



Request for Proposals: Students and Young Adults Equity  
Workforce Career Awareness and Training Grants,  
Round 2  
WFD-SYA-12225

Date of Issue: December 2, 2025  
Priority Deadline: January 15, 2026  
Proposals Due: April 10, 2026

Anticipated Available Funding: \$2,450,000  
(additional funding may be added as resources become available)

All proposals must be submitted to:  
[rfpworkforce@masscec.com](mailto:rfpworkforce@masscec.com)  
by 11:59 pm on January 15, 2026 (Priority Deadline)  
by 11:59pm on April 10, 2026 (All Proposals Due)

## I. SUMMARY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is offering Students and Young Adults Equity Workforce Career Awareness and Training Grants. The Grants help provide direct funding and technical assistance support to organizations interested in career awareness and training programming focused on supporting students<sup>1</sup> and young adults who are part of one or more of the following populations<sup>2</sup>:

- Individuals from Environmental Justice (“EJ”) Neighborhoods or low-income communities;
- Members of federally recognized or state-acknowledged tribes;
- Members of underrepresented communities in the clean energy workforce; and
- Current or former workers from the fossil fuel industry (“Fossil Fuel Workers”).

**Strand A:** Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Navigation, and Preparedness

**Strand B:** Career Pathway Training with Work-based or Learning-based Opportunities

**Strand C:** Planning and Capacity Grants for Career Awareness or Career Pathways Training

Depending on the type of request, applicants may apply for up to (\$600,000) in funding for work completed over a period of one (1) to two (2) years.

Details about the range of acceptable funding requests across the various grant options are outlined in the Program Goals and Description (Section 3).

Funds for this program will be expended from Equity Workforce Funds, initially created through the March 2021 Climate Legislation, *An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy*<sup>3</sup> and re-defined by the August 2022 Climate Legislation, *An Act*

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<sup>1</sup> This funding is designed to support students in middle/intermediate, high school, and beyond. K-12 school districts are eligible applicants, but the program model proposed should focus on students in middle and/or high school as opposed to elementary-level participants.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to Section 4 of this RFP for more complete definitions of the target populations and entities.

<sup>3</sup> <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter8>

*Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind.*<sup>4</sup> Should additional relevant funds become available through the Equity Workforce Fund or other sources, MassCEC may add funding to this RFP.

Applications for funding are due by 11:59pm on January 15, 2026 (Priority Deadline) and 11:59pm April 10, 2026.

## II. ABOUT MASSCEC

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

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

## III. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

This Request for Proposals (RFP) aims to enhance career awareness and broaden career exploration opportunities for young adults entering the workforce. The primary goal is to increase knowledge of and interest in climate-critical fields among young adults, helping to build a stronger, more diverse clean energy workforce in Massachusetts. By prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of economic opportunity, this initiative seeks to develop a highly skilled and diverse pipeline of new talent. Funding through this RFP will support applicants in achieving these objectives by enabling them to:

- **Target students and young adults who attend schools in or are from EJ Neighborhoods or low-income communities, individuals from federally recognized or state-acknowledged tribes within the Commonwealth, members of underrepresented communities in the clean energy workforce, and Fossil Fuel Workers** to explore climate-critical priority occupations.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter179>

- **Create opportunities to access new and/or expand technical and job readiness training opportunities** to provide the foundational skills necessary to make career choices about climate-critical priority occupations.
- **Develop and nurture new relationships with employers** in climate-critical sectors to create project-based learning experiences, career opportunities, and identify career pathways.
- **Establish and grow wraparound and retention support services** to address social and economic barriers and increase the likelihood of long-term career success.
- **Address common barriers to equitable access** to climate-critical careers through more intentional career awareness and navigation support.

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

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Relevant Program Focus</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
<b>Strand A: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Navigation, and Preparedness</b>	Provide effective programming to expand awareness of access to climate-critical careers among individuals from the targeted populations while providing clear age-appropriate offramps into the following steps to access those opportunities.	Up to \$400,000
<b>Strand B: Career Pathway Training with work-based or learning-based opportunities</b>	Build job training and support capacity to fill gaps in the workforce for climate-critical sectors while creating opportunities for students and young adults to enter the workforce. This strand must include real-world experience and skill gain.	Up to \$600,000
<b>Strand C: Planning and Capacity Grants for Career Awareness or Career Pathways Training</b>	Planning grants are intended to explore, develop, or refine innovative ideas for potential implementation initiatives to support individuals from target populations seeking to enter climate-critical occupations in the clean energy sector. Capacity grants are designed to enable organizations to add key capacity needed to support programming providing career pathway training or clean energy career awareness, exploration, navigation, or preparedness.	Planning Grants: \$20,000 to 30,000  Capacity Grants: \$30,000 to \$150,000

## IV. DEFINITIONS

**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.

- 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.

**Environmental Justice Populations:** As defined by the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), these 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 Viewer<sup>5</sup>.

**Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes:** Defined by the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs as a federally recognized tribe that is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Massachusetts’ Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA)<sup>6</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://mass-eoea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1d6f63e7762a48e5930de84ed4849212>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/indian-affairs>

**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 the statewide median income. If your organization uses a definition for low/moderate income other than the one above, please provide it on the application form.

**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; and
- Language barriers.

## V. ELIGIBILITY

Organizations or a partnership/team are eligible to apply and are collectively termed “Applicants.” Partnerships are strongly encouraged and may be looked upon more favorably when scored on selection criteria to the extent that partnerships can provide a range of expertise and experience to deliver a comprehensive proposal. If multiple parties jointly apply, one party should lead the application team (“Lead Applicant”). If a single organization is applying for this opportunity, that organization would also be the Lead Applicant.

In this solicitation, any organization or individual anticipating receiving a portion of the grant funds for their activities related to the proposed work, through a subcontract or other formalized agreement should be considered a partner organization (“Partner Organization”) and listed in Attachment 2. Application Form. If applicable, the partner organizations must itemize the budget of money they will receive if the lead applicant is awarded. MassCEC may request further information about the qualifications of Partner Organizations during the review process.

The Applicant is encouraged to list other organizations and individuals not receiving a portion of the grant funds but who would be considered partners by adding their expertise to the proposed work due to their past experiences.

The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, sign a contract with MassCEC (if selected), and receive funds from MassCEC. The following entities are eligible to serve as a Lead Applicant with the following conditions:

- Community-based entities (often referred to as community-based organizations) such as community action partnerships, environmental justice organizations, neighborhood revitalization organizations, advocacy groups, affordable housing providers, affordable housing developers, and non-profits.
  - Note: If Applicant is not an entity with the ability to hire staff or receive funds, consider forming a partnership with another group that can act as a fiscal agent.
- Post-secondary educational institutions, K-12 School Districts, Comprehensive and Vocational High Schools, Middle schools, and Vocational Schools offering a Career Technical Initiative evening program.
- For-profit entities such as for-profit training companies, trade associations, unions, or other coalitions of businesses and clean energy businesses.
- Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes.
- Workforce Development Organizations, Non-Profit and For-Profit.
- Massachusetts Workforce Investment Boards and Career Centers/Mass Hire Organizations.

Applicants may choose to form partnerships. Partnerships may be advantageous relative to scoring criteria if all the partnership members add to the project's success.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Lead Applicants 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 K-12 schools and 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 are currently or previously funded via solicitations under the Equity Workforce Fund must be in good standing with MassCEC and have submitted to the Workforce team during the course of their project completed progress reports substantiating outcomes and need for additional support services. Applicants funded by external funding sources should anticipate that MassCEC may request progress reports and other substantiation related to the proposed project.
- 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.
- Proposed programming must be either in-person or hybrid. No entirely virtual programs will be considered for funding at this time.

## Vi. ESTIMATED TIMELINE

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC's discretion.

Release of RFP	December 2, 2025
Questions due to MassCEC via email to <i>RfpWorkforce@masscec.com</i>	Ongoing
First Deadline	January 15, 2026
Final Deadline (All Proposals Due)	April 10, 2026
Follow-up Questions or Interviews to Applicants	Within one (1) month of application
Notification of Award	Within two (2) to three (3) months of application
Contract Signed and Executed	Within four (4) to six (6) months of application

## VII. SCOPE OF WORK

Applicants must propose programming for this grant opportunity to introduce career awareness or career pathways to Students and Young Adults. MassCEC supports diverse approaches to achieving the goals outlined in Section 3, demonstrating intentional design, measurable outcomes, and alignment between participant needs and program intensity.

**Program Eligibility and Design Expectations:** Proposed programs should clearly identify their target population and level of engagement (e.g., early exposure versus advanced training) and

align outcomes accordingly. MassCEC will assess applications based on how well proposed activities and outcomes fit the following general expectations:

- **Career Awareness Programs** focus on early exposure, self-assessment, and exploration of clean energy careers. These programs typically emphasize industry awareness, foundational career readiness skills (e.g., communication, teamwork), and initial opportunities to engage with professionals or mentors.
- **Career Pathway Programs** build upon awareness by providing technical training, applied learning, and direct work-based experiences. These programs often include internships, apprenticeships, certifications, or project-based learning that strengthen technical and professional skills.
- **Planning and Capacity Programs** support the design, piloting, or improvement of future programming aligned with either or both of the above categories.

Strong proposals will:

- Demonstrate **alignment between program design, participant population, and intended outcomes**;
- Include **clear, measurable indicators** of skill or knowledge gain (not just attendance or completion);
- Incorporate **industry input** to ensure training and exposure reflect real workforce needs; and
- Outline how outcomes will be **tracked and reported** using meaningful metrics.

**Key Considerations in Program Design:** The list below highlights relevant design considerations and best practices for students and young adult populations:

- **Skills Development** — Prioritizing the development of key transferable career readiness skills, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, alongside essential technical skills specific to the targeted industry, is crucial. Programs must incorporate financial literacy as a critical support tailored to the developmental needs of the population. Building a strong foundation in both technical and career readiness skills equips participants with the tools needed for long-term career success. Programs achieve these outcomes through intentional curriculum design, hands-on training, and effective evaluation methods.
- **Exposure to Career Pathways** — Awardees should introduce participants to various career pathways inside the clean energy industry. Participants should leave programming with an understanding of the growth potential in their careers. Site visits, guest speakers, job shadowing, and project-based learning provide participants with key insights and foster a better understanding of the sector and options.
- **Opportunities for Real-World Experiences** — Awardees should incorporate internship, apprenticeship, or work-based learning in programming to give young adults real-world

experiences. Mentorship and professional development opportunities allow participants to build networks and gain insight from professionals.

- **Designing and Delivering Quality Training**— Applicants who are developing or intend to develop training curricula are encouraged to contact MassCEC to determine the availability of quality curricula to use as exemplars or as the basis for customization. MassCEC promotes the use of publicly available resources. Additionally, skills training should be informed by employer input and differentiated to meet the learning needs of the participant population.
- **Addressing Barriers** — From the initial outreach through retention services, applicants are encouraged to design programming that mitigates barriers. Robust outreach plans will include ways to connect with individuals who may be difficult to reach via traditional avenues due to various factors, such as language barriers, lack of transportation, and distrust/cultural stigmas. When designing the program, participants may have unique challenges based on age, location, time, or transportation; consider flexible delivery methods and program access to meet some of these needs.
- **Designing for Success** — Awardees must measure success differently based on the program's design. Job placements, retention rates, career awareness measures, skill gain, knowledge, and educational attainment are vital metrics. Robust applications will consider metrics and practical measures for the tracking and evaluation of success.

Some examples of appropriate proposed programs include but are not limited to:

Strand	Examples
<b>Strand A: Clean Energy Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Navigation, and Preparedness</b>	A school district collaborates with industry partners to develop a technical skills curriculum integrating clean energy career exploration into classroom instruction. The program includes hands-on career exploration units and a clear implementation plan. Metrics track and document students' increased knowledge of clean energy careers, demonstrating the program's impact.
<b>Strand B: Career Pathway Training with work-based or learning-based learning opportunities</b>	A community-based organization designs a career readiness program tailored to participants' needs, combining training with practical work experiences. The program features problem-based learning, work-based projects, and internships. Metrics include skill assessments, individualized career plans, and pathways into advanced training programs or job placements.

<b>Strand C: Planning and Capacity Grants</b>	A training provider specializing in information technology wants to develop a clean energy career pathway program. The training provider has established support services but needs to design an implementation plan and find partners for its clean energy pathway. The training provider proposes a scope of work to add this new pathway and revise program evaluation metrics to evaluate alignment with industry needs and the establishment of pathways into clean energy careers.
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MassCEC reserves the right to make some applicants planning or capacity grants if the proposal has merit but would benefit from a smaller award amount for planning purposes. Note: The hypothetical examples presented above are an illustrative tool and do not necessarily reflect projects that MassCEC would commit to funding – see Section 13: Disclaimer & Waiver Authority of this Solicitation regarding MassCEC’s discretion to accept or reject applications.

## VIII. HOW TO APPLY

To apply:

1. Review the decision chart to find the appropriate RFP.
2. Review this RFP to understand the opportunity, requirements, and MassCEC’s objectives.
3. Review all RFP forms and attachments.
4. Attend MassCEC informational webinars and/or utilize other informational resources offered.
5. Contact MassCEC with questions and/or to discuss your idea(s) via email at [rfpworkforce@masscec.com](mailto:rfpworkforce@masscec.com).
6. Complete all RFP forms and attachments, adhering to word limits, format requirements, deadlines, and other instructions listed within this RFP and each attachment.
7. Submit all completed RFP forms and attachments by email to [rfpworkforce@masscec.com](mailto:rfpworkforce@masscec.com) by 11:59 pm on April 10, 2026, with “Students and Young Adults Equity Workforce Career Awareness and Training Grants” in the subject line.

A complete application packet will include the following:

- ☐ Attachment 1: Authorized Applicant’s Signature and Acceptance Form
- ☐ Attachment 2: Students and Young Adults Equity Workforce Career Awareness and Training Grant Application Form
- ☐ Attachment 3: Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule
- ☐ Attachment 4: Sample Milestone Grant Agreement
- ☐ Attachment 5: Sample Cost Reimbursement Grant Agreement
- ☐ Attachment 6: Decision Chart

Attachments 1 and 2 must be submitted as **separate** documents in PDF or Word format.  
Attachment 3 must be submitted as an Excel file with all tabs filled out. Attachments 4 and 5

need not be returned and are strictly for review and reference unless the Applicant requests changes to any language in the sample grant agreements. Changes requested to these sections are subject to the review of MassCEC, must be signaled at the point of application submission to be considered during contract scoping negotiations, and may impact an Applicant's eligibility for funding. MassCEC has limited ability to change contract terms.

Supporting documents such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and Letters of Support should be integrated into Attachment 2, but applicants may also submit these as distinct attachments. Additional attachments will **not** be considered during review and scoring.

Cost Reimbursement grants apply for all Implementation grants. Milestone Grant Agreements (Attachment 4) will be utilized for all Planning Grants. If the grant becomes a capacity or a planning grant, a Cost Reimbursement Grant Agreement (Attachment 5) may be considered for Capacity Grants that will run a program with participants who may experience attrition during program delivery.

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

#### 1.1. Program Budget

On tab one (1), provide a standard project budget, including staff salaries, direct program costs, subcontracting costs, indirect costs, and fringe costs. The budget should include a narrative to explain these costs. Subcontractor budgets over \$4,999 should be included by making additional tabs, if necessary. **Whenever feasible, please ensure that all submitted budgets are rounded to whole dollar amounts.**

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 any other cost centers, such as materials, subcontractors, or equipment. Any fringe rate above the 15% federal de minimis indirect cost rate requires detailed justification and documentation, including, as applicable, federally approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRAs).

#### 1.2. Proposed Project Schedule with Milestones and Outcomes

On tab two (2), provide a proposed project schedule. During the fulfillment of the grant, MassCEC responds to timely invoices that provide documentation of deliverables to disburse grant funds. **Applicants to strands A and B** must provide a project schedule proposing chronological program dates, to align with Cost Reimbursement contract structure. **Applicants to strand C** must provide a payment schedule proposing chronological invoice dates, where each invoice date is associated with clear milestones and deliverables related to defined tasks within the Scope of Work. Quarterly schedules are preferred. The close of MassCEC’s fiscal year is June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, and an invoice should be issued on this date.

Final complete application submissions are accepted until **11:59 pm EST on January 15, 2026 (Priority Deadline)** and **11:59 pm EST on April 10, 2026 (All Proposals Due)**. Under no circumstances will MassCEC accept responses past the final deadline.

### Resources and Support for Potential Applicants:

All Applicants are encouraged to work with MassCEC and utilize MassCEC support when preparing an application, such as attendance at the pre-application webinars and office hours. 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 to provide program updates, including descriptions of potential Applicants seeking partnerships. If you want to be added to the workforce listserv, email [workforce@masscec.com](mailto:workforce@masscec.com).

**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 [rfpworkforce@masscec.com](mailto:rfpworkforce@masscec.com).

## IX. SELECTION CRITERIA

All Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<u>Applicant and Partner Experience and Qualifications</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant had a strong track record serving the target population, demonstrated capacity for implementing workforce development programs, and a defined network of partners to provide comprehensive program services.</li> <li>• Applicant should highlight any history of providing unique or advanced approaches to program services.</li> </ul>
<u>Target Populations and Career Exposure</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target occupations align with climate-critical occupations, and the activities proposed are appropriate for the target population.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Additional consideration will be reserved for projects that address occupations and businesses in the <b>Energy Efficiency, Demand Management, and Clean Heating and Cooling Sector</b>. This sector is by far the largest clean energy sector, with 74,305 workers in 2022, equivalent to over 70% of the clean energy workforce in the state. Modeling from MassCEC's workforce needs assessment anticipates an additional 18,000 jobs to be added to this sector by 2030.</li> <li>● The target population is exposed to multiple career pathways, and the proposed program provides career navigation resources to enter at least one of the pathways explored.</li> </ul>
<u>Employer and Industry Engagement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Applicant should maximize engagement with employer partners across the program, designing for their involvement at multiple junctures and using their guidance to ensure that proposed programming aligns with the current demands of the industry.</li> <li>● Employers engage in a multitude of programs and career awareness activities. There is more than one point of interaction with the participants (e.g., internships, site visits, job shadows, etc.)</li> </ul>
<u>Outcomes, Budget, Leveraged Resources, and Sustainability</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Applicant proposes strong outcomes, a program designed to achieve these outcomes, and data collection practices supporting effective outcome tracking.</li> <li>● Applicant's proposed budget results in a reasonable per-participant cost for the type and intensity of programming the applicant proposes.</li> <li>● Applicant demonstrates progress towards identifying appropriate funding supports to leverage in the initial award period and sustainable funding sources to continue programming beyond the grant period.</li> <li>● The budget narrative is aligned with program needs and supports for participant success.</li> </ul>
<u>Completeness of Proposed Approach</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Applicant presents a comprehensive program design incorporating relevant best practices for the target population.</li> <li>● Applicant's plan includes a complete timeline and a responsible party for meeting the deliverables.</li> <li>● Applicant proposes milestones, deliverables, timelines, and resource allocations that align with programming and participant needs.</li> <li>● Applicant specifies goals, measurable metrics, and outcomes that will lead to programmatic success.</li> <li>● Applicant engages with partners who have a history of meeting the needs of the participants.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Innovation in Approach</u></p>	<p>Diverse Applicants and Applicant Teams are encouraged to apply, especially those certified by the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office or equivalent body. If you believe your organization meets these criteria but have not completed certification, applicants may offer a statement on the application form.</p> <p>Additional factors that will be considered include geographic opportunity, target sector/occupational opportunity, and broadening access to support additional populations (e.g., residents of Gateway Cities, low-income populations, limited English/ESOL individuals, immigrants/refugees, returning citizens, opportunity youth, etc.),</p> <p>Proposals offering novel and impactful approaches to workforce development will receive consideration.</p>
<p><b>For Strand A:</b> <u>Program Design</u> (Career Exploration, Navigation, and Support)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant presents a comprehensive program design incorporating relevant best practices for the target population.</li> <li>• The program features a clear and thoughtful range of exposures and career pathway options, including clear access to the next steps for participants.</li> <li>• Delivery models embrace innovative and proven strategies to increase participant success (e.g. work-based learning connected to employer partners).</li> <li>• The program design includes case management and support services tailored to meet participant needs, promote successful program participation, and transition to clear post-program path.</li> </ul>
<p><b>For Strand B:</b> <u>Career Pathway Training</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant presents a comprehensive program design incorporating relevant best practices for the target population.</li> <li>• The program emphasizes high-quality training design and delivery: Applicant ensures that the training is engaging, interactive, and tailored to the needs of students and young adults, providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in the target career pathways.</li> <li>• The program design includes case management and support services tailored to meet participant needs, promote successful program participation, and transition to clear post-program path.</li> </ul>

## X. 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 Awardees Cohort Sessions and Training** Awardees must send at least one (1) representative to participate in meetings to promote networking, synergize projects, share best practices, and strengthen the quality of the workforce ecosystems related to climate-critical occupations. Virtual and in-person sessions will be scheduled quarterly and Awardees are required to attend.
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 one (1) hour of TA each month the grant is active. MassCEC will host one in-person full-day TA session over the grant cycle, 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 from various partner organizations to advance the efforts of the grant.
4. **Provide Regular Reporting and Case Studies** MassCEC requires Awardees to provide regular reports typically timed to coincide with scheduled invoices for payment. Along with Progress Reports, Awardees will be asked to provide interim progress reports using templated forms and by attaching additional documentation for program-specific deliverables not captured within the Progress Report template. The templated Grantee Progress Report captures general programmatic and participant data, including but not limited to demographic data, employment and wage data, dosage of service, and status changes that signal progress toward program completion, placement, and job retention.

MassCEC regularly features Awardees in social media blog posts, reports, and other media. To facilitate these activities, Awardees will be expected to provide case studies and regular reports as agreed upon in the Scope of Work. At a minimum, case studies

need to include a one (1) page text description of success in the program and an appropriate accompanying picture, with additional information, statistics, and photographs potentially requested by the MassCEC Program Manager. Case studies will be required at least annually. Finally, MassCEC welcomes additional opportunities to collaborate with grantees on media opportunities.

## XI. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding a total of up to \$2,450,000 in grants. Applicants are encouraged to request amounts needed for the proposed program model or project. MassCEC reserves the right to make additional awards if funding becomes available. Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application.

At MassCEC's discretion, applications for Students and Young Adults Equity Workforce Career Awareness and Training Grants that are not detailed enough for an initial award or need further development prior to implementation may receive an offer for planning or a capacity grant.

Additionally, MassCEC may elect to award a portion of the funds requested by Applicants in their applications if a proposed project contains sufficient detail to merit an implementation grant but does not have an adequate scope to justify the entire amount of the award request by the applicant.

Applicants utilizing a milestone contract may receive a small portion of the funding upfront upon award. They will receive the remainder in amounts determined by the contract, based on deliverables agreed to by MassCEC and selected Applicants (see Attachment 4. Sample Agreement, as an example). Applicants for Strands A and B will generally be expected to use a cost-reimbursement contract ( see Attachment 5. Sample Agreement). Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application.

**Indirect costs** may be applied to full-time staff salaries and fringe benefits, but must not exceed the **15%** federal de minimis indirect cost rate unless the applicant has an approved **NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement)**.

### **Eligible Funding Uses:**

The expectation is that these funds should be utilized within two (2) years, except for planning grants, which must be completed within one (1) year. MassCEC anticipates these grants will be used for activities including, but not limited to:

- Staff or individual time devoted to program or project preparation and implementation;
- Curriculum development costs. Proposed curriculum development should not be duplicative of the existing MassCEC curriculum, *Massachusetts Climate Careers*:

*Powering the Future*, and any proposed curriculum development should be explained in the application;

- Materials or equipment for work or learning-based experiences. Materials or equipment proposals should include what alternative products and providers were researched, as well as two additional price quotes;<sup>7</sup>
- Costs associated with initial and/or ongoing community engagement, including translation services and direct payment to participants;
- Participation stipends for program participants;
- Subsidized wages for on-the-job training/internships
- Marketing activities and expenses commonly associated with outreach initiatives, such as purchasing marketing collateral, promotional mailers, and website or social media hosting costs, not to exceed 10% of the budget;
- Providing language access opportunities to assist English-isolated communities in connecting with clean energy resources; or
- Purchasing and installing specialized equipment for training.<sup>8</sup>

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

- Costs associated with preparing this proposal;
- Purchase or lease of venue space or equipment intended for general operating purposes;
- Career Awareness curriculum development covered by MassCEC developed curriculum and resources (<https://cleanenergyeducation.org>)
- General test preparation classes;
- Tuition costs, except when they are essential to the participant experience, are directly tied to program outcomes, and only funded on a *last-dollar-in* basis after other financial aid and grants are applied.;
- Staff or indirect costs outside of the budget guidelines; and
- Activities that occur before or following the term of an awarded grant.

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<sup>7</sup> Equipment costs for this funding opportunity must not exceed \$20,000. Programs that have greater equipment needs should submit an additional application to the Climate Critical Training RPF.

<sup>8</sup> Equipment costs for this funding opportunity must not exceed \$20,000. Programs that have greater equipment needs should submit an additional application to the Climate Critical Training RPF.

## XII. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions on Students And Young Adult Equity Workforce Career Awareness And Training Grants, please email [rfpworkforce@masscec.com](mailto:rfpworkforce@masscec.com) with the subject line **SYA Round 2 RFP Question**.

## XIII. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, any documentary material, data, or other information received by MassCEC from an applicant is a public record subject to disclosure. Applicants shall not send MassCEC any confidential or sensitive information in response to this RFP. 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.

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### DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

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

This RFP has been distributed electronically using MassCEC's website. It is the responsibility of Applicants to check the website for any addenda or modifications to an RFP to which they intend to respond. MassCEC accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date RFP document.

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### 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 template agreement attached hereto as Attachment 4 and Attachment 5, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

## ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

### **[Students and Young Adult Equity Workforce Career Awareness and Training 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 has read and understands the RFP Requirements. The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that all of the terms and conditions of the RFP are mandatory.

The undersigned and each Applicant and each member of its team acknowledges and agrees that (i) all materials submitted as part of the application are subject to disclosure under the Massachusetts Public Records Law, as explained in the RFP; (ii) that the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) has no obligation, and retains the sole discretion to fund or choose not to fund the application set forth herein; and (iii) that MassCEC’s receipt of the application does not imply any promise of funding at any time.

The undersigned and each member of the Applicant’s team understands that, if the Application is selected by MassCEC pursuant to this RFP, the Applicant will execute and deliver an agreement to be provided by MassCEC that shall set forth the terms and conditions, together the respective roles and responsibilities of the Applicant, and each member of its team, and MassCEC, with respect to the project described in the RFP.

I certify that the statements made in this Application, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct.

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

(Printed Name of Applicant)

By: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Applicant or Authorized Representative)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ATTACHMENT 2: APPLICATION FORM

Attached separately

### ATTACHMENT 3: BUDGET AND PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Attached separately

## ATTACHMENT 4: MILESTONE GRANT AGREEMENT

*Attached separately*



## ATTACHMENT 5: COST REIMBURSEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT

*Attached separately*

## ATTACHMENT 6: DECISION CHART

*Attached separately*