



## Request for Proposals: Community Engagement Support for Utility-Owned Solar and Storage

Date of Issue:

Proposals Due: Rolling Applications Accepted until Funding is  
Exhausted

Total Funding Available: \$250,000 (up to \$50,000 per award)

All proposals must be submitted to:

[grid@masscec.com](mailto:grid@masscec.com)

## I. SUMMARY

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is offering Community Engagement Planning Grants. The Community Engagement Planning Grants will provide direct support to community-based organizations, municipalities, or other entities that represent the community interest (“Communities”) to support meaningful community input in the development and deployment of solar energy projects owned by electric and gas distribution companies (“EDCs”). These projects, enabled by Section 77 of An Act Creating A Next-Generation Roadmap For Massachusetts Climate Policy, 2021 Mass. Acts 8 (the “Act”) (“Section 77 Projects”), are intended to improve community climate adaptation and resiliency and preferentially sited in municipalities with Environmental Justice populations. Section 77 Projects must be sited on land owned by the EDCs, proposed with an affirmation of support from the municipality, and approved by the Department of Utilities (“DPU”). This RFP will support Communities in collaboration with National Grid and Eversource initiatives related to Section 77 Projects.

MassCEC anticipates awarding at least five (5) Community Engagement Planning Grants through this RFP to organizations or entities representing Communities with Section 77 Project sites as identified by the EDCs. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until funding is exhausted.

## II. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a state economic development agency dedicated to accelerating the growth of the clean energy sector across the Commonwealth to spur job creation, deliver statewide environmental benefits and to secure long-term economic growth for the people of Massachusetts. MassCEC works to increase the adoption of clean energy while driving down costs and delivering financial, environmental, and economic development benefits to energy users and utility customers across the state.

MassCEC’s mission is to accelerate the clean energy and climate solution innovation that is critical to meeting the Commonwealth’s climate goals, advancing Massachusetts’ position as an international climate leader while growing the state’s clean energy economy. MassCEC is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where everyone is welcomed, supported, respected, and valued. We are committed to incorporating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all aspects of our work in order to promote the equitable distribution of the health and economic benefits of clean energy and support a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry. MassCEC strives to lead and innovate in equitable clean energy and climate solutions.

### III. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

This RFP is intended to support community engagement in the development and deployment of solar energy projects owned by EDCs, as enabled in Section 77 of the Act.

Overall Program Goals:

- **Enable informed community engagement** in the EDCs' Section 77 Project design and deployment process on key elements such as project benefits;
- **Provide flexible funding for Communities** that may be used to conduct and coordinate stakeholder meetings, public meetings, incentives for public participation, etc.; and
- **Build capacity of both Communities and EDCs** to enable future collaboration in clean energy project design and implementation.

Additionally, through this Solicitation, MassCEC intends to:

- **Create a framework for EDCs** to ensure robust future community engagement in future solar, storage or other clean energy projects; and
- **Enable Communities** to build their technical literacy on clean energy projects and processes including DPU engagement and facilitate discussions with diverse stakeholders across the community and with the broader public.

### IV. ELIGIBILITY AND AWARDEE EXPECTATIONS

Organizations or a partnership/team that represent the community interest in municipalities with or immediately adjacent to Section 77 Project sites as identified by the EDCs 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"). The Lead Applicant will sign Attachment 1, contract with MassCEC if selected, and receive funds from MassCEC. The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Community-based organizations such as community development corporations ("CDCs"), community action partnerships, neighborhood revitalization organizations, advocacy groups, and other non-profit organizations;
- Public entities such as municipalities and regional planning agencies; and
- Other entities that represent the community interest.

Additional eligibility notes:

- Applicants should have a demonstrated history working or living within, and/or engaging with a given Community (associated with a given Project site); and
- Applicants are not required to have experience in clean energy.

Awardee Expectations:

- Collaborate and communicate regularly with MassCEC, EDCs, and any technical consultants;
- Regularly attend and participate in meetings with MassCEC, EDCs, and any technical consultants;
- Finalize grant agreement with MassCEC to receive funding;
- Complete grant activities within an appropriate timeframe based on overall Section 77 Project development timeline and approval processes (likely within two to three (2-3) months of award); and
- Provide brief reports or other deliverables to summarize work.

Please contact Corrin Moss at [cmoss@masscec.com](mailto:cmoss@masscec.com) as well as the MassCEC Net Zero Grid team at [grid@masscec.com](mailto:grid@masscec.com) with any questions on applicant eligibility and awardee expectations.

V. TIMELINE

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC’s discretion.

Release of RFP	October 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
Applications Due	Rolling
Notification of Award	Within 2 weeks of application submission

VI. ELIGIBLE FUNDING USES

For Community Engagement Planning grants, applicants must propose funding to support meaningful community input in the development of solar energy and storage Section 77 Projects. MassCEC anticipates that these grants may support activities that identify desired community benefits from Section 77 Projects and build community knowledge and capacity on clean energy projects and processes more broadly.

For example, MassCEC anticipates that these grants shall be used for activities that support meaningful community engagement with the electric utilities. Some examples of how communities could use this funding include:

- Costs associated with conducting community outreach and surveying, such as providing survey incentives, printing costs for promotional materials, and staff time for outreach;
- Costs associated with facilitating accessible community meetings, such as childcare services during meetings, costs for event space, and incentives for participation;

- Costs associated with hiring a technical consultant to create accessible and community-relevant clean energy and resiliency resources;
- Costs associated with hiring a technical consultant on behalf of the Community to provide input on desired project benefits such as resiliency and workforce development;
- Costs associated with translation services, such as during public meetings or for promotional materials; and/or
- Staff time devoted to supporting community engagement.

This is not intended to be a complete list of possible uses, nor does the inclusion of one or more of these uses of funding in an application guaranty funding from MassCEC; community groups are encouraged to reach out to MassCEC with any questions about eligible uses of funds.

## VII. HOW TO APPLY

To apply:

- 1) Review this RFP to develop an understanding for the program and opportunities.
- 2) Review and sign the Authorized Applicant's Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment 1).
- 3) Review and complete the Application Form (Attachment 2).
- 4) Review the sample contract (Attachment 3).
- 5) If requested, participate in an interview with MassCEC.

### **Electronic Accessibility:**

If accessibility to 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, our team is available to discuss alternative options such as video application. Please contact Corrin Moss ([cmoss@masscec.com](mailto:cmoss@masscec.com)).

## XI. BUDGET

MassCEC anticipates awarding at least five (5) grants of up to \$50,000 for a cumulative total of \$250,000. Applicants may request any amount of funding between \$5,000 and \$50,000. MassCEC anticipates that there will be multiple Section 77 Project sites and that funding will be distributed among several sites.

## XI. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

Please contact Corrin Moss at [cmoss@masscec.com](mailto:cmoss@masscec.com) as well as the MassCEC Net Zero Grid team at [grid@masscec.com](mailto:grid@masscec.com) with any questions.

## XII. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

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

### DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

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

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

### CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Upon MassCEC's authorization to proceed with the proposal, MassCEC and the awarded applicant(s) will execute a contract, substantially in the form of the Sample Agreement attached 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

**Community Engagement Support for Utility-Owned Solar and Storage (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 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 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

Please fill in the tables below.

1. Contact Information		
<b>Applicant Name</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Preferred Pronoun</b>		
<b>Title (if applicable)</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Organization or Entity Name</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Street Address</b> <i>Number, street, apt. or suite no., city, state, and ZIP)</i>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>City or Town Represented</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	<b>Zip Code</b> Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Primary Contact Email</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Primary Contact Phone</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Secondary Contact Email (if applicable)</b>		



## 2. Grant Funding Proposal

**Describe which Community you represent and how your organization would utilize the funding to enable meaningful community input in Section 77 Project design and deployment. Please answer the following questions:**

Which Community do you represent? What is your relationship to this Community? How would your organization's position enable you to facilitate meaningful community engagement?

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

How do you intend to use the funding?

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

How would you ensure effective collaboration and communication with the EDCs, MassCEC, and other relevant Section 77 Project stakeholders?

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

What does meaningful community engagement look like to you? How would your intended funding uses help you to achieve that vision?

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

Please describe any major considerations or concerns associated with electric service in your Community (ex. Reliability, cost, etc.)

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

## 3. Experience & Qualifications

**[Optional] Please briefly describe your organization's history of experience working with the Community or Communities and/or experience with a similar program or project.**

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

**[If applicable] Partnership/Team. Please address each of the following items:**

- *If you are applying as a partnership, please list all partners and clarify role and function of partners listed. Be sure to clarify how each role contributes toward program or project development.*

*Click or tap here to enter text.*

**[Optional] DEI Qualifications and Statement**

Please include a brief summary of you or your organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion personal, mission or vision statement, or a link to such a statement on your organization's website. Please describe what your organization is proactively doing to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and what steps you plan to take in the future.

Click or tap here to enter text.

#### 4. Proposed Budget

Total Amount Requested \$

**Proposed funding usage breakout:** Please fill out the table below with each activity and proposed amount of funding associated with completing that activity.

Proposed Activity	Funding Amount
<i>Example: Funding staff time &amp; supplies devoted neighborhood stakeholder engagement sessions, outreach, pre-development sign up</i>	\$2000
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$

#### 5. Additional Notes

Have you reviewed the grant agreement (Attachment 3) and confirmed your organization's ability to execute an agreement with MassCEC? Y/N

Please provide any additional information you wish to share that has not been addressed previously in the application form:

Click or tap here to enter text.