



Request for Proposals:
MassCEC School Bus
Fleet Deployment
RFP Round 4

Date of Issue: May 12, 2025
Proposals Due: June 13, 2025 by 4:00PM EST

All proposals must be submitted to:
CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com

I. SUMMARY

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (“MassCEC”) School Bus Fleet Deployment Program (“the Program”) offers funding and technical assistance for electric school bus (“ESB”) fleet deployment projects through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”).

Through this RFP, MassCEC seeks applications from:

- **Massachusetts public school districts as sole applicants;**
- **Public school districts partnered with a private school bus transportation contractor; OR**
- **Private school bus transportation contractors (school bus service providers, Original Equipment Manufacturers (“OEMs”), and private school bus fleets that provide student transportation services) partnered with Massachusetts public school districts.**

This RFP is intended to complement the timing of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2024 Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles (“CHDV”) Grant awardees.

The Fleet Deployment Program offers funding and optional technical assistance for ESB fleets serving their district. The School Bus Fleet Deployment Program funding is intended to amplify electric school bus deployment projects that demonstrate major steps toward full-fleet electrification.

The Fleet Deployment Program will offer flexible funding for projects and provide school districts and partnered private school bus contractors with specialized project management support and optional technical assistance relative to school bus fleet electrification technology, operation, and financial planning as needed.

MassCEC anticipates that projects awarded under the Fleet Deployment Program will:

- Electrify a significant portion of their existing fleet;
- install associated charging infrastructure;
- potentially prepare sites for full-fleet electrification; and
- demonstrate a viable plan for full-fleet electrification.

The School Bus Fleet Deployment Program will prioritize applications from school districts who have been awarded EPA’s CHDV Grant funding.

Since December 2022, MassCEC has awarded three (3) rounds of School Bus Fleet Deployment funding and technical assistance provided by a hired Technical Consultant. These districts are currently receiving MassCEC support to electrify significant portions of their school bus fleets.

- Round 1– Six (6) public school districts supported directly or through a third party
- Round 2 – Five (5) public school districts supported directly or through a third party
- Round 3 – Eleven (11) public school districts supported directly or through a third party

It is the intention of MassCEC to continue School Bus Fleet Deployment Programming through this RFP for the School Bus Fleet Deployment Program. Aligned to achieve the same outcomes outlined in the first three rounds of the School Bus Fleet Deployment Program, this fourth round will incorporate learnings from rounds 1 through 3 as Project progress continues.

II. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a state economic development agency dedicated to accelerating the growth of the clean energy sector across the Commonwealth to spur job creation, deliver statewide environmental benefits and 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.

III. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

Under MassCEC's School Bus Fleet Deployment Program, MassCEC seeks to fund projects that will support electrification of school bus fleets with a focus on underserved school districts ("Projects"). The School Bus Fleet Deployment Program concentrates on equity goals, with an aim to close health and economic disparities. The Program will also address the gap in technical knowledge that impedes fleet managers from electrifying school buses and will prepare fleets to take full advantage of federal funding opportunities for electrification such as the EPA CHDV program. Preference will be given to EPA CHDV awardees and districts residing in any of the EPA Disadvantaged Community Counties (see Attachment A) in the selection criteria.

The fourth round of School Bus Fleet Deployment programming will take learnings from three (3) ongoing school bus electrification Projects under MassCEC's Accelerating Clean Transportation Now (ACTNow) Program and from the first three (3) rounds of School Bus Fleet Deployment programming.

Awarded Projects will demonstrate replicable adoption models as well as business and service delivery deployment models. With the option to work with MassCEC's hired expert technical support staff, awarded Projects will also surface key learnings regarding bus electrification that will be shared with districts across the Commonwealth. Program scope includes deploying electric school buses across major fleet operation models and providing bus fleet electrification planning support services to prepare for future funding opportunities. Projects under the Program will result in emissions reduction (both of greenhouse gases and air pollutants) through the reduction of fossil fuel usage. The Program aims to grow Massachusetts' clean transportation sector, improve school districts' access to federal and state funding opportunities, demonstrate a feasible and equitable path to electrification and serve as guidance for other school bus fleets in the Commonwealth.

IV. ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Release of RFP	May 12, 2025
Webinar hosted by MassCEC	May 23, 2025
Questions due to MassCEC via email to CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com	May 23, 2025
Questions with Answers Posted to MassCEC Website	May 30, 2025
Proposals Due	June 13, 2025 by 4:00PM EST
Interviews of Top Applicants	June 16 - 20, 2025
Anticipated Notification of Award	June 30, 2025

V. AWARD OVERVIEW

The total number of awards made by MassCEC will depend on the amount of available funding relative to the requested budgets across applications received and selected for the award. MassCEC requires that Applicants or Applicant Teams (“Applicants”) identify if they have applied for additional sources of funding, including EPA CHDV funding. While receipt of additional funding is neither a requirement for eligibility nor precludes a project from eligibility, this disclosure is important to inform if MassCEC funding is being used to increase the scale of the proposed deployment or ensure ongoing sustainability of the Project. Applicants should note that the intent of the School Bus Deployment Program is to ensure the success of EPA CHDV projects, and that prior MassCEC School Bus Deployment grants have been awarded synergistically with EPA funding. However, receipt of EPA CHDV funding is not a requirement for award under this RFP and MassCEC will consider Applicants who have not received CHDV awards. Additionally, MassCEC requires Applicants to identify whether they will need technical assistance from MassCEC’s Technical Consultant and/or whether they expect to receive technical support separate from the Program offerings. *Note that all Grantees will be expected to collaborate with and provide relevant fleet data to the Technical Consultant. See Attachment F, the Sample Grant Agreement, for examples of deliverables that will be completed in coordination with the Technical Consultant.*

Selected Applicants will receive:

- Up to Two Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,500,000) per application for ESB deployment and associated Project costs; and
- Access to a Technical Consultant.

For Applicants that identify the need for technical assistance from MassCEC, the Technical Consultant will provide support for awarded school districts and partnered private school bus contractors to strategize for ESB fleet deployment, procurement, installation of required upgrades and equipment, and for the first six (6) months of ESB operation. For all Applicants, including Applicants who do not require project support from a Technical Consultant, the Technical Consultant will perform required data collection and reporting back to MassCEC.

Funding will be in the form of one-time awards administered by MassCEC. No follow-on funding is currently allocated for ESB fleet deployment assistance.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicant Eligibility

Eligibility for the School Bus Fleet Deployment Program mirrors eligibility criteria for EPA's 2024 CHDV Program. Eligible Applicants for the School Bus Fleet Deployment Program include:

1. Public school districts that are eligible under EPA's CHDV Program. This includes Massachusetts public school districts, including charter schools, that have an [NCES District ID](#); and
2. Private school bus transportation contractors¹ school bus service providers, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), and private school bus fleets that provide student transportation services. Note that private school bus contractors can only apply on behalf of their associated Massachusetts public school district(s).
 - a. Private contractors working with school districts must have a signed commitment with the district school board reflecting school board project approval to be eligible.

The Program will give preference to applications that include school districts on the [EPA CHDV Disadvantaged Community County List](#) (see Attachment A below). The Program will also give preference to applications that include school districts that have not received a previous School Bus Fleet Deployment award. While eligibility is not limited to these districts, a major focus of the Deployment Program is to leverage awarded federal funds and enable the successful deployment of EPA CHDV projects.

Allowable Expenses

MassCEC deployment funding is flexible and is intended to cover any gaps that will not be funded by the EPA Clean School Bus Grant or other funding opportunities. These expenses may include but are not limited to:

- Partial or total purchase of a new electric school bus or buses;
- Electric school bus charging equipment;
- Depot construction costs;
- Installation costs; and
- If applicable, School District or municipal staff time coordinating with the Program's Technical Consultant.
 - Staff time at entities other than school districts or municipalities may be funded at MassCEC's sole discretion and applicants may be requested to provide specific justification as to the role of and need for MassCEC funding for this purpose.

¹ MassCEC defines private school bus transportation contractors using the closed EPA Clean School Bus Program's language from Page 13 of their Notice of Funding Opportunity as "any for-profit, not-for-profit, or nonprofit entity that has the capacity (1) to sell, lease, license, or contract for service clean school buses, ZE school buses, charging or fueling infrastructure, or other equipment needed to charge, fuel, or maintain clean school buses or zero-emission school buses, to individuals or entities that own, lease, license, or contract for service a school bus or a fleet of school buses; or (2) arrange financing for such a sale, lease, license, or contract for service. This group generally includes school bus dealers, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), school bus service providers, and private school bus fleets that provide student transportation services."

Applicants awarded under this RFP (“Awardees”) are responsible for ensuring that any in-kind contributions that they seek to include is an Allowable Expense. MassCEC will determine whether an expense is an Allowable Expense in its sole discretion. For the avoidance of doubt, Allowable Expenses **do not include:**

- Overhead (including but not limited to telephone, electricity, lease payment or rent) or profit;
- Fringe benefits (including but not limited to health insurance, 401k plans or similar plans, other similar staff benefits); or
- General administrative expenses (including but not limited to postage, packaging, shipping, printing)

Budget and Cost Share

There is no minimum cost share requirement. Awardees are expected to leverage external funds where possible, including EPA grants, other federal funds, state grants and rebates, utility programs, etc. MassCEC reserves the right to negotiate cost share based on Application Team composition, project size, and reasoning for funding need. Both the total requested budget and proposed cost share will factor in MassCEC’s evaluation of proposals under the Program.

Project Requirements

Successful Projects will result in partial or full electrification of a school district’s school bus fleet with the charging stations to support the use of the buses, and trained staff and drivers to manage charging and fleets. Awardees are required to:

- Provide a Project lead to coordinate on behalf of the Awardee team and maintain compliance with contract obligations;
- If applicable, collaborate with MassCEC’s Technical Consultant to co-manage Project deployment and operation and provide any necessary fleet data for technical and financial analyses;
- Meet all Project deadlines, including EPA Grant timelines;
- Demonstrate a successfully executed contract with the EPA if receiving an EPA grant award, and;
- Adhere to all MassCEC’s reporting requirements throughout the fleet deployment process.

VI. HOW TO APPLY

It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that all application materials are submitted. At its sole discretion, MassCEC may request supplemental materials from the Applicant. MassCEC reserves the right to request an interview with the Applicant Team and anticipates that such interviews will occur over Microsoft Teams or a comparable video conferencing platform.

Submission Requirements

A completed application includes the following Attachments:

- Attachment B: Authorized Applicant's Signature and Acceptance Form, available as a PDF on the [MassCEC website](#).
- Attachment C: Application Form, available as an editable word doc on the [MassCEC website](#).
- Attachment D: Proposed Budget, available as an editable excel on the [MassCEC website](#).
 - Applicants are expected to fill out the Proposed Budget Template spreadsheet and attach an **editable**, completed version of the spreadsheet in the proposal.
 - When completing the Proposed Budget worksheet (Attachment D), please note that some funding sources have stacking restrictions. As a rule of thumb, multiple sources of state funds cannot be used together for the same line item. For example, MassCEC state funding cannot be combined with state MOR-EV funding to cover the cost of an electric school bus.
- Attachment E: Basic Proposed Site Plan(s)
 - Applicants are expected to submit proposed site plan(s) as attachments in the proposal. **Note that a professional site plan is neither expected nor required.**
- Attachment G: Letters of Commitment
 - Applicants should plan to submit letters of commitment from the local school board, local utility partner, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (including a third-party transportation provider or landowner).
- Attachment H: Vendor Quotes for Equipment (if available)
 - If available, applicants should provide quotes for the cost of supplies or equipment, including but not limited to, electric school buses and charging systems.

Attachments for Applicant Review

- Attachment A: List of EPA CHDV Priority Counties
- Attachment F: Sample Grant Agreement

The completed Application, including all required documentation, must be submitted to CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com. ***"MassCEC School Bus Deployment Program Application" must appear in the email subject.*** Applicants are also welcome to attach Letters of Support from key decision-makers or committees.

Completed applications must be received no later than June 13, 2025 by 4:00PM EST.

VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

In addition to the above minimum eligibility criteria, MassCEC will evaluate Applications competitively on the following primary criteria and secondary criteria:

Category	Criteria
Alignment with Program Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demonstrate scalable and equitable paths to decarbonization in the transportation sector2. Maximize GHG emissions reductions, health, and economic benefits in priority populations, including by electrifying a significant number of vehicles or a disproportionately high-emitting set of vehicles3. Demonstrate efficient and effective project plan with MassCEC, and, if applicable, the Technical Consultant and private school bus contractors4. Represent the diversity of Massachusetts communities, from a geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic lens
Implementation & Priority Population Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reduction of barriers for electric school bus adopters2. Ability to realize project benefits within timeline provided3. Ability to track project benefits4. Quality of solution and level of transformation the project provides, both in the short and long term
Scalability & Replicability	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ability to implement electric school buses at-scale2. Scale of project benefits relative to total budget3. Efficiency of project benefits on a dollar-per-GHG and dollar-per-participant basis, as applicable4. Technical, financial, and administrative replicability of the procurement and deployment plan
Applicant Team	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attention to potential capacity and/or resource constraints2. Demonstration of Applicant Team collaboration and competency

VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

Application questions can be submitted via email to CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com. ***“MassCEC School Bus Application Question” should appear in the subject line.*** Please submit questions by **May 23, 2025**. Answers will be posted publicly to the [MassCEC School Bus Deployment webpage](#) on **May 30, 2025**.

MassCEC will host an informational webinar on the School Bus Fleet Deployment Program on **Friday, May 23, 2025 at 11:30AM EST**. [Register HERE](#). Questions submitted in advance will be answered during the webinar.

MassCEC intends to host office hour sessions as requested in order to address questions while the RFP is open. Please [use this link](#) or refer to the [MassCEC School Bus webpage](#) to book an office hours time slot.

IX. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

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

DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

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

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 to this RFP as Attachment F, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

