate the challenges that all businesses face during their start-up and early growth phases.

The MassCEC Equity Workforce Program aims to address these inequities through a phased rollout of a hub-and-spoke program delivery model in each of the seven (7) Workforce Skills Cabinet Regions¹. This approach supports Underrepresented Businesses in accessing a consistent baseline suite of services—including guidance and technical assistance to navigate clean energy contracting and procurement opportunities—no matter where they are located across the state. The Hub and Spoke model offers a framework for statewide consistency and coordination and enables a unified marketing and outreach approach to enhance the activity of all grantees, while retaining flexibility for regional adaptability. Recognizing the complexity of supporting lasting infrastructure, MassCEC will support a phased rollout of the model, allowing for geographic expansion and model alignment leading to full regional coverage anticipated by FY27. Hub grants have already been awarded in the Greater Boston and Pioneer Valley regions through the first CUBS solicitation. MassCEC seeks applications to establish Hubs in the remaining five (5) workforce regions. Planning grants were awarded in three (3) of those

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/wsc-regional-map/download>.

regions during the prior round to organizations exploring establishing Hubs in those regions, however other qualified applications demonstrating program designs with workforce and economic development best practices will be considered in those regions. Applicants applying for Berkshire and Cape & Islands regions may be viewed more favorably to ensure representation in all regions and equitable geographic coverage.

Through this CUBS RFP, eligible grant applicants (“Applicants”) can submit proposals under one of three (4) distinct strands:

- Strand A: Serve as the primary regional service provider of core business support services and as regional coordinating lead organization (“Hub”) aligned with one (1) of the seven (7) Workforce Skills Cabinet Regions;
- Stand B: Deliver specialized additional services designed to overcome sector-specific barriers or to address the unique needs of a particular type of underrepresented business in one or multiple regions (“Spoke”); or
- Strand C: Serve as a Spoke supporting the Contractor Development Pathway, which supports the diversification and growth of the Mass Save® Contractor and Vendor ecosystem.
- Stand D: Develop a Plan or Capacity to prepare for Implementation or to Run a Pilot Focused on Climate-Critical Underrepresented Business Support

If responding to more than one Strand, Applicants must submit a separate stand-alone application for each. Depending on the Strand, Applicants may apply for Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$800,000.00) in funding for work completed over a period of six (6) months to three (3) years. Details about the range of acceptable funding requests across the various grant options are outlined in Section 4: Funding Available. Details about the application process are outlined in Section 8: How to Apply.

To solidify the regional ecosystem, awarded Hubs and Spokes serving the same workforce region will be required to execute Memoranda of Understanding (“MOU”) at the beginning of the grant period to establish cross-referral process agreements including, but not limited to, ongoing case management and performance reports. All awarded grantees will be required to report monthly on agreed-upon performance metrics, including participant-level outputs and outcomes, and must demonstrate progress against at least one of the following metrics at regular intervals: vendor registration, capital or financing acquired, contracts won, revenue growth, staffing growth, businesses founded, or other positive performance metric approved by MassCEC.

Funds for this program will be expended from Equity Workforce Training Funds. Should additional relevant funds become available through the Equity Workforce Fund or other

sources, MassCEC may add funding to this RFP. This RFP is posted on the MassCEC website and MassCEC reserves the right to post revisions to solicitation documents prior to March 13, 2026.

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 committed to incorporating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all aspects of our work in order to promote the equitable distribution of the health and economic benefits of clean energy and support a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry. MassCEC strives to lead and innovate in equitable clean energy and climate solutions.

3. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

Funds for 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* and re-defined by the August 2022 Climate Legislation, *An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind*². The Act allocates funding to MassCEC to support:

- Small business enterprises that are minority- and women-owned;
- 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; and
- Other businesses or communities underrepresented in the clean energy workforce or clean energy industry.

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

The Workforce Equity Program seeks to spur market development by increasing Underrepresented Business clean-energy expertise, business activity, and revenue while fostering workforce development and long-term sustainability in clean-energy industries. Initiatives funded under this RFP are not intended to support one (1) or a very-limited number of Underrepresented Businesses and are instead intended to deliver support services and training programs to a broad group of Underrepresented Businesses relative to the amount of funding awarded.

CUBS grants are intended to effect measurable high-impact outcomes that advance equitable business growth in Massachusetts' clean energy economy. Funded initiatives are expected to demonstrate strong performance against key metrics including but not limited to increased access to capital and financing, expanded participation in clean energy procurement pathways, improved workforce development outcomes, and enhanced business readiness. By aligning grantee activities with clearly defined outputs and outcomes, MassCEC aims to ensure that investments lead to durable business-support infrastructure supporting underrepresented businesses in climate-critical sectors. All grantees will be expected to submit regular performance reports—including participant-level data—in accordance with MassCEC reporting requirements. At a designated point during the grant period, grantees will be required to transition to a centralized, online reporting portal. MassCEC will provide reasonable notice and technical assistance in advance of this transition.

Proposed initiatives may include supporting Underrepresented Businesses in obtaining Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) certification or similar credentials, delivering tailored administrative and back-office services to improve operational efficiency, and offering targeted financial planning and business coaching. Programs may also focus on equipping Underrepresented Businesses with procurement-readiness training, including bid preparation and vendor identification, while facilitating connections with clean-energy procurement opportunities. Additionally, initiatives should aim to strengthen existing Underrepresented Businesses by providing industry-specific training, workforce development resources, and capacity-building services to enhance competitiveness in clean energy and climate-critical sectors.

While activities supporting incremental business growth and capacity development such as credential-based progress are valued, Applicants should also propose supports that result in measurable business success outcomes. Proposals that move underrepresented businesses closer to, or result, in executed contracts, increased revenue, or verified market entry into clean-energy procurement pipelines will be viewed more favorably.

Climate-Critical Underrepresented Business Support (CUBS) Program Goals:

- Increase the number of MWBE and Underrepresented Businesses that successfully compete for and secure contracts in climate-critical business fields;
- Increase expertise of MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses in climate-critical business fields;
- Grow employment and revenue of existing MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses that operate in climate-critical business fields and continue long-term sustainability and growth strategies;
- Create new MWBE and Underrepresented Business firms in climate-critical fields and support healthy long-term growth of those firms;
- Bridge gaps in existing support systems for MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses, ensuring alignment with broader clean-energy workforce and economic development initiatives;
- Develop tailored business pathways supporting MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses unique needs and capacity levels;
- Strengthen the small Underrepresented Businesses that make up a significant portion of the climate-critical employer base; and
- Align with MassCEC-funded career pathway training programs by supporting MWBE and Underrepresented Businesses market development leading to growth of openings for occupations targeted by those training programs.

These goals will be achieved through the coordination and targeted service delivery enabled by the Hub and Spoke model, a strategic evolution in MassCEC's approach to supporting Underrepresented Businesses to achieve business readiness and success through climate-critical business pathways. This model is designed to balance centralized, statewide goals with localized service delivery fostering economic and skills development in all regions of the Commonwealth – Berkshire, Pioneer Valley, Central, Northeast, Greater Boston, Southeast, and Cape & Islands regions.

The Hubs and Spokes within each of workforce regions will be required to operate as an integrated network to support Underrepresented Businesses in the clean energy sector within that region. The designated Hub within a workforce region will be required to sign a memorandum of understanding ("MOU") with each Spoke selected by MassCEC establishing cross-referral processes and standards. See Attachment 6: Sample Memorandum of Understanding. By coordinating service delivery through each Hub, grantees within each region will be better positioned to centralize and share resources, provide consistent service, rollout collaborative recruitment and engagement efforts, and consolidate data and research for evaluation and continuous improvement. More structured coordination will better position grantees to ensure that underrepresented businesses receive comprehensive support

throughout the entire service journey and do not fall through the cracks when referred between business support programs.

For the purposes of this program, climate-critical business pathways refer to the sectors, services, and supply chains essential to achieving the Commonwealth’s mandated climate goals including renewable energy generation (solar and offshore wind), decarbonization, electrification, grid modernization, energy efficiency, clean transportation, and climate resilience. This includes businesses engaged in the design, manufacture, installation, servicing, and maintenance of clean energy systems such as high-performance building retrofits; clean heating and cooling systems (e.g. heat pump installation); solar installation; battery storage; electrical work; high-performance construction; and clean transportation infrastructure (electric vehicle “EV” charging) and EV maintenance. Climate-critical pathways also encompass the businesses that offer administrative and logistical services to enable the deployment of clean energy technologies such as contract or full-service manufacturers.

The CUBS program prioritizes pathways that expand equitable access to economic opportunity through the climate-critical trades, creating pipelines for Underrepresented Business to secure contracts, scale their skilled trades workforce, and maintain a long-term presence in the clean energy transition. Additionally, to ensure that investments of Equity Workforce funding into the Hub and Spoke ecosystem drives impact and market development in the clean energy sector, inclusive of the goals of the parallel career pathway training funding investments, Applicants proposing to support Underrepresented Businesses that employ workers that are directly involved in the design, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of clean energy and decarbonization projects and fall within the highest growth climate-critical occupations may be viewed more favorably. While growth is projected across 144 climate-critical occupations, 65% of the occupational growth is anticipated across twenty (20) occupations. See the “Program Definitions” section for additional climate-critical occupational data.

Key Considerations in Program Design

While by no means exhaustive, the list below highlights relevant best practices and design considerations:

- **Determine climate-critical business pathways.** Awardees must provide programming that prepares Underrepresented Businesses to enter and succeed in climate-critical sectors 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 demand. Based on current and continued demand, Applicants proposing support for businesses in clean heating

and cooling, electrification, and clean transportation may be viewed more favorably; these climate-critical sectors make up the largest portion of the needs assessment. However, Applicants proposing programming that supports other climate-critical sectors directly contributing to the design, manufacturing, installation and maintenance of clean energy projects are welcome and will be scored based on prior applicant success, program design, and responsiveness to regional market demands and barriers, with a lens towards the likelihood of program design leading to strong business outcomes.

- **To effectively address specific barriers to success**, strategies to support Underrepresented Businesses 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. Wraparound and Support Services that mitigate potential barriers for businesses success are viewed favorably by MassCEC. These services should be clearly identified within service plans as separate and distinct from Core and Additional business support services.
- **Support organizations can maximize impact by addressing both “supply” and “demand” needs.** For example, working with Underrepresented Businesses to ensure that they are certified by the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office has great impact 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, services, and resources to the specific types of Underrepresented Businesses that are to be served.** 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. Engagement of interested parties to inform a needs assessment process and model development can ensure that organizations have a clearer idea of whether offerings like incubators/accelerators, communities of practice, business advisory services, industry-specific programming, or other strategies are going to be the most beneficial.
- **Establish clear eligibility requirements and rigorous, transparent, and thorough intake and assessment processes.** Intake and assessment stages not only allow program administrators to check eligibility and gauge level of need, both in terms of support services and capital, but also serve as important touchpoints to set clear participation and reporting standards with participants that may impact long-term success.
- **Comprehensive support and wraparound services for program participants** can extend the capacity of Underrepresented Businesses to engage fully in proposed programming. Building these supports into the design and budget of the program in advance not only prioritizes the needs of the participants, but it also normalizes that business owners can be successful and still need additional

support in the form of access to transportation, childcare, 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 many categories and services. Therefore, it 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.
- **Research existing funding resources and opportunities available to Underrepresented Businesses** in the Commonwealth by identifying key financial institutions and organizations serving Underrepresented Businesses, ascertaining eligibility criteria and application processes, and gauging applicability to climate-critical Underrepresented Businesses.
- **Provide post-program supports** for at least one year including services such as advanced training, network access, referrals, or ongoing wraparound supports that promote long-term business growth.

Strand A: Goals and Expectations for Hubs

With this funding, MassCEC seeks organizations to serve as regional Hubs that will collectively provide baseline Core Services to Underrepresented Businesses across the Commonwealth and will serve as focal points in each region for recruiting and navigating Underrepresented Businesses to appropriate Spokes for additional services. Hubs serve as the primary public-facing entities responsible for raising awareness about the CUBS ecosystem and engaging interested parties in their designated region; as a central point of contact, grantees will offer regional coordination for outreach, intake, communication, and coordination of service referrals. Hubs have already been selected and assigned to the Greater Boston and Pioneer Valley regions under a prior RFP. This solicitation seeks applications for the remaining five (5) workforce skills cabinet regions: Berkshire, Cape & Islands, Central, Northeast, and Southeast.

Hubs are expected to provide a comprehensive core suite of services to Underrepresented Businesses located in or serving a defined workforce region. These Core Services are intended to expand participation in the climate-critical industries by helping Underrepresented Businesses transition to being “business ready” to secure clean energy contracts, access capital, scale operations, and contribute to the Commonwealth’s climate goals. Hubs must services and training within the major categories of: **Financial Planning, Operations, Management, Network Access, Business Development, and Certification Support**. Additionally, all Hubs are required to have at least one sector-specific strategy for clean energy **Procurement Access and Navigation** supports (“Procurement Services”) in their service model (see Table 1) to guide

Underrepresented Businesses through understanding, accessing, and securing contract opportunities in at least one defined climate-critical business pathway.

Table 1. Core Services and Examples, identifies the Core Service categories as well as program delivery examples. Note that the examples below are not a comprehensive list and other related activities may be acceptable.

Hub Core Services	<i>Examples</i>
☑ Financial Planning	Provide access to a consultant to support Bookkeeping and Accounting Host webinars and office hours on applying for Tax Savings and Incentives Provide resources to enable Access to Capital and Financing
☑ Operations	Help with Process Improvement such as streamlining reporting Assist with Regulatory and Legal Compliance such as filing tax reports Guide through Business Registration to attain incorporation
☑ Management	Assess Talent Recruitment processes to enable equitable labor recruitment Provide Human Resources support to ensure inclusive work environments Streamline Payroll and Benefits administration to reduce burden
☑ Network Access	Run procurement summits or workshops to promote Industry Relationship Building Nurture warm connections to increase Union, Municipal, Company Engagement Direct to relevant Networking Events Guide through market research to develop Market Strategy
☑ Business Development	Help set up sound processes for Customer Discovery Coach through Pitch Development Guide MWBEs through MWBE certifications (SDO, NMSDC, WBENC, etc.)
☑ Certification and Licensing	Assist businesses with general certifications (e.g., Veteran-owned, B Corp, etc.) Support businesses to self-represent as a DBE
☑ Procurement Access and Navigation	Identify business procurement readiness needs Build relationships with lead vendors or government agencies Develop onboarding recommendations to inform long-term procurement access.

Hubs are required to offer all Core Services and Procurement Services, but may subcontract with partners or third-party vendors, subject to the approval of MassCEC, to deliver elements of these services. Hubs that opt to subcontract any portion of Core and Procurement Services are still responsible for the administration, oversight, monitoring, and outcomes of those services and supports to ensure that participating Underrepresented Businesses attain “business readiness” or move significantly towards becoming “business ready” to compete and grow in the climate-critical sectors. Where Procurement Services—equitable contracting and sector-specific procurement access services—are outsourced, Applicants must demonstrate a clear plan for building clean energy expertise and internal programmatic capacity within the lead application organization, or include a clearly delineated scope of work that outlines partner roles and responsibilities, including how clean energy expertise will be integrated into the overall service workflow and program delivery.

Delivery of Core and Procurement Services by a Hub will be expected to result in a reasonable proportion of participating Underrepresented Businesses becoming “business ready” or making reasonable progress towards becoming “business ready” in relation to the service provided, per participant cost, and funding awarded. Generally, achieving “business ready” state will be signaled by those Underrepresented Businesses attaining one or multiple performance metrics such as inclusion on preferred vendor lists, attainment of licenses or certifications, or bids submitted. Since being “business ready” can vary depending on the procurement opportunity and/or clean energy sector targeted by the participating Underrepresented Business, Hubs will need to be prepared to offer services at varying levels responsive to the unique situation of each Underrepresented Business. Grantees will be expected to support “Business Ready” participants to attain business growth outcomes such as secured clean energy contracts, revenue/credit growth, or increase in employees.

Hubs will be expected to deploy a service plan to ensure successful administration of Core and Procurement Services. A service plan workflow will typically include, but not be limited to, marketing and outreach to recruit Underrepresented Businesses and engage procurement decisionmakers, managing referrals to and from Spokes, defined intake and assessment processes to assess eligibility, administering business assessments to tailor Services, delivery of Services and training, and post-program delivery follow-up to report participant outcomes and ensure attainment of performance metrics and continued success of Underrepresented Businesses, including referrals to Spokes when appropriate. Service plans will also clearly define anticipated

methods of delivery and dosages and staff and partner roles and responsibilities in relation to each component of the service workflow.

Hubs, acting as regional anchor, will:

- **Staff a known physical location** during established and publicized hours to provide in-person support to MWBEs and underrepresented businesses at least two days per week;
- Execute an MOUs with all assigned regional Spokes and **oversee and coordinate the bi-directional cross-referral system** with Spokes;
- Lead ongoing **case management and tracking** of Underrepresented Businesses in the cross-referral system to ensure that participants are retained and reach success;
- Collect and consolidate **performance metrics and reporting data** from Spokes into regional reports for submission to MassCEC;
- Coordinate with MassCEC and Spokes to implement **statewide marketing and outreach campaigns and regional marketing strategies** to enhance recruitment;
- Maintain close communication with MassCEC and Spokes to align with state-level goals and ensure that resource expenditures align with sub-sector needs;
- **Convene** partners, financial institutions, workforce representatives, economic development organizations, and Spokes to support state-level goals and continuous program improvement through convening, focus groups, and community workshops; and
- Directly provide **Procurement Navigation** services for at least one **clean energy sector**.

Hubs will be expected to have the staff capacity to effectively provide coordination and data collection across the designated workforce region and to undertake the ongoing case management to enable Underrepresented Businesses to fully realize the benefits of the regional cross-referral ecosystem. Hubs may collaborate with subcontracted partner organizations, to strengthen their administrative capacity.

Strand B: Goals and Expectations for Spokes

While Hubs will be required to provide Procurement Navigation services focused on at least one clean energy sector to ensure that Underrepresented Business clients have exposure to clean energy opportunities while utilizing the Hub, sector-specific Spokes play a critical role in addressing industry-specific barriers faced by Underrepresented Businesses. Spokes design customized, often high-touch, interventions that complement regional Hub services and accelerate business readiness and procurement success in a defined climate-critical sector. Applicants for Spoke funding must demonstrate a clearly defined approach to delivering additional specialized services (“Additional Services”) tailored to a specific climate-critical sector or a particular type of underserved business and must detail how proposed supports directly respond to unique challenges of the

requirements of the selected sector or the type of Underrepresented Business.

Applicants should articulate how the Spoke services will differ in scope, depth, or design from the broader, cross-sector Core Services offered by the Hubs and how the services will advance Underrepresented Businesses within the specific climate-critical business pathway or business model towards a clearly defined success goal.

Table 2. Examples of Additional Services from Spokes, identifies Additional Services as well as program delivery examples. Note that the example categories of Additional Services and supports below are not a comprehensive list and other activities may be considered for funding in alignment with proposed Spoke intervention and program goals.

Example Additional Services	<i>Example Supports</i>
Procurement Navigation	Assist with identifying and applying for appropriate clean energy Procurement Opportunities such as municipal bid to install electric vehicle (“EV”) chargers or support decarbonization municipal offices
	Guide through reaching Procurement Readiness for specific opportunities such as reaching certain revenue threshold and insurance coverage to qualify to bid on a major solar-installation project
	Provide direct Matchmaking and Networking with prime vendors to increase successful attainment of subcontracts to install heat pumps on building electrification projects
Certification and Licensing	Identify the certifications and licenses needed to support heat pump installation and whole home electrification service
	Connect to training to attain necessary certifications to run energy audits
	Provide industry-specific training to enable applying for a refrigerant license
Financial Planning ³	Offer bridge loans and microgrants to building retrofit contractors to ensure Access to Capital and Financing
	Run targeted workshops on the tax incentives offered to diverse solar installers
	Assist loan application to enable EV charger installers or geothermal drillers Access to Capital

³ Spokes focusing on Financial Planning services leading to Access to Capital and Financing will be required to adhere to the recommendations and best practices identified by the MassCEC Access to Capital grantees awarded in FY24.

	and Financing to obtain heavy equipment to trench
Business Development	Host summits involving procurement decisionmakers running largescale retrofit projects ensuring participant connections develop into procurements
	Provide warm introductions to procurement officials overseeing bids on fleet maintenance contracts
	Connect to industry-specific networks and alliances focused on solar energy

Like Hubs, Spokes will be expected to navigate a reasonable proportion of participating Underrepresented Businesses to reach “business ready” status and to carry a reasonable number of business ready participants to procurement success, thereby enhancing Hub services. Since most Spokes will be focused on sector-specific Procurement Navigation and other Additional Services directly contributing to successful procurements in climate-critical sectors, reasonable outcomes for Spokes will be focused more towards securing clean energy contracts and on success metrics signaling significant progress towards procurement success such as attainment of bonding or entry on a sector-specific preferred vendor list. Depending on the model and service plan of the Spoke, other performance metric categories may also signal success.

Like Hubs, Spokes will also be expected to deploy service plans designed to ensure Underrepresented Business participants enjoy the maximum benefits of the Additional Services. While some of the service plan components may be reliant on or supported by Hub activities, Spoke service plans should still include, but not be limited to, marketing and outreach for recruitment, management of cross-referrals from Hubs, defined eligibility criteria and intake processes, business assessments appropriate for the specific Additional Services, delivery of the Additional Services, and retention and follow-up. Spokes will also have established methods of delivery and dosages with assigned staff and partners for each step of the service plan.

A majority of the Underrepresented Businesses served by a Spoke must provide occupations within the highest growth climate-critical occupations to be considered eligible for services supported by funding from this solicitation. Similarly, the Additional Services provided by a Spoke must be focused on and around sector-specific Procurement Navigation leading to opportunities that support the highest growth climate-critical occupations. While highly tailored programs designed to support a specific type of Underrepresented Business will also be considered for funding, Applicants must clearly articulate how the approach differs from and

would enhance Core Services offered by the Hub and how participating businesses will be supported to access relevant clean energy supply chains and procurement opportunities.

While primary coordination across the workforce region will be provided by Hubs, Spokes will be expected to support coordinated efforts. While Spokes may operate independently in the design and delivery of specialized programming tailored to their target sector or target population, Spoke Applicants must demonstrate willingness to coordinate with the designated regional Hub including formal and informal communication channels, referral protocols, and shared strategies to avoid duplication and ensure regional participants have access to complementary supports. In addition to serving as specialized delivery agents focused on direct services and education to Underrepresented Businesses, Spokes will:

- Sign an MOU with the regional Hub to **take part in the cross-referral system** and refer participants to the Hub for Core Services when appropriate;
- Coordinate with the Hub to **ensure that cross-referred participants receive ongoing case management and tracking**;
- Report **performance metrics and reporting data** to both the Hub and MassCEC;
- Coordinate with MassCEC and Hubs to implement **statewide marketing and outreach campaigns and regional marketing strategies** to enhance recruitment;
- Maintain close communication with MassCEC and the Hub to ensure efforts align with state-level goals; and
- Participate in regional convenings and events led by the Hub.

Like Hubs, Spokes will be expected to have the staff capacity to administer the additional cross-referrals, case management, and collaborative participation and reporting necessary to participate in the Hub and Spoke ecosystem. Applicants are expected to demonstrate in-house clean energy expertise relevant to their proposed sector or business-type focus. If expertise is limited, Applicants must outline how they will partner with qualified, technical experts and build internal capacity to ensure delivery of industry-informed and industry-aligned services. Spokes may apply to support more than one region but will be expected to maintain the requisite staff capacity to coordinate with multiple Hubs and fulfill the reporting requirements and case load.

Stand C: Mass Save® Contractor Development Pathway Spoke

In addition to sector-specific Spoke roles, MassCEC seeks one or more Spokes to develop and administer a specialized Contractor Development Pathway supporting Underrepresented Businesses, predominantly energy efficiency contractors, entering Massachusetts' energy efficiency programs administered by Mass Save®. The 2025-2027 Mass Save® Three-Year Plan⁴

⁴ <https://www.masssave.com/-/media/Files/PDFs/Mass-2025-2027-Energy-Efficiency-Decarbonization-Plan.pdf>

specifically calls for supplier diversity, workforce development, and vendor and contractor training. In response, Contractor Development Pathway Spokes will create clearer pathways for Underrepresented Businesses to access and advance within the Mass Save® ecosystem while enhancing engagement through targeted communication, mentorship, and training.

Spokes in this Strand will be expected to support installation-ready MWBEs and other Underrepresented businesses in understanding and navigating opportunities within the Mass Save® contractor and vendor ecosystem, expanding business capacity for climate-critical services desired within the Mass Save® ecosystem (e.g. weatherization and insulation, heat pump installation, and building electrification), attaining vendor or contractor enrollment and approval status, and realizing the benefits and opportunities of the Mass Save® ecosystem. Contractor Development Pathway Spokes will be expected to deploy a suite of Additional Services responsive to the barriers faced by Underrepresented Businesses in the Mass Save® ecosystem including, but not limited to, technical assistance to successfully complete preferred vendor applications; training on Mass Save® incentives, incentive stacking, and communicating program offerings to customers; supporting development of value propositions and deployment of marketing and business development approaches to increase customer base; and facilitating networking and mentorship connections with Home Performance Contractors (“HPC”), lead vendors, and other procurement decisionmakers within the Mass Save® ecosystem.

As with the sector-specific Spokes, Spokes within the Contractor Development Pathway will be expected to deploy a service plan that clearly defines how Underrepresented Businesses will be supported with the Additional Services and should still include strategies for recruiting Underrepresented Businesses, management of cross-referrals from Hubs, established eligibility criteria and rigorous intake and assessment processes, business assessments appropriate for the Contractor Development Pathway, delivery of the Additional Services, and retention and follow-up. Spokes will also have established roles and responsibilities for each part of the service plan, both internally and for assigned partners, as well as clear dosages and timelines.

Contractor Development Pathway Spokes may also refer participants to regional Hubs for Core Services or training appropriately aligned to increasing access to and success within the Mass Save® ecosystem. Contractor Development Pathway Spokes will be expected to have the staff capacity to coordinate with the regional Hubs to avoid duplication, align business referrals, and share resources and data. Contractor Development Pathway Spokes may apply to cover more than one region but will be expected to maintain the capacity needed to collaborate with multiple Hubs and fulfill all Spoke requirements.

Stand D: Planning or Capacity to Prepare for Implementation or to Run a Pilot Focused on Climate-Critical Underrepresented Business Support

MassCEC seeks a regional Hub in each of the Workforce Skills Cabinet Regions and a robust network of sector-specific Spokes arrayed around each Hub to provide the comprehensive support needed for Underrepresented Businesses to grow and succeed in the clean energy sector. In recognition that pivoting of exiting business support services into either role and aligning existing reporting methods and partner networks into the Hub and Spoke ecosystem may require additional resources, MassCEC will consider applications for Planning Grants to prepare for implementation or Capacity Grants focused on running a pilot project as a step towards implementation, or for projects that do not require full implementation funding. Capacity Grants may also be leveraged to enhance or expand the capacity of a Hub or Spoke to add additional services and supports, or to respond to a need or shortfall that may hamper successful implementation of an existing award.

Applicants seeking either a Planning Grant or Capacity Grant that can clearly state their proposed role and fit in the CUBS Hub and Spoke ecosystem, define the specific Core Services or Additional Services that will be deployed after the planning or capacity-building phase, provide a potential service plan that follows workforce development best practices with defined roles and responsibilities and reasonable level of detail, and clarify clean energy-specific expertise or specialization may be viewed more favorably. Applicants must also demonstrate the needed staff and organizational capacity, internally or through established partnerships, to complete the planning or capacity building and to successfully implement if awarded implementation funds through competitive grant solicitations following completion of the planning or capacity phase.

Coordination Expectations for Hubs and Spokes (Strands A, B, and C)

The Hubs and Spokes within each of the seven (7) workforce regions will be required to operate as an integrated network to support Underrepresented Businesses in the clean energy sector within that region. The designated Hub and Spokes within a workforce region will be required to sign a memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) establishing cross-referral processes and standards. See Attachment 6: Sample Memorandum of Understanding.

Table 3. Hub and Spoke Roles and Responsibilities, identifies roles and responsibilities that Hubs and Spokes will be expected to fulfill to ensure coordination across a workforce region. Note that the categories of additional activities below are not a comprehensive list and other related activities may be acceptable or required.

Activity	Hub Roles and Responsibilities	Joint Responsibilities	Spoke Roles and Responsibilities
Direct Service	Provide Core Services and at least one sector-specific Additional Service	Cross-refer to ensure that participants receive comprehensive services	Provide sector-specific Additional Services

Hub and Spoke Coordination	Act as the central coordination point for cross-referrals of participants in a designated workforce region	Participate in bi-directional cross-referral and information sharing processes and sign MOUs formalizing this process	Collaborate with the Hub and Mass Save® Contractor Pathway Spoke to support efficient cross-referrals and participant support
Physical Location	Maintain regular in-person staffing presence (minimum two days per week)	Raise awareness of in-person support and cross-refer participants	Refer participants to in-person support when appropriate
Case Management and Tracking	Lead case management process for cross-referred participants and direct participants	Maintain an ongoing case file on each participant to ensure participant receives needed supports and reaches success	Provide case management to direct participants and collaborate with Hub when cross-referring
Performance Metrics and Reporting	Collect and consolidate performance metrics and data from the region and report to MassCEC	Consistently collect and share performance metrics and other data	Report performance metrics and data to both the Hub and MassCEC
Marketing and Outreach	Develop regional marketing and outreach plans in alignment with MassCEC statewide marketing	Engage with community members, employers, procurement officials and other stakeholders	Participate in the roll out of regional and statewide marketing and outreach efforts
Convening	Host regional workshops and events to convene interested parties and MassCEC grantees to support goals and continuous improvement of regional approaches	Attend statewide ecosystem convenings	Participate in regional convenings and events hosted by the Hub

Examples of Appropriate Programs:

MassCEC supports diverse approaches to achieving the goals of this solicitation. The examples presented below in Table 4. Examples of Application Types, are provided as an illustrative tool and do not necessarily reflect projects that MassCEC would commit to funding. See Section 12: Disclaimer & Waiver Authority of this Solicitation regarding MassCEC discretion to accept or reject applications.

Applicant Type	Examples
Strand A: Hub Application	<p>A business support organization with prior experience providing all Core Services proposes providing comprehensive support to Underrepresented Businesses across its workforce region. The support organization will partner with the local community college to host in-person support hours every day from mid-afternoon to early-evening to enable small business owners to attend without missing out on work, and the support organization brings on additional in-house staff to ensure sufficiently responsive coverage. The support organization also has prior experience providing direct Procurement Navigation coaching and mentoring to businesses interested on bidding on solar installation projects. For this example, the support organization would have to submit a Hub application noting the subcontract with the community college. If successful, the support organization would have to sign additional MOUs with awarded Spokes in its workforce region.</p>
Strand A: Hub Application	<p>A regional Economic Development Agency (“EDA”) and a local small business support nonprofit will collaborate to deliver Core Services across their workforce region. EDA will provide centralized administrative staff, grants administration, Business Development planning, Financial Planning workshops, and coaching from expert consultants on Operations and Management through its primary city office, while also offering rotating in-person consultation days at its primary office and two satellite offices. While EDA will identify the need through the business assessment phase and oversee the overall process, the nonprofit will sign a subcontract to provide individual Underrepresented Businesses with direct consulting hours to guide them through attaining needed SDO Certifications and Licenses. EDA will also provide Procurement Navigation into local municipal building electrification bids. In addition, EDA also has preexisting agreements with organizations focused on providing necessary training and licensing for solar project bids, and on providing advanced training on high-performance building techniques and local regulations. For this model, EDA would submit a Hub application, which notes the subcontract with the small nonprofit and reflects that subcontract in the budget, and a program design detailing the Procurement Navigation into building electrification. The other organizations providing solar and high-performance buildings would each have to submit separate Spoke applications.</p>

Strand B: Spoke Application	A nonprofit working to expand the growing heat pump market will offer tailored technical assistance and business support to experienced HVAC Technicians looking to transition to business ownership or enter cooperatives. The nonprofit has preexisting equity-focused pathway programs including training on ownership models, tailored one-on-one business plans with market analysis and pricing strategies, certifications, and licensing support. The nonprofit also has pipelines to connect participants to local manufacturers to learn about product-specific training. This nonprofit submit a Spoke application. If selected, the nonprofit would have to sign an MOU with the Hub in the respective workforce region. If the nonprofit proposes serving multiple regions, the nonprofit would have to ensure sufficient staffing capacity to support cross-referrals, case management, and participation in regional efforts and sign MOUs with the respective Hubs in the regions awarded.
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Program Outcomes and Metrics:

Grantees will be required to track and report outcome metrics using MassCEC templates and standards. Outcome metrics are designed to reflect successful progress toward the overall goals of the MassCEC Workforce Funds. During the grant performance period, MassCEC will transition from collecting participant progress data via spreadsheets and will instead have grantees enter data into a secure data platform. MassCEC will provide support and training to grantee staff in advance of the transition. MassCEC tracks participant-level data and outcomes of underrepresented business support programs using metrics such as but not limited to:

Participant-level data:

- Name of Business
- Address of Business
- Business Type
- Years in Operation
- Geographic region served
- Clean energy sectors
- Customer base
- Ownership demographics including income at enrollment; Primary/Secondary languages spoken; Racial/ethnic background
- Business Revenue at intake and exit
- Number of employees at intake and exit
- Certifications at enrollment and completion
- Status of business 6-12 months post program delivery

Performance Metrics:

- Employee Growth

- Revenue Growth
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses expanded into new sector/service
- Number of new underrepresented businesses founded
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses certified
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses added to approved vendor lists (e.g. Mass Save®)
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses submitting applications (i.e. improved documentation)
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses developing business plans
- Number/% of bids submitted for public or private contracts
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses connected to CDFIs or funders
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses receiving capital
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses hiring for clean energy positions
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses winning new contracts or completing new contracts
- Number/% of underrepresented businesses participating in follow-up programming or alumni support

Applicants should propose internal targets for outcome achievement and should identify mechanisms for reporting and collecting follow-up data at 6-month intervals. Grantees will be expected to track and report on positive business outcomes during and after the program delivery period. At a minimum, MassCEC expects at least 70-75% of participating businesses will report one or more of the following measurable positive business outcomes within six (6) months of completing program services: preferred vendor status, increased revenue; employee growth; successful entry into climate-critical sector as a new business; new contracts or subcontracts secured; new sources of capital or financing; new market or expanded customer base; or other approved positive performance metric.

For all Strands, Applicants that demonstrate prior success supported by outcome metric actuals from comparable programming may be viewed more favorably. A sample Progress Report is included as Attachment 5: Sample Grantee Progress Report for reference to baseline metrics and participant data to be captured throughout the grant period.

Program Definitions:

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

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 and the subsequent

table lists them by occupational category. Applicants are welcome to make a case for additional occupations not listed here or in the Needs Assessment's priority occupations list.

Occupation	Hourly Median Wage
Electricians	\$37.02
Construction Laborers	\$27.90
General and Operations Managers	\$60.62
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	\$47.19
Insulation Workers	\$24.75
Office Clerks, General	\$22.53
Construction Managers	\$57.00
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	\$30.53
Line Installers and Repairers	\$48.02
Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	\$31.26

- 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.
- Clean 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.

Table 5. Median Hourly Earnings of Highest-Growth Occupations

WORKFORCE PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY^{5 6}

Occupation Title	2017 EOLWD Star Ranking	Median Wage	Additional Clean Energy Jobs by 2030	% Growth of Clean Energy Jobs by 2030
BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OPERATIONS OCCUPATIONS				
Cost Estimators	3.9	\$ 46.87	331	35%
Logistician and Project Management Specialists (Fleet Managers)	3.6	\$ 48.86	113	183%
Management Analysts	4.9	\$ 52.02	252	15%
COMPUTER & MATHEMATICAL OCCUPATIONS				
Software and Web Developers, Programmers and Testers	4.8	\$ 60.56	455	13%
CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OCCUPATIONS				
Automotive Technicians and Repairers*	3.2	\$ 25.06	103	92%
Carpenters	4.1	\$ 30.47	398	29%
Construction and Building Inspectors (including Energy Analysts)	3.2	\$ 36.58	532	25%
Construction Laborers	4.1	\$ 27.90	2,288	33%
Electricians	4.4	\$ 37.02	4,444	69%
Hazardous Waste Removal Workers	2.7	\$ 22.71	41	22%
Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	4	\$ 31.26	650	17%
Insulation Workers	2	\$ 24.75	965	25%
Line Installers and Repairers	3.3	\$ 48.02	722	98%

⁵ *Designates occupations where clean energy job growth partially offsets projected occupation job losses economywide.

⁶ The occupation star ranking was developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development in 2017 and is based on a five-star ranking system in which higher-demand, higher-wage jobs are ranked higher, based on short-term hiring projections (2017), long-term hiring projections (2024) and occupation median wage.

Maintenance Workers and Repairers, General (including building operators)	4.1	\$	24.62	161	57%
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	4	\$	31.69	321	29%
Pile Driver Operators	4	\$	47.86	14	482%
Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters	3.6	\$	37.91	397	11%
Roofers	3.2	\$	30.46	154	25%
Sheet Metal Workers	3.2	\$	35.55	281	28%
Surface Mining Machine Operators and Earth Drillers	N/A	\$	30.48	16	43%
Wind Turbine Service Technicians	N/A	\$	32.38	33	33%
MANAGEMENT OCCUPATIONS					
General and Operations Managers	5	\$	60.62	1,579	31%
OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS					
Customer Service Representatives*	4	\$	22.72	404	27%
PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS					
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	3	\$	19.46	52	697%
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators*	2.5	\$	18.94	358	23%
Miscellaneous Metal Workers and Plastic Workers*	1.6	\$	21.61	75	1851%
Power Plant Operators, Distributors and Dispatchers	3.8	\$	44.11	116	85%
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters*	2.4	\$	25.43	140	57%
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Workers	2.5	\$	26.31	139	28%
SALES REPRESENTATIVES OF SERVICES OCCUPATIONS					
Miscellaneous Sales Representatives, Services	4.5	\$	38.13	333	22%

TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS					
Crane and Tower Operators	2	\$	32.47	51	331%
Ship and Boat Captains and Operators	2.5	\$	30.81	40	136%

Table 6. Workforce Priority Occupations by Occupational Category

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

Environmental Justice Populations: As defined by the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), are “segments of the population determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources, or are especially vulnerable.”

- “Environmental Justice (“EJ”) Neighborhood” means a census block group where:
 - Twenty-five percent (25%) of households have an annual median household income that is equal to or less than sixty-five percent (65%) of the statewide median income; or
 - Forty percent (40%) of its population is Minority; or
 - Twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the households lack English language proficiency; or
 - Minorities comprise twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed one-hundred fifty percent (150%) of the statewide annual median household income
- “Minority” refers to individuals who identify themselves as Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, Asian, Indigenous people, and people who otherwise identify as non-white (see additional definition below).
- “Low-income” means median household income at or below sixty-five percent (65%) of the statewide median income for Massachusetts, according to federal census data.
- To see census block groups that meet the Environmental Justice definition, see Environmental Justice Map Viewer⁷.

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

⁷ <https://mass-eoea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1d6f63e7762a48e5930de84ed4849212>

obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Massachusetts' Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA)⁸ 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 oil and propane dealer employees, including fuel delivery truck drivers; oil, gas, and propane heating technicians, sales, and administrative staff; gas station attendants; gas station equipment repair staff; gasoline car repair staff, and natural gas pipeline contractors.

Gateway City: Defined by the Massachusetts Legislature as twenty-six (26) mid-size urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state that face social and economic challenges but retain many assets with unrealized potential. These communities are municipalities with a population greater than 35,000 and less than 250,000 with a median household income below the Commonwealth's average, and rate of educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or above that is below the Commonwealth average.

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

Low/Moderate Income Initiatives: Initiatives that serve low and/or moderate-income populations. "Low income" generally is defined as earning 60%-65% of the statewide median income. "Moderate income" varies more; defined as earning 60%-80% to 80%-120% of statewide median income. If your organization uses another definition for low/moderate income than above, please provide your definition on the application form.

Massachusetts business: Business entity that maintains an official registered business address within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including a usual place of business located in Massachusetts or a Massachusetts Registered Agent address on file with the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth. Businesses headquartered outside of Massachusetts may qualify if they are duly registered to operate within the Commonwealth and actively conduct business activities in Massachusetts.

Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE): Defined by the Commonwealth, 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

⁸ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/indian-affairs>

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.

Potential Barriers: For the purposes of the solicitation, MassCEC has identified potential barriers to entry and participation in the climate-critical workforce (“Potential Barriers”) to include, but not be limited to:

- Childcare and/or other caregiving costs;
- Transportation costs;
- Vehicle and/or public transportation access;
- Lack of a driver’s license;
- Lack of a high school diploma or GED;
- Tool/equipment purchase costs;
- Training fees, tuition, or other educational costs;
- Access to Internet and computers or other connective devices;
- Opportunity costs of time spent in training or educational programs;
- Housing and/or food insecurity;
- Short- and medium-term impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Lack of support systems providing guidance and raising awareness to make training/educational programs and job opportunities more accessible and achievable;
- Cultural barriers;
- Language barriers; and
- Owner/lead staff capacity constraints

Supplier Diversity Office (SDO): State office that promotes diversity, equity and inclusion in state contracting by certifying diverse small Massachusetts businesses and connecting them with business opportunities and resources.

- SDO Directory of Certified Businesses
- SDO Certification Self-Assessment for businesses and nonprofits
- Certifications include:
 - Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
 - Women Business Enterprise (WBE)
 - Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
 - Portuguese Business Enterprise (PBE)
 - Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE)
 - Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)
 - Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
 - Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)

Underrepresented Business: Business that is at least 51% owned and operated by an individual or group that is part of a traditionally underrepresented or underserved group. MWBEs are Underrepresented Businesses. Note: To support equity goals, MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses can substantiate eligibility for programming based on their home or workplace address.

4. FUNDING AVAILABLE

The CUBS Grants program Hub and Spoke model intends to equitably allocate resources across regions while addressing the unique needs of MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses. MassCEC anticipates awarding a total of up to Six Million and Fifty-thousand Dollars (\$6,050,000) but may increase the total awards should additional resources become available.

Applicants proposing to serve as a Hub may apply for up to Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$800,000) in funding for work completed over a period of two (2) or three (3) years. MassCEC anticipates that Hub awards will average between Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) and Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$700,000) based on past MWBE Support Grant awards, with those awards exceeding the higher end of the average being unique cases where the Applicant has demonstrated through data and evidence significant need and barriers and/or unique and impactful program models.

Applicants proposing a Spoke program may apply for up to Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000) for work completed over one (1) or two (2) years. MassCEC anticipates that Spoke awards will average between One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) and Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) based on past MWBE Support Grant awards. Spoke Applicants may apply for funding to provide services across multiple workforce regions, however the Applicant will be assessed for capacity and the maximum total funding request still applies.

MassCEC anticipates offering expedited application opportunities to established Hubs and Spokes in good standing and meeting performance metrics in future rounds of the CUBS Grant solicitations. These expedited application opportunities may also facilitate scaling and expansion to other regions.

Table 7. Application Thresholds for Hubs and Spokes, outlines the funding range based on applicant type and program scope:

Application Type	Funding Term	Funding Request Range
Strand A: Hub	2 to 3 years (An additional year of post-program monitoring and metrics tracking is required)	\$400,000 - \$800,000

	after the proposed project is complete, so Applicants should plan and budget for that obligation.)	
Strand B: Spoke	1 to 2 years (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.)	\$150,000 - \$400,000
Strand C: Mass Save® Contract Development Pathway	1 to 2 years (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.)	\$150,000 - \$400,000
Strand D: Planning and Capacity Building	Planning: 6 months to 1 year Capacity: 1 to 2 years	Planning: \$20,000 - \$50,000 Capacity: \$30,000 - \$150,000

Hub Applicants responding to the FY26 RFP will not be required to subgrant funds to Spokes, however Hubs will be required to collaborate with selected Spokes within their workforce region and sign MOUs with those Spokes. MassCEC reserves the right to consider Hub Applicants for Spoke awards if the proposal is more suited to fulfill the role of a Spoke. In these circumstances, the Applicant will be notified and be granted a period to submit additional supplemental documentation or decline consideration. In limited cases, MassCEC may recommend that one Hub Applicant partner with another Applicant to result in a larger and/or more effective regional Hub. In these situations, Applicants will be notified and be granted a period to collaborate and submit additional supplemental documentation to support a new collaborative proposal or decline consideration.

Applicants applying for funding to operate Hubs in multiple regions must submit a separate application for each region. Applicants applying for funding to operate Spokes in multiple regions may submit a single application if the work does not significantly vary per region; if the work necessitates a different service plan per region or if different sector-focused services will be offered in different regions, the Applicant must submit applications for each distinct project.

Funding amount decisions will take into account program variables, sector-specific barriers, and region-specific needs to ensure efficient use of funds, measurable outcomes, and alignment with programmatic goals. Variables may include the number of Underrepresented Businesses to be served, partnership model for delivery of services, proportion of participants likely to support the highest growth climate-critical occupations, economic indicators for participants (e.g., poverty rates, number of Environmental Justice communities, climate impact), identified regional and sector-specific barriers, geographic considerations (e.g., rural vs. urban costs), regional infrastructure, and the scale of regional operations (e.g., number of Spokes).

All proposals are encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to cost-sharing as MassCEC looks to leverage shared resources with limited funding. Projects with greater levels of cost-share may be prioritized in the selection process. **Applicants intending to designate thirty (30) percent or more of the proposed budget to subcontractor expenses or have instances of a single subcontractor receiving \$50,000 or more must provide a separate detailed budget for the subcontractor** using a copy of the provided budget template, Attachment 3: Program Budget, Organizational Budget, and Proposed Project Schedule. Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application. All Applicants selected for an award will be required to submit final, revised budgets for approval before contract execution.

5. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES

Funding can support operational capacity, programmatic delivery, and ecosystem development. All programs must focus specifically on support of MWBEs or Underrepresented Businesses or the creation of Underrepresented Businesses in climate-critical business fields. The expectation is that CUBS Grant funds 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 used for activities such as:

- Staff or individual time devoted to program, or project preparation and implementation; including under 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 and 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 Underrepresented Businesses may incur while participating in extended training offerings;
- Wraparound Support and Support Services that mitigate barriers for participating businesses;
- Ongoing costs for accountants, lawyers, or other professional services;
- Costs associated with initial and ongoing Underrepresented Business engagement, including translation services; and
- Administration and distribution of small grants to provide Underrepresented Businesses with capital needed for clean energy projects.

Activities that are NOT eligible for funding include:

- Costs associated with preparing a proposal;
- Support activities that have been undertaken prior to the execution of a grant;
- Purchase or lease of venue space or equipment intended for general operating purposes; and
- Staff or indirect costs outside of the allowable cost guidelines.

All Awards for Strands A, B, and C under this RFP are Cost-Reimbursement Grant Agreements. Under this agreement, the grantee is reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the approved budget. Strand D Planning Awards are Milestone and Deliverables Grant Agreements. The sample agreements, Attachment 4: Sample Cost-Reimbursement and Milestone Grant Agreements, are 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.

6. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Organizations, or a partnership/team, are eligible to apply and are collectively termed “Applicants.” 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 subcontractor and listed in Section 2.0 of Attachment 2: Application Form. In addition, all partners who will be responsible for implementing portions of the service plan that require a formalized agreement with Applicant

should also be listed as the subcontractors in the application form. The Applicant is encouraged to list other organizations and individuals not receiving a portion of the grant funds or entering into formal agreements but still contributing to the proposed work as proposed partners in Section 2.1 of Attachment 2: Application Form, indicating their roles and relevant past experience.

If selected, the Lead Applicant will sign a contract like Attachment 5: Sample Cost-Reimbursement Grant Agreement with MassCEC (if selected) and receive funds from MassCEC. The following entities are eligible to serve as a Lead Applicant with the following conditions:

- Nonprofit organizations including Chamber of Commerce organizations, trade associations, clean energy incubators/accelerators, environmental justice organizations, and organizations representing tribes;
- Academic institutions or government agencies with a business support program; and
- Non-profit and for profit entities such as clean energy installers, energy efficiency, or home performance contractors, technical or workforce training organizations, financial institutions, economic development entities, or other clean energy practitioners.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Lead Applicant must have a Massachusetts office and must be able to submit a Certificate of Good Standing (COGS) from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. For more information and to obtain your COGS, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dor-certificate-of-good-standing-and-or-corporate-tax-lien-waiver-faqs>
 - **Note:** COGS requested through the mail may take up to four (4) to six (6) weeks; plan accordingly. Public post-secondary institutions are exempt from this requirement.
- Applicants who have received prior funding or are pursuing separate funding opportunities from MassCEC are eligible to apply for this funding so long as the proposed work is sufficiently distinct and does not lead to the same project being funded.
- Applicants who have received prior funding under the Equity Workforce Fund or other MassCEC funding opportunities must be in good standing with MassCEC.
- 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.
- **Reminder:** This funding is not intended to benefit a single or limited number of MWBEs or Underrepresented Businesses but instead it is intended to support an organization

that can help many different Underrepresented Businesses grow and excel in climate-critical business sectors.

7. ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR CUBS SUPPORT GRANTS

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC's discretion, and notification timelines may vary based off the number of applications. The Pre-Application Webinar will be recorded and be available on MassCEC's website. Additionally, questions regarding this RFP will be collected during open Pre-Application Office Hours and posted to the MassCEC website monthly.

Release of RFP	December 1st th , 2025
Pre-Application Webinar: How To Apply for CUBS RFP	December 10 th , 2:00PM via Zoom
Pre-Application Office Hours	Tuesday 12/2 at 5:30 PM Thursday 12/11 at 12 PM Tuesday 1/6 at 5:30 PM Thursday 1/22 at 12 PM Tuesday 2/10 at 12 PM Thursday 2/19 at 5:30 PM Tuesday 3/10 at 12:00 PM Thursday 3/26 at 5:30 PM
Questions due to MassCEC via email to CUBSBusinessSupport@masscec.com	Rolling through April 6, 2026
Questions with answers posted to MassCEC Website	Updated at least every month on the 2 nd Tuesday through March 31, 2026
Proposals Due	January 16, 2026, by 11:59 PM April 17, 2026, by 11:59 PM
Initial Review and Interviews of Applicants	Scheduled as needed
Supplemental Documentation Due	Two weeks after request
Notification of Award	April 2026, if received by January deadline July 2026, if received by April deadline

Expected Contract Execution	Four (4) to Six (6) months from application deadline.
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8. HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are encouraged to apply even if they do not yet have all program components fully developed, so long as the proposal submitted includes a clear and actionable plan to commence implementation of the proposed project during a reasonable timeframe within the grant period, typically within a six (6) month program development ramp up period. Additionally, Applicants who have not formalized partnerships through MOUs but confirm willingness to collaborate with Hubs and Spokes are encouraged to apply.

While not required, Applicants submitting proposals with multiple partners, signaled by Letters of Commitments or MOUs, may be viewed more favorably. Spoke Applicants may rely on Fiscal Agents (e.g., Regional Planning Commissions, Workforce Boards, Schools, Economic Development groups) to address administrative needs, however Applicants must have sufficient staff capacity to deliver services and provide participant case management at all stages of the service plan.

Applicants are allowed to submit multiple applications for distinct regions or programmatic approaches. Applicants proposing to operate Hubs in multiple regions must submit a separate application for each region. Applicants applying to operate Spokes in multiple regions may submit a single application if the work does not significantly vary per region, but Applicants must submit separate applications for distinct projects or regions, if the proposed work necessitates a different service plan per region or if different services or sector-focuses will be offered in different regions.

MassCEC may deem a proposal a stronger fit for other solicitations or for collaboration with other Hub and Spoke Applicants, including selecting one or part of a proposed network of partners. All requests for additional information and/or authorization to consider an application under additional procurement or funding opportunities will be clearly communicated, and Applicants will be given a defined timeline to respond to requests and provide supplemental documentation. Applicants are encouraged to proactively submit concurrent applications to open solicitations.

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

of innovative potential implementation initiatives to conduct CUBS projects, while capacity grants are designed to enable organizations to add key capacity needed to support programming to service Underrepresented Businesses entering and growing in climate-critical sectors.

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

Applicants responding to this FY26 CUBS Grants RFP will not be required to subgrant funds to Spokes. All Spokes must apply directly via separate applications and will receive grant funds directly from MassCEC, if awarded.

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 CUBSBusinessSupport@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 CUBSBusinessSupport@masscec.com by 11:59 ET on January 16, 2026 and 11:59 ET April 17, 2026, with "CUBS Grants Application" in the subject line.

A complete application packet will include the following:

- ☐ Attachment 1: Authorized Applicant Signature and Acceptance Form
- ☐ Attachment 2: CUBS Grant Application (A,B,C,D)
- ☐ Attachment 3: Budgets and Proposed Project Schedule
- ☐ Attachment 4: Sample Cost-Reimbursement and Milestone Grant Agreements
- ☐ Attachment 5: Sample Grantee Progress Report
- ☐ Attachment 6: Sample Memorandum of Understanding

Attachments 1 and 2 must be submitted as separate documents Attachment 3: Budgets and Proposed Project Schedule, must be submitted as an individual Excel file and should include the Applicant's Proposed Budget, Program Schedule, Organizational Annual Budget, and Subcontractor Budget if applicable.

Attachment 4 is sample of a MassCEC Cost-Reimbursement and Milestone Grant Agreement Contracts are strictly for review and reference and does need not be returned 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 5.4 of Attachment 2: Application Form and return an annotated version of Attachment 4: Sample Cost-Reimbursement and Milestone Grant Agreements as part of your application packet.**

Note: MassCEC has limited ability to change contract terms. All awards under this RFP are Cost-Reimbursement Grant Agreements, except planning grant awards, which may be formatted as milestone deliverable grant agreements when appropriate, except in rare instances where a Cost-Reimbursement grant structure would cause undue hardship.

Supporting documents such as Memorandums of Understanding (“MOUs”) and Letters of Support (“LOSs”) should be integrated into Attachment 2: Application Form, but Applicants may also submit these as distinct attachments. Additional attachments will **not** be considered during review and scoring.

Attachment 5 is a Sample Grantee Progress report and is included to inform Applicants of required data and metrics to be collected. Additional information on metrics is included under Section 3: Program Goals and Descriptions. Attachment 6 is a Sample Memorandum of Understanding between a Regional Hub and partner Spoke.

Attachments 4, 5, and 6 are for reference only.

Attachment 3: Budget Instructions

Program Budget:

On tab one (1), provide a standard line-item program budget representing the full term of the proposed project, including staff salaries, direct program costs, support services and 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.**

All line-items must be explained in the narrative column. For example, if applying for personnel funds, include the units (Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) or hours) and rate (annual salary or wage) as well as the program responsibilities and title for each staff person. *Please note that while the budget form asks for names and titles for staff, applicants may elect to provide titles only.*

Staff costs must align with documented wages and salaries and cannot be fully loaded rates that organizations associate with the value of specific services provided by staff. Similarly, fringe

rates must reflect both existing benefits and costs, as well as projected costs. Applicants must be willing to provide additional details about the breakdown of current and anticipated fringe costs.

Indirect rates must be calculated only for staff and fringe costs and cannot be applied to other cost centers, such as materials, subcontractors, or equipment. Any indirect rate above the 15% federal de minimis requires detailed justification and documentation, including, as applicable, federally approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRAs).

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 (\$50,000.00) 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 Project Schedule.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to cost-sharing as MassCEC looks to leverage shared resources with limited funding. Projects with greater levels of cost-share will be reviewed favorably. Cost share is defined as monetary or in-kind costs supporting the proposed grant program. Cost share cannot include other grants from MassCEC.

Organization Budget:

Provide an annual organizational operating budget along with the proposed program budget. Key features of an operating budget include the lead applicant's projected revenue and expenses and top-level expense categories such as salaries, operational expenses, and administrative overhead.

Proposed Project Schedule-Timeline and Phases:

On tab two (2), provide a proposed project schedule. Applicants must provide a project schedule including a timeline and phases aligned with and fully reflected in the requested budget, ensuring all activities correspond with associated budget costs.

Complete application submissions will be accepted through **11:59 PM ET on January 16, 2026** and **11:59 PM ET on April 17, 2026**. Under no circumstances will MassCEC accept responses past the deadline.

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. If you are not on the Workforce list and would like to be added, email WFDTraining@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 CUBSBusinessSupport@masscec.com or telephone the Workforce Equity Program Administrator at (617) 315-9300, option 7, option 2, to discuss accommodations.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation will be reviewed by MassCEC including a threshold and compliance screening and a review committee. MassCEC reserves the right to request additional information from any Applicant. MassCEC will consider the following categories when evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of proposals:

<u>Applicant Experience and Qualifications</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicant or Applicant teams (“Applicants”) have a demonstrated history engaging and supporting MWBEs or Underrepresented Businesses and have a network established to attract existing Underrepresented Businesses.• Applicants demonstrate experience in fostering partnerships and
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	<p>collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have a track record of providing Core Services or Additional Services to help Underrepresented Businesses overcome typical barriers or sector-specific barriers, such as back office services, bridge and startup capital, or introductions to procuring agencies. • Applicants use data such as completion rates, scale/size, and performance metrics to demonstrate historical success. • Applicants have experience or knowledge of climate-critical business fields. • Applicants have experience or knowledge of the regional economy.
<p><u>Target Climate-Critical Sectors / Demonstration of Market Opportunity</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have defined climate-critical business fields to focus work on and uses data or research about the importance of the growth of this fields in meeting state climate goals. • Applicants have a strong tie to procurement pipelines and customers integrated into the project so that trained Underrepresented Businesses have business opportunities during or at program completion. • Applicants have clearly outlined gaps in current services for Underrepresented Businesses and has a strong plan and strategy to fill gaps and needs. • Applicants identify the type of MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses to be served in the target region/s including target demographics or sectors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants plan to serve predominantly Underrepresented Businesses that directly participate in the design, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of clean energy projects and that provide employment opportunities for the top twenty (20) highest growth climate-critical occupations.
<u>Core and Additional Services</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a clear account of services and training to be offered through Additional Services or Core Service category. • Applicants present a clear delivery and dosage model for each offering, including defining staff and partner roles and responsibilities. • Applicants propose reasonable performance metrics to gauge success of delivery of Core and Additional Services. • Applicants demonstrate staff capacity to provide case management and one-on-one supports
<u>Program Design and Service Workflow Plan</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants offer or demonstrate willingness to participate in a regional convening strategy and a regional collaborative marketing and outreach strategy. • Applicants provide a staffing plan that accounts for administration and management of the Hub and Spoke ecosystem in the designated workforce region, including cross-referrals with Spokes, case management, collection and collation of participation and performance data from Spokes, and reporting to

	<p>MassCEC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a comprehensive program design with a clear service plan to deliver specific Core Services or Additional Services that align with their stated goals for supporting MWBEs and Underrepresented Businesses. • Applicants provide a service plan workflow that includes clear steps including but limited to Marketing and Outreach, Intake and Assessment, Business Assessment, delivery of Core or Additional Services, and Retention and Follow-Up Supports, with approaches to provide responsive supports to Underrepresented Businesses appropriate to the needs of each participant. • Applicants match outreach, engagement, and program design elements to the needs of the Underrepresented Businesses in the region and sectors they intend to serve. • Applicants present program design and delivery organized to maximize benefit to the supported Underrepresented Businesses and to allow the support organization to effectively capture data outcomes to continuously improve programming. • Applicants incorporate continuous improvement planning with clear reporting processes for tracking outcomes, collecting data, and refining program delivery based on feedback.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants provide a reasonable staffing plan for the work proposed with assigned roles and responsibilities for the proposed tasks including coordination between Hubs and Spokes. • Applicants articulate how their programs align with the Hub and Spoke delivery model. • Applicants emphasize collaboration or openness to collaboration with other organizations and clearly signal agreements between Hubs and Spokes.
<u>Outcomes, Budget, Leveraged Resources, and Sustainability</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants propose strong outcomes with reasonable performance metrics, a program design that can achieve these outcomes, and data collection practices that support effective outcome tracking. • Applicants propose clear, measurable outcomes aligned with clean energy market entry or growth. • Applicants present a budget aligned with program needs and a reasonable per-participant cost for the type and intensity of programming and services the applicant proposes • Applicants include itemized budgets for subcontractors if applicable. • Applicants leverage and take advantage of existing government and other business support and workforce resources such as Small Business Administration, Supplier Diversity Office, State Workforce Board, MassHire Organizations, or Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (“EOLWD”) Workforce programs and/or demonstrates

	<p>progress towards identifying appropriate funds to leverage in the initial award period and to sustain the programming beyond the grant period.</p>
<p><u>Diversity of Approaches</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Applicants and Applicant Teams are encouraged to apply, especially those certified by the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office or equivalent certifying entity. If the Applicant 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. Based on current coverage by existing awardees, consideration may be given to proposals focused on areas currently lacking coverage. • 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. • Heightened and Innovative Support: Consideration may be given towards applications that propose heightened and innovative supports not offered by other programs, such as social supports removing childcare barriers or addressing

	<p>food or housing insecurity potentially faced by small business owners. Or Applicants propose innovative ways to address common growth barriers faced by Underrepresented Businesses.</p>
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10. EXPECTATIONS FOR GRANT AWARDEES

In addition to fulfilling Project Plan and Timeline 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, project plan, timeline 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 must send at least one representative to participate in regular webinars and meetings to promote networking, synergize projects, share best practices, and strengthen the quality of the workforce and business development ecosystems related to climate-critical occupations. Cohort meetings and training sessions will be offered on an ongoing basis, and Awardees are expected to participate regularly.

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 Awardees.

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

4. Provide Monthly Reporting and Case Studies

MassCEC requires awardees to provide monthly progress reports using templated spreadsheets and 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 and business data, revenue and wage data, dosage of service, and changes to status that signal progress towards program completion.

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 program 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.

11. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions related to this CUBS Grant RFP, please email CUBSBusinessSupport@masscec.com.

12. 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 that will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

Climate-Critical Underrepresented Business Support Grants (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: CUBS GRANT APPLICATIONS

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 3: Budgets and Proposed Project Schedule

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 4: Sample Cost-Reimbursement and Milestone Grant Agreements

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 5: Sample Grantee Progress Report

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 6: Sample Memorandum of Understanding

Attached separately