



Request for Proposals: Climate-Critical Workforce
Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure FY24 Grants
MASSCEC-WFD-12062023

Date of Issue: December 7, 2023

Proposals Due: January 26, 2024 and May 1, 2024

Anticipated Available Funding: \$6,450,000

All proposals must be submitted to

rfpworkforce@masscec.com

by 11:59 on January 26, 2024 and 11:59 pm on May 1, 2024

I. SUMMARY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is offering Climate-Critical Workforce Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure Grants (“Climate Training Grants”). The Climate Training Grants will increase access to modern, relevant training equipment and infrastructure and provide direct funding and technical assistance support to organizations that can build and scale career pathways and upskilling programs that help Massachusetts residents access and advance in climate-critical priority occupations.

Massachusetts is a global leader in clean energy and home to the highest-earning clean energy workers in the country. Since 2010, the clean energy industry has grown by 73%, which accounted for more than 14% of all net jobs created in the state during that time.¹

Massachusetts has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions – first cutting emissions by 50% by 2030 and then achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 — policies that will further cement the state’s leadership in decarbonization and drive clean energy job growth at a rapid pace for decades to come. MassCEC’s [Powering the Future, A Massachusetts Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment](#) projects that the state’s decarbonization plan will require the clean energy workforce to expand by a likely conservative projection of **29,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers by 2030, or the equivalent of 38,100 workers spending some or all of their time on clean energy projects.**

The Climate Training grants are designed to help Massachusetts meet clean energy and climate tech employer needs while providing high-quality training and support opportunities for residents across the Commonwealth. Applicants may apply for Climate Training Grants for programming that falls within one (1) or more of the following categories:

- **Strand A:** Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations;
- **Strand B:** Climate-Critical Upskilling for Incumbent Workers; or
- **Strand C:** Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training.

Depending on the type of request, applicants may apply for Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$800,000) 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 Section VI: Budget.

Details about the application process are outlined in Section IX: How to Apply.

¹ “2022 Massachusetts Clean Energy Industry Report,” page 13, <https://www.masscec.com/resources/2022-massachusetts-clean-energy-industry-report>.

Funds for Strand A and B of this program will be expended from funding provided to MassCEC through the FY24 State Budget.

Funds for Strand C of this program will be expended from certain federal funding made available to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”). Please see Section XIII below, regarding contracting requirements for more information.

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 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 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

Climate-Critical Workforce Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure FY24 Grants Goals:

This solicitation is intended to help build job training and support capacity to fill gaps in the workforce for climate-critical sectors through a range of project and program models, all of which should center employer and participant needs in the design and program implementation. These funds will enable applicants to:

- **Expand recruitment pipelines** to broaden access to climate-critical priority occupations.
- **Create new and/or expand technical and job readiness training opportunities** to provide the skills necessary to attain placement in climate-critical priority occupations.
- **Create new and/or expand career advancement programming and upskilling training opportunities** to help workers gain valuable skills while businesses expand capacity to support the state’s climate goals.
- **Leverage effective workforce development models like registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships** by providing the resources to launch and/or expand programs.
- **Develop and nurture new relationships with employers** in climate-critical sectors to develop job placements and identify avenues for career growth.

- **Establish and grow wraparound and retention support services** to address potential barriers to entry and advancement in climate-critical occupations.
- **Expand the availability and/or effectiveness** of climate-critical training by securing modern equipment and infrastructure resources for their programming.

Key Considerations in Program Design: While by no means exhaustive, the list below highlights relevant design considerations and best practices:

- **Determining Occupational Focus** – Awardees must provide programming that prepares participants to enter and succeed in occupations critical to the Commonwealth achieving 2030 emission goals and net zero emissions in 2050. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the Massachusetts Clean Energy Workforce Needs Assessment, available at <https://www.masscec.com/resources/massachusetts-clean-energy-workforce-needs-assessment>, to identify and consider anticipated priority occupations.
- **Defining and Targeting Living Wages** – To advance Massachusetts’ clean energy workforce equity goals, applicants should design programming that expands workforce development pipelines and provides long-term economic stability to participants in the form of careers that offer living wages². Certain climate-critical priority occupations start at lower hourly wages. However, they may still be appropriate target occupations for this program if they enable expedited entry into high-growth career pathways, so long as they offer wages more in line with living wages within a reasonable timeframe of six (6) to twelve (12) months.
- **Providing Transparent Career Fit Counseling** – To ensure the long-term success of training participants, potential recruits should be interested and able to work in the target occupations. Recruits should be aware of the job description, duties, work environment, requirements, salary range, and potential career pathway before applying for and enrolling in the program.
- **Designing and Delivering Quality Training** – Applicants who are in the process or intend to develop training curricula are encouraged to reach out to MassCEC to determine the availability of quality curricula to use as exemplars or as the basis for customization. Additionally, skills training should be informed by employer input and differentiated to meet the learning needs of the participant population.
- **Designing for Inclusivity and Addressing Barriers** – From the initial outreach all the way through retention services, applicants are encouraged to design programming that mitigates barriers and provides more inclusive training and advancement opportunities for the targeted populations. While this solicitation does not require the target populations include individuals from priority populations identified in other Equity Workforce solicitations, MassCEC is committed to creating an inclusive and diverse clean energy workforce, so applicants are encouraged to consider including individuals from

² The MIT Living Wage Calculator (<https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/25/locations>) is a helpful tool.

Environmental Justice (EJ) Neighborhoods³ and Low-Income Neighborhoods, current and former Fossil Fuel Workers, members of Federally recognized and State-acknowledged tribes, and other underrepresented populations in the program design. Applicants are encouraged to design and budget for programs that can offer strong support services with clear intake assessment and case management practices to determine initial and ongoing needs. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to explore strategic usage of training stipends, paid on-the-job learning, and initial wage subsidies combined with ongoing mentorship and support service during the early period of placements.

- Designing for Success** – Strong workforce development programs typically strive for at least 80% completion, 70% placement of participants in target occupations within thirty (30) days after completion, and 60% retention of participants in target occupations twelve (12) months after initial placement. For applicants planning to support incumbent workers, other milestones and signals of success need to be considered instead of placement, including skills gain, obtaining certifications/licenses, wage increase, promotions, increase in clean energy work opportunities, etc. For applicants seeking to serve participants with higher initial barriers, it is helpful to reference any comparable outcome data. In cases where the proposed target rates for a program are lower than 80%/70%/60%, applicants are encouraged to detail strategies and support that can lead to increased outcomes over the performance period of the grant.

Examples of Appropriate Programs:

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

Strand	Examples
Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations	<p>A for-profit solar energy company recognizes the need for more trained workers in customer service and installation roles, so it stands up an academy to provide this training. At the same time, the company engages local community-based organizations to ensure that underserved individuals from their constituent communities gain access to these career pathways.</p> <p>A post-secondary institution works with several Massachusetts climate tech companies to propose the development of a workforce development program focused on equipping individuals with skills in software and web development, programming, and testing to meet the demands of the climate tech industry.</p>

³ More information about Environmental Justice Populations can be found at [Environmental Justice Populations in Massachusetts | Mass.gov](#)

<p>Strand B: Climate-Critical Upskilling for Incumbent Workers</p>	<p>A training provider works with a group of climate tech employers to design and deliver a program to better meet the skills gap needs and logistical constraints of current workers so that they can be upskilled for advanced positions or expanded work duties.</p> <p>A community college with an existing HVAC training curriculum works with an employer partner to develop an additional heat pump curriculum and partners with a community-based organization providing training stipends and wraparound support services to ensure that current HVAC technicians can gain access to the upskilling program and area employers can expand their service offerings.</p>
<p>Strand C: Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training</p>	<p>A vocational high school with an existing auto technician training program proposes the equipment needed to expand their training to include preparation on electric vehicle repairs.</p> <p>The training center associated with a labor union focused on climate-critical trades proposes additional equipment and access to an online training platform that will expand their apprentices’ knowledge of and exposure to new technology critical to the state’s decarbonization plans.</p>

Note: The hypothetical examples presented above are provided as 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.

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.

WORKFORCE PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY^{4 5}

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

⁴ *Designates occupations where clean energy job growth partially offsets projected occupation job losses economywide.

⁵ The occupation star ranking was developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development in 2017 and is based on a five-star ranking system in which higher-demand, higher-wage jobs are ranked higher, based on short-term hiring projections (2017), long-term hiring projections (2024) and occupation median wage.

Line Installers and Repairers	3.3	\$ 48.02	722	98%
Maintenance Workers and Repairers, General (including building operators)	4.1	\$ 24.62	161	57%
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	4	\$ 31.69	321	29%
Pile Driver Operators	4	\$ 47.86	14	482%
Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters	3.6	\$ 37.91	397	11%
Roofers	3.2	\$ 30.46	154	25%
Sheet Metal Workers	3.2	\$ 35.55	281	28%
Surface Mining Machine Operators and Earth Drillers	N/A	\$ 30.48	16	43%
Wind Turbine Service Technicians	N/A	\$ 32.38	33	33%
MANAGEMENT OCCUPATIONS				
General and Operations Managers	5	\$ 60.62	1,579	31%
OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS				
Customer Service Representatives*	4	\$ 22.72	404	27%
PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS				
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	3	\$ 19.46	52	697%
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators*	2.5	\$ 18.94	358	23%
Miscellaneous Metal Workers and Plastic Workers*	1.6	\$ 21.61	75	1851%
Power Plant Operators, Distributors and Dispatchers	3.8	\$ 44.11	116	85%
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters*	2.4	\$ 25.43	140	57%
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Workers	2.5	\$ 26.31	139	28%
SALES REPRESENTATIVES OF SERVICES OCCUPATIONS				
Miscellaneous Sales Representatives, Services	4.5	\$ 38.13	333	22%
TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS				
Crane and Tower Operators	2	\$ 32.47	51	331%
Ship and Boat Captains and Operators	2.5	\$ 30.81	40	136%

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. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

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 are jointly applying, one party should take on the role of leading the application team (“Lead Applicant”). If a single organization is applying for this opportunity, that organization would also be the Lead Applicant.

In the context of this solicitation, any organization or individual anticipating receiving a portion of the grant funds for their activities related to the proposed work, through a subcontract or other formalized agreement, should be considered a partner applicant (“Partner Applicant”) and listed in Section 1.1 of Attachment 2. Application Form. MassCEC may request further information about the qualifications of Partner Applicants during the review process.

The applicant is encouraged to list other organizations and individuals not receiving a portion of the grant funds but contributing to the proposed work as proposed partners in Section 8 of Attachment 2 and indicate their past experience.

The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, the 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 CBOs) 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.
- Community Colleges, Colleges, or Universities, Comprehensive and Vocational High Schools, and Vocational Schools offering an after-hours or Career Technical Initiative evening training program.

- For-Profit entities such as for-profit training companies, trade associations, unions or other coalitions of businesses, clean energy installers, energy efficiency or home performance contractors, financial institutions, or other clean energy practitioners.
- Workforce Development Organizations, both non-profit and for-profit.
- MassHire Workforce Investment Boards and Career Centers.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Lead Applicants must have a Massachusetts office or staffing.
- Lead Applicant is currently in good standing with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and can provide a Certification of Good Standing (COGS)⁶. Please note that community colleges, public vocational-technical high schools, and public state universities serving as the lead applicant do not need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing.
- Applicants are also eligible to apply for MassCEC’s other workforce development grants and programs, so long as those applications are separate and distinct efforts from this application.
- 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.

VI. BUDGET AND COST SHARE

MassCEC anticipates awarding a total of \$6,450,000 in funds through the two deadlines being offered to applicants, with funds available until expended. MassCEC may increase or decrease funding at its sole discretion.

Grant Strand	Award Range	Cost Share Requirements	Duration Options
Strand A: Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations	\$100,000-\$800,000	Not required, but encouraged	One (1) to Two (2) year award. (an additional year of post-program monitoring and metrics tracking is required after the proposed project is complete, so applicants should plan and budget for that obligation.)
Strand B: Climate-Critical Upskilling for Incumbent	\$100,000-\$600,000	Not required, but encouraged	One (1) to Two (2) year award. (an additional year of post-program monitoring and metrics tracking is

⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dor-certificate-of-good-standing-andor-corporate-tax-lien-waiver-faqs>

Workers			required after the proposed project is complete, so applicants should plan and budget for that obligation.)
Strand C: Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training	\$50,000- \$750,000	1:1 for private entities 0.25:1 for public entities	One (1) year to Eighteen (18) month award.

All proposals under Strand C must demonstrate a commitment to cost-sharing as MassCEC looks to leverage shared resources with limited funding. Specifically, project proposals submitted by private entities will require a one-to-one (1:1) financial match. All other proposals must demonstrate a minimum twenty-five percent (25%) cost-share, which can comprise financial contributions, in-kind contributions, or a combination thereof. Projects with greater levels of cost-share will be prioritized in the selection process.

Proposals lacking any cost-share may be considered but must make a clear case for why including a cost-share is not possible or would be prohibitive. In-kind cost-share includes non-monetary contributions to project activities that are not covered by grant funds. Examples of in-kind cost-share can include but are not limited to: personnel time devoted to project activities, facility space used for project activities, materials and supplies necessary for project activities, etc.

If a proposal requests funds for support services (e.g., services to help individuals overcome Potential Barriers such as childcare costs, fees to get a driver’s license, programs to help individuals get a GED, etc.), the applicant must clearly document and explain the basis for determining the amount to be made available and how these services will directly support Priority Group(s)’ participation in the proposed project..

At MassCEC’s discretion, applications for Climate Training Grants that are not detailed enough for initial award or need further development prior to implementation may be offered a planning grant or a capacity grant, and if funding is available, an opportunity to reapply in a later round of Climate Training Grants for implementation funds. Planning grants are intended for the exploration, development, or refinement of innovative ideas for potential implementation initiatives to support individuals from target populations seeking to enter climate-critical occupations in the clean energy sector, while 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.

Additionally, MassCEC may elect to award a portion of Climate Training Grant funds requested by Applicants in their applications in the event a proposed project contains sufficient detail to merit an implementation grant versus a planning grant or capacity grant but does not have sufficient scope to justify the entire amount of the award requested by the applicant.

Depending on the structure of the final grant agreement, applicants may receive a portion of the funding upfront upon award. They will receive the remainder in amounts determined by the contract and terms agreed to by MassCEC and selected Applicants (see Attachment 4: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strands A&B and Attachment 5: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strand C: ARPA Funding, as examples). The sample agreement is provided as a resource, and MassCEC reserves the right to present awardees with grant agreements that differ from the example provided. Applicants will have an opportunity to clarify specific budget needs in their application.

VII. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES:

For the Equity Workforce Training Implementation Grants, applicants must use funds to implement workforce development programs that lead to careers in the clean energy sector. Grant funds shall be used for activities including, but not limited to:

- Staff time devoted to the program, including outreach and recruitment, intake and assessment, training delivery, wraparound support services, job placement services, and retention services, or to general operating activities needed to launch and continue the program, where costs related to general operating do not exceed the stated indirect rate;
- Marketing, communications, and outreach activities related to recruitment for the program, such as design costs for marketing collateral, purchasing mass media spots, and website or social media costs;
- Subcontracting with training providers for curriculum delivery or with vendors providing specific training platforms or licensure testing services;
- Purchasing and installing specialized equipment and infrastructure for training;
- Leasing venue space, and other direct startup costs needed for training delivery;
- Training stipends and subsidized wages for on-the-job training/initial placements; and
- Supporting services to address barrier reduction, including transportation reimbursements, daycare subsidies, and equipment and gear subsidies.

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

- Purchase or lease of venue space or equipment intended for general operating purposes;
- Costs associated with preparing this proposal; and
- Activities that occur before or following the term of an awarded grant.

VIII. ESTIMATED TIMELINE

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC's discretion. Notification of Award timelines may vary based on the number of applications and time of year.

Release of RFP	December 7, 2023
Questions due to MassCEC via email to rfpworkforce@masscec.com	Ongoing through April 5, 2024
Questions with answers posted to the MassCEC website	Updated at least every month on the 2 nd Tuesday through April 5, 2024
Pre-Application Webinars	December 19, 2023 at 1:00 pm March 14, 2024 at 3:00 pm
Pre-Application Office Hours	TBA
Proposals Due	January 26, 2024, by 11:59 pm for review during February 2024 May 1, 2024, by 11:59 pm for review during May 2024
Interviews of Applicants (as needed)	TBD
Notification of Award	March/April 2024 if received by January 26, 2024 June 2024 if received by May 1, 2024

IX. HOW TO APPLY

To apply:

1. Review this RFP to understand the opportunity, requirements, and MassCEC’s objectives.
2. Review all RFP forms and attachments.
3. Attend MassCEC informational webinars and/or utilize other informational resources offered (see below – Resources and Support for Potential Applicants).
4. Contact MassCEC with questions and/or to discuss your idea(s) via email at rfpworkforce@masscec.com.
5. Complete all RFP forms and attachments, adhering to word limits, format requirements, deadlines, and other instructions listed within this RFP and each attachment.
6. Submit all completed RFP forms and attachments by email to rfpworkforce@masscec.com by 11:59 on January 26, 2024 or by 11:59 pm on May 1, 2024, with “Climate Training Grant Application” in the subject line.

A complete application packet will include the following:

- Attachment 1: Authorized Applicant’s Signature and Acceptance Form
- Attachment 2: Equity Workforce Training Planning Grant Application Form
- Attachment 3: Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule
- Attachment 4: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strands A&B
- Attachment 5: Sample Grant Agreement Language for Strand C: ARPA Funding

Attachments 1 and 2 must be submitted as separate documents in PDF or Word format.
Attachment 3 must be submitted as an individual 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 is requesting changes to any of the language in the sample grant agreements; **if changes are requested to the grant agreement language, please note that in Section 11 of Attachment 2. Application Form and return an annotated version of Attachment 4 or 5, depending on which Strand you are applying to, as part of your application packet.** (Note: 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.

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

1.1. Program Budget

On tab one (1), provide a standard line-item project budget representing the full term of the proposed project, including staff salaries, direct program costs, subcontracting costs, indirect costs, and fringe costs. **Each line-item should include rates and units/quantities, as well as detailed narratives that align with the proposed activities described in Attachment 2 Application Form, and should not reflect lump sums for the associated tasks.** If multiple similar tasks are planned, each unique task with an assigned rate should be detailed on a separate line; for example, if two (2) different types of stipends are being offered to participants, each stipend should be reflected on a separate line under Support Services.

Applicants intending to designate Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) or more of the grant funds to a subcontractor for the work proposed must submit a separate detailed line-item budget for the subcontractors using a copy of the provided budget template, Attachment 3 Budget and Proposed Payment Schedule.

1.2. Proposed Payment Schedule with Milestones and Deliverables

On tab two (2), provide a proposed payment schedule. During the fulfillment of the grant, MassCEC responds to timely invoices that provide documentation of deliverables to disburse grant funds. **Applicants 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 invoices are preferred.**

Complete application submissions will be accepted through **11:59 PM EST on January 26, 2024** for review during February 2024 and **11:59 PM EST on May 1, 2024** for review during May 2024. Under no circumstances will MassCEC accept responses past the deadline. Awards will be made competitively and until available funds are expended.

Resources and Support for Potential Applicants:

All Applicants are encouraged to work with MassCEC and utilize MassCEC support when preparing an application. Attendance at the pre-application webinars and office hours. Links to helpful resources and past webinars will be provided on the MassCEC website along with the links to the funding opportunity documents.

Additionally, applicants are encouraged to leverage MassCEC networks to seek partnerships. MassCEC will maintain an opt-in listserv that will provide program updates, including descriptions of potential applicants seeking part. Ifs if you are not on the Workforce listserv and would like to be added, email workforce@masscec.com.

MassCEC will offer a publicly accessible contact list of organizations seeking partnerships and their geographic and occupational interest areas for those seeking partnership opportunities. MassCEC may also seek to facilitate relationships directly upon request.

Electronic Accessibility:

If accessibility to a computer, internet, or software may prohibit you from submitting an electronic application, in general, or by any deadline, or if there are other challenges with accessibility, such as language or writing barriers, alternative options may be discussed, such as video application. Please email workforce@masscec.com or telephone Camilla Bacolod, Program Administrator, at (617) 315-9319 to discuss accommodations.

X. 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">• Applicants have a strong track record and demonstrated capacity for implementing workforce development programs, and a defined network of partners to provide comprehensive program services.• Applicants should highlight any history of providing unique or advanced approaches to program services.
<u>Target Occupations</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target occupations align with climate-critical occupations as outlined in the RFP and/or make a detailed case for an additional climate-critical occupation.• The target occupation(s) are contextualized into multiple career pathways for advancement, and the proposed program provides direct or supported access to navigating these pathways.
<u>Employer and Industry Engagement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants 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 or equipment and infrastructure investment align with the current demands of the industry.

<p><u>Outcomes, Budget, Leveraged Resources, and Sustainability</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants propose strong outcomes, a program design that can achieve these outcomes, and data collection practices that support effective outcome tracking. • Applicants propose milestones, deliverables timelines, and resource allocations that align with programming and participant needs. • Applicants proposed budget results in a reasonable per-participant cost for the type and intensity of programming the applicant proposes. • Applicants demonstrate progress towards identifying appropriate funding supports to leverage in the initial award period and sustainable funding sources to continue programming beyond the grant period.
<p><u>Diversity of Approaches</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 the criteria for this but has not completed certification, applicants may offer a statement in this regard on the application form.</p> <p>Additional factors that will be considered include geographic diversity, target sector/occupational diversity, support of Equity Workforce priority populations (e.g., individuals from EJ Neighborhoods and Low-Income Neighborhoods, Fossil Fuel Workers, members of Federally recognized and State-acknowledged Tribes, etc.), and support of additional categories of populations (e.g., residents of Gateway Cities, ESOL individuals, immigrants/refugees, returning citizens, opportunity youth, etc.),</p> <p>Consideration may be given to proposals offering novel and impactful approaches to workforce development.</p>

Strand A: (Career Pathway Training Leading to Employment in Climate-Critical Priority Occupations) will also be assessed on the following category:

<p><u>Program Design (Training Delivery, Outreach, Support Services, Placement, Retention)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a comprehensive training plan with strong vocational and work readiness curricula designed to meet employer needs and maximize participant success. • Whenever possible, programs provide pathways to industry-recognized credentials or licenses and/or articulated higher education credits. • Training delivery models embrace innovative and proven strategies to increase participant success (e.g., on-the-job training at the employer’s location, pre-apprenticeships, virtual reality to maximize hands-on training time, etc.). • The program design includes case management and support services tailored to meet participant needs and promote completion, retention, and advancement. • Applicants have a comprehensive placement strategy that includes dedicated job development staff through the leader applicant or partner, employer partners with provided letters of support or MOUs, transparent communication with employers about the assets and barriers of the participant population, and alignment between training
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	elements and potential employment placements.
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Strand B: (Climate-Critical Upskilling for Incumbent Workers) will also be assessed on the following category:

<u>Program Design</u> (Career Advancement and Upskilling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants present a detailed training plan with clear benefits to incumbent workers and participating employers. • Whenever relevant, the training program offers industry-recognized certifications. • The program design benefits participant skill development without proposing any costs to the worker. • The proposal includes clear and imminent opportunities for workers to utilize the skills developed in the training.
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Strand C: (Equipment and Infrastructure to Support Climate-Critical Training) will also be assessed on the following category:

<u>Program Impact on</u> <u>Training</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to increasing the availability/quality of climate-critical training in occupations indicated to have additional demand based on the Workforce Needs Assessment and/or through demonstrated employer demand. • Maximizes the increase of climate-critical skilled workers by Increasing the number of students able to participate in an existing program or creating a new program to meet demonstrated demand. • Leads to the addition or significant improvement in the climate-critical skills supported by an existing training program, especially those that facilitate the reskilling or upskilling of workers/ trainees who would otherwise be focused on fossil-fuel technologies or non-high-performance building practices. • Demonstrates sustainability by showing evidence of the ability of the organization to sustain the training program after the initial award. • Leverages partnerships and resources by scoping a project that includes the input and collaboration of relevant stakeholders alongside additional funding from local, state, federal, and private funding. • Demonstrates a commitment to increasing access to environmental justice and disadvantaged communities and populations historically underrepresented in the target occupation. • Demonstrates capacity to manage the fiscal and administrative obligations associated with receiving federal funds.
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XI. EXPECTATIONS FOR GRANT AWARDEES

In addition to fulfilling milestones and deliverables 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, milestones and deliverables schedule, payment schedule, and other terms are in conformity to MassCEC standards prior to commencement of project work and disbursements of funding.

2. Attend Awardee Cohort Sessions and Training

Awardees will be required to send a representative to participate in regular webinars and meetings with other awardees from this round of the solicitation to check in, promote networking, synergize projects, share best practices, and overall strengthen the quality of the workforce development ecosystem related to climate critical occupations. Cohort sessions and training sessions will be scheduled every quarter.

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 awardee. Applicants are encouraged to consider the staff time required to participate fully when developing plans and budgets for proposed programming.

4. Provide Regular Reporting and Case Studies

MassCEC requires awardees to provide regular reports typically timed to coincide with scheduled invoices for payment, with a preference towards quarterly invoices and 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 templates. The templated reports capture general programmatic and participant data, including but not limited to demographic data, employment and wage data, dosage of service, and changes to status that signal progress towards program completion, placement, and 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 the regular reports as agreed upon in the Scope of Work. At a minimum, case studies will be expected to include a one (1) page text description of a successful training participant and an appropriate

accompanying picture, with additional information, statistics, and photographs potentially requested by the MassCEC Program Manager. It is anticipated that case studies will be required on at least an annual basis.

XII. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

For all questions on the Climate Training, please email rfpworkforce@masscec.com.

XIII. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified in Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, any documentary material, data, or other information received by MassCEC from an applicant is a public record subject to disclosure. Applicants shall not send MassCEC any confidential or sensitive information in response to this RFP. If confidential information is submitted as part of the application and not clearly marked as confidential, such information may be made publicly available by MassCEC without further notice to the Applicant.

DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

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

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

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Upon MassCEC's authorization to proceed with the proposal, MassCEC and the awarded applicant(s) will execute a contract, substantially in the form of the Sample Agreement attached hereto as Attachment 4 for Strands A&B, and Attachment 5 for Strand C, that will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

PLEASE NOTE: Projects under Strand C will be funded through ARPA. Because of the federal funding behind the awards, Strand C projects will be subject to federal reporting and compliance requirements. Additionally, MassCEC is required to expend all ARPA funds awarded under Strand C prior to **December 31, 2026**, and therefore, will require final invoices to be submitted to MassCEC for these funds well in advance of the December 31, 2026 deadline. As a consequence of ARPA funding, there are federal pass-through requirements in the Sample Agreement in Attachment 5 that are unique to ARPA funding. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review all relevant provisions in the Sample Agreement in Attachment 5.

ATTACHMENT 1: AUTHORIZED APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

Climate-Critical Workforce Training, Equipment, and Infrastructure Grant (the “RFP”)

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Applicant named below. The undersigned has read and understands the RFP requirements and acknowledges and confirms that the Applicant and each member of its team have read and understand the RFP Requirements. The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that all of the terms and conditions of the RFP are mandatory.

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

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

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

Applicant: _____

(Printed Name of Applicant)

By: _____

(Signature of Applicant or Authorized Representative)

Title: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 2: APPLICATION FORM

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 3: BUDGET AND PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 4: SAMPLE AGREEMENT FOR STRANDS A&B

Attached separately

ATTACHMENT 5: SAMPLE AGREEMENT FOR STRAND C: ARPA FUNDING

Attached separately