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## Workforce Development Request for Qualifications

### Workforce Capacity Building and Youth Pipeline Opportunities

RFQ ID: MassCEC FY 2012-WFD-01

Posting Date: December 12, 2011

#### I. SUMMARY

As our local clean energy industry competes on an international scale and evolves quickly to meet market needs, so must our training and education programs prepare students with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills needed to source the talent pipeline in support of this growing industry. This request for qualifications (“RFQ”) targets the development and support of projects that will address gaps in clean energy-related workforce capacity building and youth pipeline opportunities.

Massachusetts Clean Energy Center’s (“MassCEC”) Workforce Capacity Building Program was designed to develop replicable models that address deficiencies and enhance working models in the clean energy training and education programs of the Commonwealth’s education, non-profit and workforce universe. This solicitation will be the third iteration of its kind. The first solicitation, which was developed and administered in 2009 in partnership with Commonwealth Corporation, addressed the lack of courses and curricula that provide discreet training to cultivate specific skills sets for certain trainee-types (trades people, vocational and college students, out of school youth and adults). [www.masscec.com/curriculum](http://www.masscec.com/curriculum) The second solicitation addressed access to “hands-on” training by building an infrastructure of brick and mortar facilities that can now be used by our education, workforce and industry stakeholders. [www.cleanenergyeducation.org](http://www.cleanenergyeducation.org) This current request will attempt to address more organizational deficiencies in the workforce universe, which include a lack of clean energy knowledge, experience and skills among our training providers (i.e. educators and instructors), lack of access to industry-related work experience for both educators and students, and lack of exposure to clean energy career options requiring Science Technology Engineering and Math (“STEM”) skills. Together, the package of these three contiguous efforts will provide a strong infrastructure of accessible resources and replicable models.

#### A. OVERVIEW AND GOALS:

“Clean Energy”, as defined by the Green Jobs Act of 2008 and for the purposes of this solicitation, means “advanced and applied technologies that significantly reduce or eliminate the use of energy from non-renewable sources, including, but not limited to: energy efficiency; demand response; energy conservation and those technologies powered in whole or in part by the sun, wind, water, biomass, alcohol, wood, fuel cells, [and] any renewable, non-depletable or recyclable fuel [or] an alternative energy-generating source.”

**MassCEC is seeking proposals that, in the aggregate:**

- Develop 5-6 replicable projects that target a systematic approach to teaching clean energy concepts;

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- Provide teaching, learning, mentorship and partnership opportunities with the clean energy industry for 25-35 educators.
- Provide teaching, learning, mentorship and partnership opportunities with the clean energy industry for 200-400 students, including up to 200 low-income high school students and disconnected youth that may not otherwise have access to work experience in the clean energy field;
- Expose hundreds of students to clean energy and STEM-related careers;
- Engage 60-70 clean energy companies in the classroom and via workplace opportunities, and
- Create a synthesized network of partnerships across the state that leverages each other's strengths towards providing meaningful teaching and learning experiences for students.

*This table describes the key challenges to meeting the workforce needs of our clean energy industry that this request will seek to alleviate.*

| Challenge/Need  | Data Sources  |
|---|---|
| <i>Meet industry requirements for skill labor.</i>  | The results of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Industry Report indicate that clean energy employers in Massachusetts prefer or require more education and training of their employees than clean energy employers across the country. <sup>1</sup>   |
| <i>Invest in our workforce system to create stronger career pathways in clean energy.</i>                         | The 2010 report, <i>Massachusetts' Forgotten Middle Skills</i> , articulates a clear need to align vocational-technical training, community colleges and public higher education to meet the demands of the Commonwealth's growing innovation clusters, including clean energy where there is significant local, state and national investment in job creation. <sup>2</sup>                            |
| <i>To compete, the Massachusetts clean energy industry needs strong resources supporting its talent pipeline.</i> | The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Task Force on 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills <sup>3</sup> and the Governor's Science Technology Engineer and Math (STEM) Advisory Council <sup>4</sup> call for development and support of activities that reach both the educator and student to expose and integrate STEM-career activities in preparation for middle and high skill jobs. |

**B. SUBMISSION SCHEDULE, DEADLINE AND INFORMATION SESSION**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Request for Concept Paper Release Date    | Monday, December 12, 2011                |
| Close of Applicants' Webinar Registration | Friday, December 16, 2011, 2 pm          |
| Applicants' Webinar                       | Monday, December 19, 2011, 2 pm          |
| Deadline for Written Questions            | Monday, December 19, 2011, 5 pm          |
| Final Questions & Answers Posted          | Wednesday, December 21, 2011 at 5 pm     |
| <b>Qualifications Submission Due Date</b> | <b>Friday, February 17, 2012 at 3 pm</b> |
| Applicants Notified of Status             | March 2012                               |
| Implementation Plan Development Phase     | April 2012                               |
| Estimated Contract Start Timeframe        | June 1, 2012                             |

(i) Responses must be received by MassCEC **no later than 3:00 PM Friday, February 17, 2012**. Only complete, timely responses will be considered.

<sup>1</sup> [http://masscec.com/masscec/file/MassCEC%20Industry-Rept\\_DesignFinal%281%29.pdf](http://masscec.com/masscec/file/MassCEC%20Industry-Rept_DesignFinal%281%29.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://skills2competema.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/forgottenjobs\\_ma.pdf](http://skills2competema.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/forgottenjobs_ma.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=4429>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=gov3subtopic&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Our+Team&L2=Lieutenant+Governor+Timothy+P.+Murray&L3=Councils%2c+Cabinets%2c+and+Commissions&L4=Governor%27s+Science%2c+Technology%2c+Engineering%2c+and+Math+Advisory+Council&id=Agov3>

The following items must be submitted to MassCEC as part of a qualification package:

- An electronic copy (preferred) *or* **one** hard copy (double-sided and stapled) of the Qualification Package (Attachments A through F). Please save them in a MS Word file under a distinguishing file name.
- Applications may be delivered/emailed to:

Massachusetts Clean Energy Center  
c/o Workforce Development Programs  
55 Summer Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02110  
(617) 315-9347 (phone)  
(617) 315-9356 (fax)  
[anatella@masscec.com](mailto:anatella@masscec.com)

- (i) An optional bidders' webinar will be held on **Monday, December 19, 2011, 2 pm**. Directions to participate will follow registration.

All potential applicants interested in participating in the webinar must register by **Friday, December 16, 2011 at 2pm**. To register, please email Arthur Natella at [ANatella@masscec.com](mailto:ANatella@masscec.com). Please include "Capacity Building Bidder Conference" in the subject line of the email.

### C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY:

Total funding available for this request is up to \$850,000.

**Match Requirement:** Match is not required for a grant, although it is strongly encouraged and projects that leverage additional funding will be scored more highly.

### D. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT(S):

A project term may range between 10-18 months depending on the type of project and associated requirements.

## II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS- Lead applicants must be from one of the following:

- i. Massachusetts Higher Education Institutions offering 2 and 4 year degrees
- ii. Massachusetts Secondary and Vocational-Technical High Schools
- iii. Community-based and non-profit organizations, with 501(c)(3) status, located in Massachusetts
- iv. Community-Based Organizations providing GED or alternative high school diploma services to youth and young adults

**B. REQUIRED PARTNERS** -Each lead applicant must identify at least three clean energy companies as partners to the project and have a signed Memorandum of Agreement outlining their roles and responsibilities during the project.

### C. OTHER PARTNERS- Other potential partners may include but are not limited to:

- One-Stop Career Centers
- Workforce Investment Boards

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- Other community based organizations, higher education institutions, primary, secondary or vocational technical high schools
- Education and training providers
- Local economic development agencies
- Clean energy industry professional/trade associations
- Foundations
- Local community action councils
- Chambers of Commerce
- Labor unions

Each partner must have a signed Memorandum of Agreement outlining their roles and responsibilities during the project. Partners may also all sign one Memorandum of Agreement.

#### **D. QUALIFICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

(i) **Qualifications:** MassCEC is seeking qualifications from applicants for two types of projects:

- A. Workforce Capacity Building-** Up to \$450,000 is available for 4-9 awards between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to support activities leading to workforce training program enhancement, expansion or new program development activities that build the instructional capacity and/or expose students to clean energy concepts at higher education institutions, secondary and vocational technical high schools, and community-based/non-profit organizations. Applicants should engage the clean energy industry directly in order to provide industry-related experience and teaching concepts for its trainers, instructors and/or professors, expose students to clean energy concepts using STEM-focused teaching and learning, and develop replicable projects that lead to comprehensive, systematic and sustainable models for instruction in clean energy.

Examples of projects may include, but are not limited: engaging clean energy industry representatives in the classroom as instructors/volunteers/program advisors, providing teacher externships and/or sabbaticals at local clean energy employers, developing projects/capstone and/or problem-solving activities for applied science in the clean energy field, and projects that expose students to careers opportunities in clean energy with a specific emphasis on STEM-related skills.

- B. Youth Pipeline Opportunity-** Up to \$400,000 is available for projects that seek to work directly with clean energy companies to provide work experience (co-ops, internships etc) to low-income high school students and/or disconnected youth between the ages of 16 and 24. Applicants in this category should have experience commensurate with providing guidance, support and direct case management for low-income youth and should also have experience working with employers interested in providing youth employment. MassCEC anticipates that awards will include administrative and project management costs and costs associated with subsidized employment up to 75% of a student's hourly wages not to exceed \$10/hr.

(ii) **Implementation Plan:** MassCEC seeks qualified applicants able to implement a program that can begin no later than June 1, 2012. MassCEC requests that applicants provide a detailed timetable describing the process by which applicants will work with MassCEC and external partners to establish a program design. Applicants do not need to propose development of a new program design if they have an existing model that has proven to be successful with the target populations. We are seeking applicants with experience and capacity to incorporate the following features into program design:

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- Involvement of clean energy industry/employer partners in designing, assessing and implementing training and education programs for educators and/or students alike to ensure that they are aligned with requirements for jobs in clean energy;
- Align STEM-education and career awareness for students across different academic levels in order to increase exposure to opportunities in clean energy careers and the requisite skills needed to obtain employment in the industry;
- Align programs as part of a more systematic approach to creating career pathways and skill development for a talent pipeline in support of the clean energy industry;
- Provide access to industry-related work experience for educators or students that reduce barriers to teaching and learning about clean energy careers and the requisite skills needed to obtain employment in the industry; and
- Case management and strategies to ensure low-income high school students and/or disconnected youth participants find and retain co-ops/internships at clean energy companies.

### III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

- A. *Qualifications Submission Instructions:*** Qualifications are due on **Friday, February 17, 2012 at 3:00 PM**. Please send submissions to: [anatella@masscec.com](mailto:anatella@masscec.com) “Workforce Capacity Building and Youth Pipeline Opportunities” must appear in the email subject line. Required submission forms must be submitted in Word file format. The signed MOU should be submitted in the form of a PDF file.
- B. *Qualifications Submission Package Components:*** The following documents make up the required components of the Qualifications Submission Package. Failure to provide any of the documents or materials listed below may result in the disqualification of the application.
1. *Qualifications Form:* Attachment C is the Qualifications Form. Respond to all applicable questions on the Qualifications Form and submit Attachments A, B, D, and E. You may adjust the spacing in each section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions. If a question does not apply write “not applicable.” The Qualifications Form may not exceed ten (10) pages, using a font size of 11 or larger. Tables, Figures, Charts, or Appendices are included in the ten-page limit.
  2. *Memorandum of Agreement:* Attachment F is the Memorandum of Agreement. Applicants should edit and make additions as appropriate. However, the MOA should detail specific partner roles and responsibilities, including hiring commitments. All partners in the project must sign the Memorandum of Agreement.
- C. *Submission Evaluation Process:*** Submissions in response to this RFQ will be evaluated by a review committee that will consist of representatives from MassCEC, Commonwealth Corporation and other external partners.

The Submission review process will consist of the following steps:

#### **Step 1**

Submissions will be screened for completeness, conformity to the program requirements and timeliness of response. Submissions that are incomplete, non-conforming, or late will not be considered.

#### **Step 2**

The review committee will examine all eligible submissions and will score each submission based on the responses included in the Qualifications Submission Package.

Review results will be documented. MassCEC reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant to ensure that the review committee has a complete understanding of the program concept.

#### **Step 3**

MassCEC will notify qualified applicants of their status and invite applicants to submit an **Implementation Plan**, including a comprehensive program design, as described below. Selection as a qualified applicant does not guarantee an award. MassCEC will work with qualified applicants to develop an implementation plan. Applicants should expect a minimum of one initial and one mid-point meeting with MassCEC during the development of their implementation plan.

The implementation plan will include:

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- Full description of the program design and strategy, type of training, training delivery, training schedule, and employer roles;
- Outreach and assessment strategy;
- Support services;
- Participant outcomes;
- Alignment of partnerships and projects; and
- Budget request and match contributions.

**Step 4**

MassCEC will review all implementation plan submissions. Grants will be awarded upon successful review of qualified applicants' implementation plans.

- D. *Rejection of Submissions:*** MassCEC reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to accept any and all applications, in whole or in part, if deemed to be in the interest of the MassCEC to do so. This submission does not commit MassCEC to award any contracts.
- E. *IRS Tax Forms:*** All applicants that are selected for an award will be required to submit a copy of a properly completed United States Internal Revenue Service Tax Form W-9 (the "W-9"). Failure to provide the W-9 shall be grounds for withholding grant payments until such W-9 is received. W-9s should be emailed to the secure email address [MCECfinance@masscec.com](mailto:MCECfinance@masscec.com) at the time of award.

#### IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

MassCEC will give funding priority to entities that meet the following criterion:

##### **General (10 Pts)**

- All required materials and forms submitted on time (threshold criteria)
- Applicant meets eligibility standards (threshold criteria)
- Overall quality and content of application
- Geographic distribution of the project
- **Target Areas- This criterion applies only to projects applying for the Youth Pipeline Activities**
  - Projects that effectively target high school or out of school/disconnected youth populations of < 300% of poverty level (or other self-sufficiency level)
  - Program targets high school or out of school/disconnected youth populations in one or more low-income community, including Economic Target Areas, and/or Gateways Cities

##### **Team and Qualifications (30 Pts)**

###### *Applicant Qualifications*

- Clean energy related accomplishments, experience, and training completed or offered at the time of the proposal.
- Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the concepts underlying the proposed programs?
- Does the applicant have documented experience in developing and implementing workforce education, training and placement programs?
- Does the applicant have a record of developing training curricula that have been approved as a course, or approved for integration into existing curricula?
- Does applicant have record of successful experience working with partners in the design and implementation of workforce education, training and placement programs?

###### *Staff Qualifications*

- Clear and concise identification of individuals or staff who will be involved in all aspects of the project
- Are key personnel's education, qualifications and experience relevant to the program needs? Is the overall capability of the staff adequate and appropriate?
- Has the training/project management team demonstrated recent experience designing and developing relevant curricula for secondary, post-secondary, and workforce instruction programs?
- What is the quality of the program staff's performance on past programs or their achievements related to proposed work? How were their efforts evaluated?
- Do the personnel dedicated or tasked as contractors to this program possess strong clean energy knowledge and working experience?

##### **Program Design and Work plan (50 Pts)**

- The accuracy, quality, and usefulness of the information and ideas that will be developed as part of the program are consistent with the goals of the RFQ.
- Strength of capacity building strategy (engaging employers in curriculum development, in advisory capacity, employer expectations are identified in application and will be met by program, etc.)
- Application addresses recommended program elements
- Is the application submitted by Partnership? If so, does partnership include strong commitments from recommended constituencies?
- Does the project include coordination and interaction with all of the relevant parties?

##### **Budget (10pts)**

- Reasonableness and validity of funding requested for each proposed activity
- Funding requested relative to other applicants
- Matching funds share relative to other applicants

*Note: Matching funds are not required but strongly encouraged.*

## V. GENERAL REQUEST FOR RESPONSE CONDITIONS

### V.1. Notice of Public Disclosure

#### V.1.1. General Statement

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, except for those documents exempted from disclosure, any documentary material, data, or other information received by the MassCEC from a Grantee is a public record subject to disclosure. Materials that fall under certain categories, however, may be exempt from public disclosure under a statutory or common law exemption, including the limited exemption at Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 23J, Section 2(k) regarding confidential information submitted to MassCEC by an applicant for any form of assistance. Specifically, materials that fall under one of the following categories may be determined to be not public records and thus not subject to disclosure:

- Information, documents, or data that consist of trade secrets;
- Information, documents, or data that consist of commercial or financial information regarding the operation of any business conducted by the Applicant; and
- Information, documents, or data regarding the Applicant's competitive position in a particular field of endeavor.

Grantee may assert a claim of confidentiality for these categories of materials by clearly identifying the documents, reports, or other information for which it wishes to receive confidential treatment and by attaching the Notice of Confidentiality Cover Letter.

### V.2. Contractual Requirements

MassCEC intends to enter into an agreement with the selected applicant containing certain standard provisions (the "Agreement"). (See "**Attachment E**: General Terms and Conditions" for a copy of the Agreement.) MassCEC reserves the right to amend the Agreement without further issuance of another solicitation. Upon MassCEC authorization to proceed with the project, MassCEC and the selected applicant will execute a task order (the "Task Order") (substantially in the form appended hereto as Attachment 1) which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of parties.

**Applicants are required to specify any exceptions to the Agreement and to make any suggested counterproposal with their application. A failure to specify exceptions and/or counterproposals will be deemed an acceptance of the agreement's general terms and conditions, and no subsequent negotiation of such provisions shall be permitted. A signed Agreement must accompany the application if the applicant has not specified any exceptions or counterproposals.**

### V.3. Waiver Authority

Conditions, covenants, duties and obligations contained in this Agreement may be waived only by written agreement between the parties. Forbearance or indulgence in any form or manner by a party shall not be construed as a waiver, nor in any way limit the remedies available to that party.

### V.4. Disclaimer

This RFQ 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, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the RFQ in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.

