



Request for Proposals: EmPower Massachusetts Program: Fiscal Year 2024 Implementation Grants

Date of Issue: August 10, 2023

Proposals Due:

Round 1 - October 18, 2023 and

Round 2 – April 3, 2024

Total Funding Available: Applicants are eligible for grants up to \$150,000. MassCEC may award a limited amount of grants up to \$300,000 for eligible Priority Tracks. See Section 5 for more details.

All proposals must be submitted to:

empower@masscec.com

Note: MassCEC is offering a parallel Request for Proposals for 2024 Innovation & Capacity Building Grants; see [EmPower website](#) for more details.

1. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (“MassCEC”) is launching a third year of opportunities for the EmPower Massachusetts Program (“EmPower Mass” or “the Program”). The Program is an overarching initiative aimed at the exploration, development, and implementation of innovative program models or projects that will provide access to the benefits of clean energy or reduce energy burden for previously underserved or vulnerable populations in the Commonwealth. For purposes of this RFP, such populations are collectively called “Priority Groups” and a more complete definition of Priority Groups can be found in Section 3 of this RFP.

Stakeholder outreach and engagement is a core component of EmPower Mass design and operation. As part of the application process, MassCEC will offer workshops, office hours, and optional application review for potential applicants. See Section 8 for more details on resources and support for potential applicants.

The Program has two (2) funding opportunities:

- Innovation & Capacity Building Grants; and
- Implementation Grants (this RFP).

Through this RFP, MassCEC seeks applications for **Implementation Grant funding** from community-based organizations, individuals, and other groups with a history of working with Priority Groups (see Section 6 for a complete definition of the term “Applicants”). This opportunity will provide funding for the **implementation of innovative program models or projects**. The goals of each program model or project should be increasing access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reducing energy burden to Priority Groups. Further details about the Program are outlined in Section 3.

Applications are due by October 18, 2023 for the first round and April 3, 2024 for the second round.

2. 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 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. EMPOWER PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

EmPower Massachusetts Program Goals:

Empower communities, organizations, and stakeholders to:

- **Identify innovative solutions** for increasing access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reducing energy burden to Priority Groups.
- **Implement innovative solutions** and continue long-term engagement strategies in Priority Groups.
- **Increase organizational capacity** to support long-term ability to identify and implement these solutions.

Funding Opportunity Structure:

The following information is presented to assist potential Applicants in determining which aspect of the Program best suits them, which grant to apply for, and how the opportunities can supplement each other. The Program has two (2) funding opportunities:

1. **Implementation Grants (this RFP):** MassCEC will provide funding for place-based (e.g., within a Municipality or specific neighborhood) or network-based (e.g., a statewide membership organization) programs or projects that increase access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reduce energy burden to underserved or vulnerable population Priority Groups, as defined below, and are ready for implementation. **This RFP is specifically for applications for the Implementation Grants.** All applications should increase access to the benefits of clean energy and/or reduce energy burden to Priority Group populations.
2. **Innovation & Capacity Building Grants:** MassCEC will provide seed funding for:
 - a. the exploration, development, or refinement of innovative ideas for potential program models or projects; or
 - b. building organizational capacity to conduct community-based programs or projects.

This is a separate funding opportunity (found here on the EmPower website) and potential Applicants do not need to seek the Implementation Grant funding to be eligible. **This RFP is not for Innovation & Capacity Building Grants.**

Through the Program, MassCEC also intends to:

- Facilitate communication and relationships between interested and/or participating organizations or individuals;
- Inform participants about relevant opportunities or programs at MassCEC or from other agencies;
- Deepen MassCEC’s relationships with community-based organizations and other organizations or individuals with a demonstrated history working with Priority Groups;
- Create and maintain an inclusive process and program structure that supports Priority Groups (as defined below) and Federally Recognized and State Acknowledged Tribes (as defined below);
- Lower barriers to access clean energy or other environmental justice related grant opportunities, including education on clean energy and barriers to accessing to clean energy; and
- Utilize stakeholder engagement to inform future programming and policy.

Program Definitions:

- **Priority Groups:** For the purposes of this RFP and in accordance with the Program goals, MassCEC defines “Priority Groups” to include the following:
 - “Environmental Justice Populations” as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download>.
 - “Environmental Justice (EJ) Population” means (A) a neighborhood that meets 1 or more of the following criteria: (i) the annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income; (ii) minorities comprise 40% or more of the population; (iii) 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency; or (iv) minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income; or (B) a geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.

- “Minority” refers to individuals who identify themselves as Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, Asian, Indigenous people, and people who otherwise identify as non-white.
 - “Low-income” means median household income at or below 65% of the statewide median income for Massachusetts, according to federal census data.
 - “English isolation” refers to households that are English Language Isolated according to federal census forms, or do not have an adult over the age of 14 that speaks only English or English very well.
- Environmental Justice Map Viewer: <https://arcg.is/1i9Hqn0>
- Renters (primarily residential)
 - Communities or individuals disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, by the fossil-fuel based energy system, or other environmental hazards (e.g., air quality or heat).

If you believe you know of a population or group you believe should be considered a Priority Group and is not listed above, especially for the purposes of ensuring eligibility to apply to this grant, please reach out to Lisa Dobbs, Program Manager at empower@masscec.com.

- **Capacity building:** For the purposes of this RFP, “capacity building” is defined as efforts to increase the capacity of an organization to better fulfill its mission or broaden its impact. This may be done by (though is not limited to) hiring/increasing staff, offering training opportunities, or providing technical support.
- **Clean energy:** For the purposes of this RFP, “clean energy” is defined as technologies that generate renewable energy (e.g., solar PV, solar thermal), provide electrification opportunities (e.g., air source heat pumps), or reduce energy usage/load (e.g., energy efficiency). Other methods, practices, or measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) or improve resiliency may also be considered “clean energy” for purposes of this RFP if they have a connection to clean energy (e.g., green infrastructure, battery storage). Access to the benefits of clean energy could take the form of direct adoption of clean energy (e.g., installing solar PV on your roof), or it may take a less direct form (e.g., utility bill savings through participating in a community solar project).
- **Energy burden:** For the purposes of this RFP, “energy burden” is defined as percentage of gross household income spent on energy costs.

- **Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes:** Federally Recognized Tribes are defined by the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs as an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Massachusetts' Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) assists Native American individuals, tribes, and organizations in their relationship with state and local government agencies, and more information can be obtained from their website and office support line.

4. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding grants of up to One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000). Applicants are encouraged to request lower amounts if less funding is needed for the proposed program model or project. MassCEC *may award a limited number* of Implementation Grants for up to Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) to projects that meet the requirements for the Priority Tracks outlined in Section 5.2.

If selected, Applicants can elect to receive a limited portion of the funding upon contract signing and will receive the remainder in amounts determined by the contract based on deliverables agreed to by MassCEC and selected Applicants (see Attachment 3 Sample Agreement for examples). Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application.

Applicants may seek funding through this RFP to supplement a program or project that is also receiving other incentives, grants, or investments. This includes previous awards under the EmPower program. There will be an opportunity to clarify this in the application. A listing of complimentary funding opportunities that we are aware of are listed in the Resources section of our website <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts>.

5. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES

5.1 GENERAL FUNDING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

For the Implementation Grant opportunity, Applicants must propose the implementation of innovative program models or projects. All programs or projects must focus exclusively on Priority Groups, as defined in Section 3. The expectation is that these funds should be utilized within three (3) years. MassCEC anticipates these grants will be utilized for activities including, but not limited to:

- staff or individual time devoted to program or project preparation and implementation;
- costs associated with initial and/or ongoing Priority Group engagement, including translation services and especially direct payment to participants;
- 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;¹
- ongoing costs for an accountant, lawyer, or other professional services; or
- direct capital costs such as system installation or grants.
 - **Note:** Up to 25% of your funding request budget can be allotted towards capital costs such as clean energy system installations or grants to community members to install clean energy systems. “Budget” is defined here as the total grant request under the EmPower program and not the total budget of a potential capital project. For example: your proposal includes mini-grants to supplement ASHP or solar PV installs in a community, as part of a broader initiative to “seed” these installs in Priority Group populations, increase education, and seek representative energy ambassadors to promote these technologies. You request \$100,000 under an Implementation Grant for this program, and therefore \$25,000 can be utilized for these grants.²

For **the Implementation Grant funding**, MassCEC is particularly interested in funding applications that meet the Priority Track requirements as defined in Section 5.2 below. However, MassCEC also remains committed to funding a range of innovative program models and projects. In addition to the Priority Tracks described below, the following are some topics of particular interest to MassCEC that could be incorporated into a Priority Track application or any other application:

- Leveraging existing incentive programs such as:

¹ Depending on the type of program applicants propose, and upon request, MassCEC may offer in-kind support instead of all or part of a cash grant. This option is meant to help Applicants for whom procurement of technical services may be challenging. Possible in-kind technical services MassCEC could provide include technical assistance for seeking an installer partner for your program, more in-depth clean energy training, resource development, system design, or evaluation. **Applicants must discuss this with MassCEC prior to application and must submit documented requests for all in-kind support through the application process.**

² This is provided as an example and does not necessarily reflect an application that would be selected for funding under this RFP.

- Massachusetts-based opportunities: [SMART](#), [Mass Save®](#) incentives (rebates, home energy assessments and weatherization, HEAT Loan & barrier remediation grants, ConnectedSolutions, income-eligible programs), [Clean Peak Standard](#), [Commercial-PACE](#), [Department of Energy](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), or [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#), or [Department of Agriculture Grants](#)) and MassCEC's [Internship](#) & [Vocational Internship](#) programs and [Workforce Equity](#) programs for the purposes of supporting a program or project.
- Federal opportunities: There are numerous federal opportunities that may be applicable to Applicants. [Justice40](#) and [DOE](#) are two resources that may provide relevant opportunities. Reach out to MassCEC if you would like additional support navigating potential federal funding opportunities.
- Addressing renter populations through solutions that target landlord investments, particularly campaigns that should seek to minimize the displacement of existing communities.
- Testing innovative finance or partnership models, including on-bill financing, methods for taking advantage of tax incentives, green leasing, or revolving funds.
- Providing public health and air-quality (indoor or outdoor) benefits, especially in communities that suffer from disproportionate negative public health outcomes such as asthma.
- Exploring approaches that provide additional benefits beyond access to the benefits of clean energy, such as job training opportunities or increasing resilience in communities with Priority Groups.
- Providing language access opportunities to assist English-isolated communities in connecting with clean energy resources.

For details on successful applications to the EmPower Mass Program, visit <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts> which contains the awardee story map for EmPower funded projects to date. We'll also host a developing list of ideas and examples from similar grant opportunities.

If you are unsure if your program or project proposal is appropriate for this grant opportunity, you would like to clarify whether your target community meets the Program's definition for Priority Group, or you have additional questions regarding the grant process, please contact Lisa Dobbs, Program Manager at empower@masscec.com.

5.2 PRIORITY TRACK ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Starting in FY24, MassCEC has identified two types of program models that have been successful in previous rounds of EmPower Massachusetts that MassCEC would like to see refined and amplified:

- **Energy Coach/Ambassador Track:** Community clean energy outreach, education, and adoption campaigns that use trusted individuals as coaches or ambassadors; and
- **Technical Assistance Provider Track:** Replicable technical assistance models that can serve several Community-Based Organizations (as defined in Section 6) by adopting a standardized approach or framework for providing technical assistance such as assessments, feasibility studies, legal support, grant writing, financial or business analysis/planning, etc.

For the purposes of this RFP, “Energy Coach” refers to a professional advisor involved in a community clean energy outreach, education, and adoption campaign (typically employed by a Community-Based Organization or municipality), while “Energy Ambassador” refers a peer-to-peer model for a community clean energy outreach, education, and adoption campaign in which the ambassadors have some basic training on clean energy but – while they would be compensated for their time – are not engaged in the campaign as their primary occupation. Instead, Energy Ambassadors would leverage their existing social networks to spread information within their community. MassCEC recognizes that different terminology may resonate in different communities and will not dictate how these roles are referred to publicly.

Collectively these program models are referred to as “Priority Tracks.”

Priority Track applications may be eligible for additional funding if the proposed projects or programs meet additional eligibility criteria described below and demonstrate willingness to provide additional reporting and/or commit to collaborate with MassCEC to further evaluate the model for future refining and scaling.

- **Energy Coach/Ambassador Track Requirements:**
 - Program must operate for two years.
 - Energy Coaches must be a representative of the Priority Group served or must have at least 2 years of successful experience working with Priority Group populations.
 - Energy Ambassadors must be a member of the Priority Group served.

- Program proposal and design must reasonably demonstrate that Energy Coaches or Ambassadors are being appropriately compensated for their time and providing a pathway to grow professionally. To demonstrate appropriate compensation, Applicants should consider:
 - Offering Energy Coaches a full-time position;
 - Offering Energy Coaches an opportunity for career development and growth within the Applicant’s organization or with other organizations;
 - Providing MassCEC an explanation of how the compensation levels were determined and why the Applicant believes that they are appropriate;
 - Offering Energy Coaches benefits and other reasonable compensation (see, e.g., MIT’s Living Wage Calculator for calculating a living wage);³ or
 - Offering Energy Ambassadors reasonable compensation for their work including training time and outreach planning and conversations (see, e.g., MIT’s Living Wage Calculator for calculating a living wage).
- Demonstration that Energy Coaches or Ambassadors will receive appropriate training. MassCEC will prioritize applications where the Energy Coaches or Ambassadors will receive training across a comprehensive suite of clean energy solutions.
- Applicant will agree to share a detailed program plan to MassCEC prior to launching.
- Campaigns may support any clean energy solution (as defined in Section 3). MassCEC will prioritize applications that focus on a comprehensive suite of clean energy solutions. The focus of the campaign may also expand over the duration of the campaign.
- Co-participation in Mass Save’s [Community First Partnership](#) is an eligible approach. MassCEC will prioritize applications that are promoting additional clean energy solutions in addition to the Mass Save supported solutions. The focus of the campaign may also expand over the duration of the campaign.

- **Technical Assistance Provider Track Requirements:**

³ MIT Living Wage Calculator: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/25>

- Technical Assistance must be offered to Community-Based Organizations, individual members of Priority Groups, Federally Recognized or State Acknowledged Tribes, and/or Municipalities;
- Technical assistance must aim to support multiple recipients, as defined above, with a suggested range of 5-15+ recipients;
- If appropriate, the technical assistance could be offered over a period of two to three years - the Applicant does not need to have the capacity to provide technical assistance to the entire group of recipients at once;
- Technical assistance should provide clear pathways (including an implementation strategy) towards accessing clean energy or reducing energy burden;
- As applicable, the Lead Applicant, as defined below, should have expertise in and/or include partners covering the following roles:
 - Clean energy technology and/or engineering expertise
 - Project or program management expertise
 - Demonstrated history of working with the targeted Priority Group/s
 - Implementation expertise (e.g., clean energy installer, partner with expertise in procurement processes)
- Must offer meaningful stipends to participants receiving the technical assistance for their participation, including time spent submitting data, attending meetings, etc.

6. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Organizations, individuals, or a partnership/team are eligible to apply and are collectively termed “Applicants.” If there are multiple parties that are jointly applying, one party should take on the role of leading the application team (“Lead Applicant”). If a single organization or individual is applying for this opportunity, that organization or individual would also be the Lead Applicant. The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, 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:

- Organizations and entities with a demonstrated history of engaging and supporting Priority Groups such as community action partnerships, neighborhood revitalization organizations, advocacy groups, affordable housing providers, affordable housing developers, and non-profits (“Community-Based Organization” or “CBO”).

- Note: CBOs do not need to be incorporated non-profits to participate, but if your organization 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 and Lead Applicant for the application. If you need assistance in finding a fiscal agent, contact MassCEC to see if we can assist.
- Other non-profit entities that are not CBOs. Examples might include a non-profit entity that provides technical expertise or a non-profit focused on clean energy without ties to a Priority Population. *Note: Other non-profit entities must partner with at least one non-profit CBO. Unique or specific modifications to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis – please contact program staff.*
- Individuals with a demonstrated history of engaging Priority Groups, including those that may be members of a Priority Group themselves.
- Federally Recognized and State-Acknowledged Tribes.
- Public entities such as municipalities (includes municipal lighting plant communities) and regional planning agencies. **Note:** Public entities must partner with at least one non-profit CBO. *Unique or specific modifications to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis – please contact program staff.*
- For-profit entities such as clean energy installers, energy efficiency, or home performance contractors, technical or workforce training organizations, financial institutions, or other clean energy practitioners. **Note:** For-profit entities must partner with at least one non-profit CBO. *Unique or specific modifications to this requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis – please contact program staff.*
- Any Applicants may choose to form additional partnerships beyond what is required above.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Applicants must have a demonstrated history working or living within, and/or engaging with at least one (1) of the Program’s Priority Groups.
- Applicants are not required to have experience in clean energy.

- Applicants without prior experience in clean energy are encouraged to review this [Clean Energy 101 primer](#) and review our resources on the EmPower Mass website.
- This does not apply to clean energy installers or contractors, who must meet industry and state standards for their relevant clean energy technology.
- Business entities (e.g., corporations, limited liability companies, nonprofit corporations) must be registered to do business in Massachusetts.
- Applicants must submit a proposal that involves one or more RFP defined Priority Group(s).
- Applicants to this grant opportunity may apply to the parallel grant opportunity under the Program, [Request for Proposals: EmPower Massachusetts Program: Innovation & Capacity Building Grants](#). However, each application must be focused on a different program model or project. For example, you and/or your team may have a project ready for implementation and may also have a separate idea you would like to explore for future implementation. Both applications must demonstrate adequate organizational capacity to complete both concurrently.
- Grant awardees for the 2024 Implementation Grants are eligible to apply for future EmPower Mass Implementation grants with different program models or projects or new iterations of their prior EmPower program models or projects.

MassCEC is interested in supporting the facilitation of partnerships whenever possible. Please reach out if you would like assistance.

7. ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC’s discretion, and notification timelines may vary based on the number of applications.

Release of RFP	August 10, 2023
Questions due to MassCEC via email to empower@masscec.com	Ongoing
Questions with Answers Posted to MassCEC Website (MassCEC will still answer questions up until the deadline)	Ongoing (MassCEC will aim to post a response to a question within two weeks of receiving it.)

Optional Pre-Application Review Deadline	Review Group 1: Draft applications received Review Group 1: September 20, 2023 (feedback will be provided by October 4, 2023) Review Group 2: March 6, 2024 (feedback will be provided by March 20, 2024)
Proposals Due	Review Group 1: October 18, 2023 Review Group 2: April 3, 2024
Follow up and/or Interviews of Applicants	Scheduled as needed
Notification of Award	Within 2-3 months of application

*Applicants not selected in the first review group may be given an opportunity to re-apply in the second review group.

8. HOW TO APPLY

Reminder: Please refer to Section 7 (above) for full timeline.

To apply:

- 1) First, review this RFP (and the [Innovation & Capacity Building Grant RFP](#)) to develop an understanding of the Program and opportunities.
- 2) (Optional but encouraged) Attend our informational webinars, participate in a workshop, and/or utilize other informational resources offered. See more information below regarding the resources MassCEC may be able to offer to potential Applicants.
- 3) (Optional but encouraged) Reach out to MassCEC to discuss your idea(s) and seek input or support via email (empower@masscec.com) or visit the MassCEC [EmPower Slack workspace](#). Please note all communications with MassCEC, including through Slack, are generally considered public records. See more information below on the support MassCEC may be able to offer to potential Applicants including a one-time review of your submission.

- 4) (Optional) Submit a draft Application to MassCEC by the relevant Pre-Application Review Deadline listed in Section 5 and receive feedback from MassCEC within two weeks.
- 5) Reach out to MassCEC to indicate and discuss interest in any in-kind technical services from MassCEC (as described in section 5).
- 6) Complete the Attachment 1: EmPower Mass FY24 Signature and Acceptance form.
- 7) Complete the Attachment 2: EmPower Mass FY24 Implementation Grant Application Form, either as a Word document or through the [online application](#).
 - a. This includes confirming review of Attachment 3: EmPower Mass FY24 Template Implementation Grant Agreement.
- 8) If completing the Application as a Word document, submit the Application by email to the EmPower Mass team at empower@masscec.com with **“Implementation Grant Application”** in the subject line. If completing the Application online, submit through MassCEC’s online portal, making sure to attach Attachment 1: EmPower Mass FY24 Signature and Acceptance form.

Complete application submissions will be accepted for the first review group through 11:59 PM on October 18, 2023. Successful Applicants will be notified of status by within 2-3 months of application. Second round applications will be accepted through 11:59 PM on April 3, 2024, and successful Applicants will be notified of status within 2-3 months of selection.

MassCEC’s Resources and Support for Potential Applicants:

All potential Applicants are encouraged to work with MassCEC and utilize our support when preparing an application. Applicants are encouraged to:

- **Participate in Workshops:** MassCEC will host workshops for potential Applicants to learn about clean energy solutions, brainstorm ideas that could work in their communities, and network. The workshop dates will be listed at <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts> as they are finalized.
- **Attend Office Hours:** MassCEC will offer an opportunity for one-on-one conversations with MassCEC staff during virtual office hours. Office hours dates will be listed at <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts> as they are finalized and updated on a recurring basis.

- **Submit for one-time pre-application review:** Applicants will have a one-time opportunity to get a review of their draft application. Please see timeline above for submission details and timeline.
 - o The pre-application review is optional.
 - o **Note:** Feedback will not indicate the likelihood that an Applicant will be selected for funding. Addressing some or all review feedback, comments, or suggestions does not guarantee selection. MassCEC reserves ultimate discretion to fund or not fund any application to the Program.

- **Explore Resources:** Resources are available on MassCEC’s website to learn more about capacity building, clean energy, community engagement, identification of Priority Groups (e.g. environmental justice map viewer), available incentives & programs, and complementary grant opportunities. Applicants new to clean energy are especially encouraged to review our [Clean Energy 101 primer](#). See resources at: <https://www.masscec.com/program/empower-massachusetts>. Applicants considering implementing a community education, outreach, and/or adoption campaign may be required to engage in discussions with MassCEC about the nature of their projects, and MassCEC may be able to provide useful resources regarding the operation of such a campaign.

- **Connect on Slack:** MassCEC has also created a Slack workspace specifically for discussing ideas and seeking partnerships, it can be found [here](#).

- **Join Our Email List:** MassCEC will maintain an opt-in listserv that will provide Program updates, including descriptions of potential Applicants seeking partners. If you are not on the EmPower Mass listserv, and would like to be added, email empower@masscec.com. MassCEC may also seek to facilitate relationships directly upon request. As the program evolves other opportunities may arise and will be shared on the website or through the listserv.

If you have a suggestion about other types of support we can offer, let us know!

Electronic Accessibility:

If accessibility to a computer, the 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, our team is available to discuss alternative options such as video application. Please call Lisa Dobbs, Program Manager at 617-315-9367 or email at empower@masscec.com.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<p><u>Experience and Qualifications</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants have a demonstrated history engaging with one or more Priority Groups. • Applicant partners (community-based) have experience in successfully developing programs or projects to support one or more Priority Groups. It is not required previous program or project efforts be connected to clean energy. Applicant partners (clean energy implementors) must have demonstrated experience in clean energy.
<p><u>Innovation & Replicability</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program model or project plan for implementation is reasonably new and untested, needs assistance to become viable, or overcomes barriers in new/innovative ways. • Program model or project plan for implementation demonstrates potential for replicability in the future, especially applications that align with the Priority Tracks.
<p><u>Completeness of Proposed Approach</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan clearly identifies Priority Groups that will be served by the program model or project. • Plan includes timeline and concrete milestones to track progress. • Plan includes specific goals and/or target outcomes for success. • Plan includes stakeholder engagement with Priority Groups. • When applicable, role and function of any partners is clarified.
<p><u>Budget</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget amounts are reasonable, and expenses are eligible (please review clarification on capital costs on pages 5-6). • Applicants have proposed a clear plan for how funds will be used to assist in implementing program model or project, including how much funding will be allotted to each project partner (if applicable).
<p><u>Priority Group Benefits</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program model or project plan provides a viable direct path to increase access to the benefits of clean energy or to meaningfully reduce energy burden for identified Priority Groups. • Program model or project plan offers additional non-energy related co-benefits such as workforce development, job creation, improved health outcomes, or community resiliency. Note that proposals that provide non-energy related co-benefits are encouraged but not required.
<p><u>Diversity of Approaches</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic, Technology & Model: Consideration may be given towards awarding applications from a representative spread of communities

	<p>across Massachusetts, a variety of clean energy technologies, and diverse ideas/concepts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: MassCEC will consider the awardee pool for the entirety of the Program to date when considering whether an Application provides a diversity of approaches to the projects funded through the Program. ● Diverse Applicants are encouraged to apply, especially those that fall into the RFP defined Priority Groups themselves. Applicants may offer a statement to this regard on the application form.
<p><u>Priority Track Requirements, if applicable</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed Program Model or Project reasonably meets requirements outlined in section 5.2 for either the Energy Coach/Ambassador Track or the Technical Assistance Provider Track. ● Provides reasonable set of proposed deliverables that will allow MassCEC to evaluate the success and challenges of the proposed project or program model for future refinement and scaling.

10. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions on EmPower Massachusetts, please email empower@masscec.com.

11. 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 its 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 hereto as Attachment 3, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

EmPower Massachusetts Program: Implementation Grants (the “RFP”)

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Lead Applicant named below. The undersigned has read and understands the RFP requirements and acknowledges and confirms that the Lead 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 the Lead 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 Lead 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.

Lead Applicant Organization: _____

Authorized Representative: _____

(Printed Name of Authorized Representative)

(Signature of Applicant or Authorized Representative)

(Title)

Date: _____

**ATTACHMENT 2: EMPOWER MASSACHUSETTS IMPLEMENTATION GRANT
APPLICATION FORM**

Attached separately.

ATTACHMENT 3: SAMPLE AGREEMENT & PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

Attached separately.