



Responses to Written Questions

Request for Proposals: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consulting Services

1. **If you had to prioritize which of the above deliverables are most important to the organization, how would you prioritize them?**

Developing a measurable strategy, training, and education are our main priorities at this time.

2. **Hybrid can be across multiple disciplines with various elements of in-person, remote, and self-paced onboarding and support. Can you explain how you envision or define hybrid in this situation? For example, would you like a trainer to be in person for training and/or workshops? If so, where are the physical locations you anticipate training and workshops to take place? Do you expect participants to be in person?**

Our current office space is not large enough to hold all our employees on a given day, so any trainings and workshops would need to be offered virtually, likely over Zoom or Microsoft Teams. If we were to break employees into smaller groups, we could offer in-person as an option, but would need to discuss if the format makes sense for the training topic.

3. **Do you have an ideal length of training and workshops? How much time do you expect people to commit? For example, do we have time to do three hours of training sessions in small groups, or do we need to make training a one-hour session for all hundred people? Are you open to self-paced training as part of the hybrid training & workshops? And is it that workshops are live and training and education are virtual and/or self-paced?**

We would like to keep the training sessions with all staff between 1-1.5 hours, as people's schedules are incredibly varied. Offering workshops with smaller groups can be a bit longer, closer to 2 hours. We want to ensure all staff participate in both the training and workshop, but offering additional resources for those who want to engage further with the content can at their own pace.

To ensure that all employees are engaging with the content, we would like to keep the broader concepts in a training/workshop format. However, if we did have additional content our new hires that join after any trainings can do self-paced, that would be a good option as well. We are open to discussing the training format options and considering recommendations from the selected consultant.

4. How do you understand the difference between training and education and workshops?

Training: a session where a subject matter expert (in this case, you) discusses with the larger group concepts and applications

Education: materials and/or resources employees can use on their own time to improve their understanding, likely offering more specifics than a general training

Workshops: an interactive activity where employees (in smaller groups than all staff) can practice applying the information/principles being taught live, under the supervision of a facilitator

5. To identify areas of programmatic improvement will we have access to the MassCEC EJ Strategy at this time?

Our current strategy aligns with the following commitments:

- a. Take Responsibility as Leaders and Build Internal Support
- b. Support Personal Development on Conscious Inclusion
- c. Prioritize Improvement and Encourage Courageous Conversation
- d. Establish Transparent and Just Hiring and Compensation Practices
- e. Focus on Retention and Career Advancement
- f. Cultivate a Culture of Belonging
- g. Engage in Accountability and Evaluation

Our EJ policy aligns with the policy set out by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, which can be found here under Current Policy:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-policy>

6. The RFP states the project begins on December 2, 2025. What does MassCEC envision as 1) the timeline, and 2) the end date for the project?

We are flexible regarding timeline. We would imagine this work to take 3-6 months depending on the scope of the project offered by the selected consultant.

7. Is the \$20,000 budget intended to cover fees associated with all six project areas (assessment, strategy development, training and education, employee workshops, recruitment guidelines, and potentially programmatic environmental justice strategy)?

The \$20,000 is what we have budgeted for the payment of consultant services, which should cover those project areas. The project proposal should show what services can be offered within that budget. Additional recommended services can be listed separately.

8. Will MassCEC cover the costs associated with the development of "sustainable training materials and programs"

The \$20,000 budget is intended to pay for the services of the consultant, which should include the development of training materials and programs.

9. Does MassCEC envision the trainings and workshops will be conducted in-person, virtual, or both?

Given our current hybrid structure (employees come into the office one day a week), most of the trainings and workshops will need to be virtual. Anything offered in-person would need to be in a smaller group.

10. Will MassCEC assign a project coordinator to lead employee participation in the assessment, training, and feedback activities?

The DEI consultant will have the assistance of our DEI working groups, which consist of volunteer staff members across teams and departments. The HR team will also help facilitate any trainings and activities.

11. Please clarify MassCEC's requirement of "*Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements related to diversity, equity, and inclusion*"

The DEI landscape is rapidly changing at a legislative level, so we expect the selected consultant to be up to date on employment law updates in relation to DEI, and make any recommendations with those in mind.

12. Does MassCEC envision partnering with a consultant with DEI expertise in a human resources/corporate training context? Has MassCEC navigated any DEI training in the past two years? If so, will you share the covered topics?

Experience with HR and corporate training is a plus. In 2022 we had the services of a DEI consultant, who highlighted several areas for us to focus on. These areas were hiring and recruiting, professional development and advancement, culture, and vendor selection.

13. Do you have a preferred training method (in-person, virtual, hybrid)? If not, I'm happy to recommend.

Most training will need to be offered virtually, but we are open to offering in-person options with limited capacity. Open to recommendations.

14. Are there specific teams or departments who need specialized training (i.e. leadership, board, etc.)?

No specific teams need to be targeted. Trainings on leading inclusively and managing equitably, as well as a training on hiring bias are areas we think would be useful.

15. Do you have any specific pain points or training topics to guide the starting point for the training?

A lot of our employees are very new to MassCEC, so ensuring people feel included and safe will be important to making any real progress. We are looking for actionable steps and goals to guide our DEI strategy.

16. What other DEI initiatives have you engaged in within the past two years?

We engaged the services of a DEI consultant in 2022, and have had a couple staff-led talks regarding certain DEI topics on a volunteer basis.

17. Is MassCEC interested in receiving proposals that include actions or initiatives beyond the scope of work as it is written in the RFP?

We ask that proposals for the RFP be related to our current DEI and EJ work, but if there are gaps in our current strategy not covered in the RFP, we are open to proposals that highlight that.

18. Does MassCEC have its own unique definitions for Diversity, Equity, and/or Inclusion?

We do not have our own unique definitions for DEI. However, Environmental Justice is defined by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EEA) as the following:

Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency.

Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

19. How many staff members does MassCEC currently have?

MassCEC currently employs 123 full-time staff.

20. Does MassCEC have any internal DEI employee work or resource group?

Yes, we have 2 working groups dedicated to imbedding DEI principles into our work. Our Internal DEI Working Group focuses on MassCEC's culture, training, and hiring, and our External DEI Working Group focuses on our programmatic work to ensure our impact is sustainable and equitable.

21. What DEI training or activities have MassCEC staff engaged in up until this point?

We previously engaged with a DEI consultant in 2022, who provided us a basic roadmap for initial DEI work.

22. Is there a preference for in-state bidders over those out-of-state?

As a quasi-state agency, a consultant familiar with the Massachusetts EJ landscape is preferred. Otherwise, we would just expect the consultant to be available for onsite meetings, if necessary.

23. Is MassCEC interested in just an internal assessment or is the organization looking for an external assessment as well?

While we are currently focused on strengthening our internal company culture and practices, we are open to assessments of our external impact as well, if it is within the selected consultant's capability and our budget.

24. Is there an expected duration for this contract?

We are flexible regarding the duration of the contract but would anticipate this work to take place over 3-6 months.