

# Green School Works

## Draft Program Concept

July 12, 2024

### Key Program Information

Program Name	Green School Works
Program Scope	Provide technical assistance and implementation funding to K-12 public schools or districts for projects that improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, or mitigate the impacts of climate change, and support decarbonization planning and prioritization.
Estimated Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct stakeholder engagement and finalize Program design: Q1-Q2, FY2025</li><li>• Program documentation, TA RFP release, and TA consultant selection: Q2, FY2025</li><li>• Enrollment opens for all Program Components: Q3, FY2025</li></ul>
Potential Program Eligibility	Schools that meet the following criteria are eligible to enroll/apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• K-12 public school; and,</li><li>• serves a Massachusetts Environmental Justice Block Group population; and/or,</li><li>• is a designated Title I school.</li></ul>
Potential Competitive Selection Criteria	<p>General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Selected schools represent a diverse set of communities, i.e. rural, urban;</li><li>• School has a demonstrated need, i.e. this project would not happen without Program funding; and,</li><li>• Majority of student population is from a Massachusetts Environmental Justice Block Group.</li></ul> <p>For implementation funding awards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrated strategy for integrating projects with student learning; and,</li><li>• Project(s) intends to maximize Investment Tax Credit funding.</li></ul>

### Program Overview

Created as part of the state’s FY24 budget, the goal of the Green School Works program (the “Program”) is to provide financial support to “K-12 public schools or districts for projects to install or maintain clean energy infrastructure.” The \$50 million program is meant to address “the costs of installation, operation, or upgrades of clean energy infrastructure that improves energy efficiency, reduces carbon emissions, or mitigates the impacts of climate change, including school rooftop construction or repair costs necessary for a clean energy infrastructure project to be safely installed.” There are a wide variety of projects that would fit within this funding scope. For a full list of proposed eligible projects, please see the section titled “Eligible Implementation Project Types,” found at the end of this document.

The establishing legislation seeks to maximize the total number of projects undertaken by public schools or districts and gives preference to projects at schools serving low-income and environmental justice populations.

Below is a list of potential program offerings for public comment through the accompanying Request for Information (RFI). This draft program concept proposes a combination of funding mechanisms, including technical services grants, implementation grants, and implementation bridge loans, to support the planning and implementation of clean energy, electrification, and decarbonization projects. The Program will prioritize funding for schools serving low-income and Environmental Justice populations. The draft program concepts are divided into three components, described further below: Portfolio Planning, Project Planning, and Implementation.

## **Program Component 1: Portfolio Planning**

### Overview

Developing a district-wide decarbonization plan is the necessary first step for many school districts as they work towards a 2050-Ready, zero emissions building portfolio. This type of high-level portfolio planning is generally accomplished through desktop analysis and is relatively low cost per school district. School districts should utilize this type of planning to chart a course to net-zero emissions for schools by 2050, while prioritizing capital improvements across multiple schools over time.

### Proposed Services

MassCEC proposes that the Program provides wraparound support to school districts to complement portfolio electrification prioritization plans offered by Mass Save through third-party vendors. The Program would supplement the Mass Save offering with funding to low-income and Environmental Justice schools for over-time 2050-Ready planning and renewable energy feasibility analysis not covered in the Mass Save offering, as well as funding the school district's portion of any Mass Save-required cost match. Services would be delivered to districts directly by Mass Save vendors pre-approved to do this work, and payments to vendors would flow from Mass Save and MassCEC directly to vendors, relieving school districts from the administrative burden of procuring these services themselves.

### Enrollment

MassCEC proposes an open enrollment model for this Program component. Districts with eligible schools which enroll in Mass Save portfolio prioritization plan support will be given the choice to enroll in Green School Works Portfolio Planning, until the Program goal for the number of participating districts is reached. Districts served by municipal utilities, and therefore unable to access Mass Save services directly, would still be eligible for Program enrollment, assuming they also meet the general Program eligibility criteria described below.

### Eligibility

Schools will be eligible for Program Portfolio Planning if they are a K-12 public school and serve a Massachusetts Environmental Justice Block Group population, and/or are a designated Title I school.

### Estimated Timeline

- Stakeholder engagement and final Program design: Q1-Q2, FY2025
- Program documentation, RFP, and consultant selection: Q2, FY2025
- Enrollment open: Q3, FY2025

## **Program Component 2: Project Planning**

### Overview:

The next step after district-wide decarbonization planning for school districts working towards a 2050-Ready, zero emissions building portfolio is a deeper dive into building decarbonization assessment and planning for one or more individual buildings. This project-level planning includes more rigorous energy use and emissions analysis, calibrated energy modeling and engineering calculations, and on-site assessment. It is roughly an order of magnitude more intensive and costly than the high-level desktop analysis that happens in the Portfolio Planning stage, however, it is still a relatively small scope of work relative to the total value of decarbonization implementation work. Not all school districts will require the first step of Portfolio Planning before embarking on Project Planning, due to capital planning work already in process or underway and/or due to a limited number of buildings in a given district's portfolio with clear decarbonization needs.

### Proposed Services:

MassCEC proposes that the Program provide low-income and Environmental Justice school districts with a single building decarbonization assessment and plan. This step would supplement Decarbonization Roadmap support services offered through Mass Save and their vendors. MassCEC would provide wrap-around services for over-time 2050-Ready planning and renewable energy feasibility analysis as needed to complement Mass Save's offering through direct payments to the vendors providing those services and would fund the school district's portion of any Mass Save-required cost match.

### Enrollment:

MassCEC proposes extending an invitation to apply for this program component to eligible districts already receiving Decarbonization Roadmap support from Mass Save. A certain number of spots would be reserved for districts participating in the initial Portfolio Planning step of this Program. Additionally, an inquiry form would be available through the Program website for other districts to express interest, through which MassCEC would then connect them to Mass Save.

### Eligibility:

Schools will be eligible for Program Portfolio Planning if they are a K-12 public school and serve a Massachusetts Environmental Justice Block Group population, and/or are a designated Title I school.

### Estimated Timeline

- Stakeholder engagement and final Program design: Q1-Q2, FY2025
- Program documentation, RFP, and consultant selection: Q2, FY2025
- Application open Q3: FY2025

## **Program Component 3: Implementation**

### Overview:

Decarbonizing schools is often complex, costly, and time consuming, and these projects require a good deal of technical and staff capacity. For school districts with the capacity to tap into new and expanded funding resources, the incentive and funding environment is far more favorable to these projects than in the past. Many of the new and expanded funding resources provide funding at project completion, or in the case of the IRA tax credits, have a limited time window, with eligibility ending in 2032, or have disparate eligibility and priority criteria.

### Proposed Services

MassCEC proposes awarding a certain number of school districts with implementation funding that may be in the form of a bridge loan, grant, or combination of the two for eligible decarbonization project hard costs, plus design, capacity, and technical assistance grants to support soft costs for eligible projects. A bridge loan would allow schools to capture up-front IRA tax credit funding for eligible projects at the beginning of construction, and to repay the bridge loan at the time the tax credit is received. Projects intending to maximize IRA tax credit funding may be given priority in the selection process.

For districts with projects already in the planning phase, we invite them to respond to the RFI with more details on estimated project costs and tax credit eligible portion of costs and to express interest in the upcoming Program funding application.

### Enrollment

Not all eligible districts will require Portfolio and Project Planning assistance prior to embarking on Implementation. MassCEC proposes opening the application for Implementation funding at roughly the same time as the other two Program components above. However, at least half of the implementation awards should be reserved for school districts participating in one or both of the other two Program components.

### Eligibility

Schools will be eligible for Program Portfolio Planning if they are a K-12 public school and serve a Massachusetts Environmental Justice Block Group population, and/or are a designated Title I school.

### Estimated Timeline

- Stakeholder engagement and final Program design: Q1-Q2, FY2025
- Program documentation: Q2, FY2025
- Application open: Q3, FY2025

### **Eligible Implementation Project Types**

MassCEC proposes the following list of eligible electrification, decarbonization, and clean energy implementation project types. While all these project types are eligible for Green School Works implementation funding, they are broken out into categories depending on whether they are eligible for direct pay tax credits through the Inflation Reduction Act's Energy Investment Tax Credit (ITC) program.

#### ITC-eligible

- EVSE for electric school buses and personal vehicles
- Ground-source heat pumps (GSHP)
- Solar PV (rooftop, ground mount, and parking canopy)
- Solar PV with islandable battery storage systems

#### Non-ITC-eligible but enabling work for ITC-eligible systems, e.g.

- Building electrification readiness (e.g. high-performance building envelope improvements, high-efficiency energy recovery ventilation with ASHP-tempered makeup air, conversion of heating and cooling distribution systems such as steam to hot water conversions, electrical service and system upgrades to enable full building electrification)
- Roof repair
- Window replacement

#### Non-ITC-eligible

- Air-source heat pumps (ASHP)
- Electrification of other building systems (e.g. domestic hot water, kitchen equipment)
- Other electrification, decarbonization, and clean energy projects to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Program Concept Next Steps and Coordination with Partner Entities**

MassCEC expects to adapt and update the draft Program concept outlined above based on responses to the RFI and input gathered during the stakeholder engagement process. MassCEC is coordinating on final Program design, participant selection prioritization, and the creation and dissemination of post-program case studies and lessons learned with partner agencies, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Massachusetts School Building Authority, the Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience, the Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities and Energy Efficiency programs, regional planning agencies, and others.