THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
# DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

ELIZABETH MAHONY, COMMISSIONER

**100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor**
**Boston, MA 02114**

## Program Opportunity Notice (PON)

## Document Title: Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Technical Support

**COMMBUYS Bid Number: BD-25-1041-ENE01-ENE01-110104**
**Agency Document Number: PON-ENE-2025-014**

**Issued: November 22, 2024**
**Amended: September 17, 2026**

Please Note: This is a single document associated with a complete Bid (also referred to as Solicitation) that can be found on www.COMMBUYS.com. All Bidders are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements for the entire Bid, which are all incorporated into the Bid. Bidders may also contact the COMMBUYS Helpdesk at COMMBUYS@state.ma.us or the COMMBUYS Helpline at 1-888-MA-STATE. The Helpline is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal, state and Suffolk county holidays.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**
**Department of Energy Resources**
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
http://www.mass.gov/doer

**Climate Leader Communities**
**Decarbonization Technical Support**
PON-ENE-2025-014

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) develops and implements policies and programs to ensure the adequacy, security, diversity, and cost-effectiveness of the Commonwealth's energy supply to create a clean, affordable, equitable, and resilient energy future.

The DOER Green Communities Division provides grants, technical assistance, and local support from Regional Coordinators to assist municipalities in reducing energy use and costs by implementing clean energy projects in municipal buildings, facilities, and schools.

The Climate Leader Communities Certification Program creates a new voluntary framework for municipalities to meet the above goals by providing tools and resources to help municipalities reduce emissions by electrifying non-electric energy uses and maximizing the efficiency of buildings and transportation. To fully understand the requirements for becoming a Climate Leader Community, and the associated Certification Program, interested municipalities are strongly encouraged to review the detailed guidance available on the DOER website Climate Leader Community Certification and Grant Program page.

The **Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Technical Support (Program)** is designed to assist certified Massachusetts' Climate Leader Communities by offering funding for technical support that generates both recommendations and engineering design documents to implement projects that align with the applicant's Climate Leader Communities Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap.

Grants will be between the DOER and the selected Climate Leader Certified municipality(s), as further described in Section 5 below (municipality or collectively, municipalities).

# 2. PROGRAM OUTLINE

The **Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Technical Support (Program)** is designed to assist certified Massachusetts' Climate Leader Communities by offering funding for technical support that generates both recommendations and engineering design documents. The technical support provided by the contractor should be a comprehensive proposal that can be used for construction projects and future grant applications. In alignment with the applicant's Climate Leader Communities Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap, the projects should aim to reduce or eliminate onsite fossil fuel use, decrease energy consumption, and/or lower energy costs. The technical support and designs produced through this PON should, at a minimum, provide detailed information on project costs, designs, materials, equipment, and timelines. Projects and technologies supported

by this PON may include, but are not limited to, renewable thermal systems (such as air, water, and ground source heat pumps, or solar thermal), Photovoltaic (PV) systems for onsite energy generation, clean energy resilience, energy storage, and other relevant strategies. DOER expects to support technical support and design documents under this PON that cannot be fully funded through other sources.

Applications will be accepted for technical support in both new and existing facilities that have been identified in the municipality's Climate Leader Community municipal operations decarbonization roadmap as approved by the DOER.

## 3. FUNDING

An amount not to exceed seven million five-hundred thousand dollars ($7,500,000) is being made available under this PON. Requested grant amounts may vary depending on the type and complexity of the technology/technologies being considered and the size of the facility but shall not exceed one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) per award. DOER may offer full or partial awards based on the scope and potential decarbonization impacts of the technical support, relevance towards the community's goals as outlined in its Climate Leader Communities municipal operations decarbonization roadmap as approved by the DOER, the extent to which external and internal funding is available, and other factors that DOER may weigh at its sole discretion.

As outlined in Section 4, the awarded municipality shall be responsible for the administration and ultimate deliverable(s) of the study process and shall provide the final study to DOER upon completion.

~~Applications will be accepted by DOER on a rolling basis from the issue date of this PON until June 30, 2027, and evaluated semi-annually, in December and June. Awards will be made on a first-come basis and will continue until the expiration date of June 30, 2027, or until all grant funding has been exhausted, whichever comes first.~~

Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis through June 30, 2027, or until all grant funding has been awarded, whichever occurs first. Applications received November 30, 2026, by 4:00 PM will be evaluated during the December 2026 review period. Applications received after November 30, 2026, will be evaluated following the June 30, 2027 application deadline.

The DOER reserves the right to increase or decrease the total program funding at its sole discretion.

## 4. AWARDS

DOER is accepting applications for clean energy technical support where potential projects need more in-depth analysis before moving to final design and/or installation and possibly seeking implementation funding. DOER funding may be used to cover the full cost of the technical support or the incremental cost of any clean energy technology portion of the study which in either case shall not exceed one hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($150,000).

Grants may be awarded for technical support at a single site or for bundled technical support that covers multiple sites. Applicants may propose multiple sites or technologies in a single application, but the total amount of funding being requested shall not exceed one hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($150,000). The awarded municipality shall engage a consultant for technical support approved by DOER in its sole discretion through the municipality's consultant procurement process. DOER will contract directly with the awarded municipality to transfer funds and may request to participate in development activities related to technical support funded by the Program, but DOER shall not own, be named in, be responsible or liable for any such study or any finding or potential deficiency contained therein which shall be the sole responsibility of the municipality conducting the study.

Municipalities considering applying for the Program are highly encouraged to contact their Green Communities Regional Coordinator to discuss potential proposals with DOER staff. DOER reserves the right to assist in developing work plans, statements of work, and vendor specifications.

DOER reserves the right to request additional information following application submittal during the evaluation process. To increase replicability and provide valuable insights to other entities, awarded applicants will be asked to release a copy of the final study content to DOER within a reasonable timeframe following its completion.

## 5. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The applicant must be an existing, certified Climate Leader Community to apply for this grant award. One award per community will be made via this PON.

## 6. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

### Strategies and Technologies

Clean energy technical support may investigate any number of technology, equipment, and/or material options that are designed to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of onsite fossil fuels, reduce energy use and/or costs, and advance the development and installation of clean and renewable energy resources. DOER grant funds shall only be made available for technical support that examines options related to non-fossil fuels that support efforts to meet the community's Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Roadmap.

Technical support may look at any combination of strategies/technologies, including but not limited to:

1. Renewable thermal applications, including:
   - Heat pumps (ground-, air-, and water-source)
   - Solar thermal
2. PV applications serving onsite load.
3. Energy resilience utilizing clean energy resources.
4. Energy storage.
5. Other clean technologies and/or strategies that target reductions in energy use, emissions, and fossil fuels (applicants must provide a detailed description of the potential associated energy and environmental benefits).

### Utility Building Studies

Applicants must complete any comprehensive building study available through the applicable electric or natural gas utility, including a Mass Save-sponsored study where applicable, before applying for Technical Support funding under this PON. The study must be completed before an application is submitted to DOER. Applicants should use the findings of the utility study to identify any remaining technical assistance needs and avoid duplicating work already completed or available through the Mass Save program.

### Project Timelines

Technical study grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis but must be submitted no later than the deadline in this PON or until funding is no longer available, whichever comes first. Applicants should target completion of any study within six (6) months of the grant award; however, longer study durations may be requested should the project circumstances warrant a longer timeframe. DOER reserves the right to amend these deadlines based on project viability and available funding.

**Schedule**

Proposals must provide anticipated schedules for the technical study, including the start and completion dates and expected timeline for project implementation if known.

The following dates are subject to change.

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|---|---|
| Issue PON (DOER) | November 22, 2024 |
| PON Amended | 9/17/2026 |
| Grants Reviewed | ~~Grants will be reviewed on a rolling basis and awarded semi-annually or until allocated funds are awarded.~~<br>Applications received November 30, 2026, by 4:00 PM will be evaluated in December 2026. Applications received after November 5, 2026, and by June 30, 2027 will be evaluated following the June 30, 2027 application deadline. |
| PON Responses Submission Deadline* | June 30, 2027 |

~~* *Note DOER reserves the right to re-open this solicitation if funds are not fully awarded.*~~
** See section 8 regarding the anticipated successor PON*

## 7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

DOER will evaluate and rank the responses to this PON based on multiple criteria. Projects must meet requirements in the Project Requirements section as part of the evaluation criteria. Applications will be reviewed on a semi-annual basis to determine potential award amounts. The DOER reserves the right to request clarifying information or amendments supporting the application and evaluation process.

In keeping with the DOER's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by limiting and/or eliminating the use of fossil fuels through the decarbonization of buildings, this PON will prioritize grant awards for technical support that helps advance these objectives as noted in Section 6.

In support of these objectives, the following criteria may be used for evaluating technical study applications under this PON:

- Projects proposing to study/analyze the reduction or elimination of significant amounts of onsite fossil fuel use will be prioritized
- Feasibility of meeting the proposed schedule for the study and installation phases
- Potential for significant environmental and/or fiscal benefits, including the potential for projects in the application to have a payback period lower than the measure-life of the proposed equipment
- The extent of the energy efficiency measures already undertaken or planned at the proposed project site
- Project has demonstrated the ability to contribute to the goals and targets of the applicant's Climate Leader Communities Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap
- The extent to which other internal and external funds are leveraged to support the technical study. The application should include estimated utility incentives in support of the study. Documentation that the

applicant has met, teleconferenced, or had an email exchange with its utility representatives regarding the availability of utility incentives should be included in the application

- Other project elements that advance DOER and Commonwealth clean energy and Environmental Justice goals. Applicants are encouraged to describe how technical support would benefit EJ Communities in the project narratives. Click here to access the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Neighborhoods Map.
- DOER reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject incomplete applications
- The extent to which the proposed project can be replicated at other municipal facilities

## 8. APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicants shall complete the "Climate Leader Community Decarbonization Technical Support Form" (Attachment A) and submit it electronically via email to Green Communities Grants at GC-Grants@mass.gov. You will receive an email indicating receipt of the documents. Determination of the grant award will not occur at this time.

Applications shall include a copy of any applicable completed comprehensive building study provided by the Mass Save program, or documentation demonstrating that such a study is not available or applicable to the proposed project.

The process is electronic only. No paper submission is accepted for the grant application.

Applications must be submitted by an authorized employee of a certified Climate Leader Community.

~~Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, reviewed semi-annually, and approved for funds until the monies are no longer available. Applications will be accepted until June 30, 2027, or until all funds have been awarded, whichever comes first.~~

Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis through June 30, 2027, or until all funds have been awarded, whichever occurs first. Applications received November 30, 2026, by 4:00 PM will be evaluated during the December 2026 review period. Applications received after November30, 2026, will be evaluated following the June 30, 2027 application deadline.

DOER anticipates issuing a successor Program Opportunity Notice after this PON expires. Subject to the continued availability of funds and all required approvals, DOER may make any uncommitted funds remaining under this Program available through the successor PON. Issuance of a successor PON and the amount of funding available are not guaranteed.

## 9. GRANT AND CONTACT INFORMATION

A. Type of Grant

This PON is being conducted pursuant to 815 CMR 2.00 and has been distributed electronically using COMMBUYS, which is the Commonwealth's official procurement record system (http://www.commbuys.com).

The project name is **Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Technical Support**, and the project number is PON-ENE-2025-014. Correspondence to the DOER should include this project number as well as the project name. All notifications and amendments to this PON will be posted on COMMBUYS. It is the responsibility of every respondent to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to a PON to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to respondents who fail to check for amended PONs or submit inadequate or incorrect responses.

Respondents may not alter PON language or any PON component files. Respondents submitting a proposal must respond in accordance with the PON directions and complete only those sections that prompt a respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this PON, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this PON are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify a response.

All proposals and information submitted in response to this PON are subject to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. Law, ch. 66, §10, and ch. 4, §7 and Subsection 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

B. Questions and Answers

1. Written Questions via the Bid Q&A on COMMBUYS

The "Bid Q&A" provides the opportunity for Bidders to ask written questions and receive written answers from the Strategic Sourcing Team ("SST") regarding this bid. All Bidders' questions must be submitted through the Bid Q&A, found on COMMBUYS (see below for instructions).

It is the Bidder's responsibility to verify the SST's receipt of questions.

Please note that any questions submitted to the SST using any other medium (including those that are sent by mail, fax, email, or voicemail, etc.) will not be answered. To reduce the number of redundant or duplicate questions, Bidders are asked to review all questions previously submitted to determine whether the Bidder's question has already been posted.

Bidders are responsible for entering content suitable for public viewing since all of the questions are accessible to the public. Bidders must not include any information that could be considered personal, security sensitive, inflammatory, incorrect, collusory, or otherwise objectionable, including information about the Bidder's company or other companies. The SST reserves the right to edit or delete any submitted questions that raise any of these issues or that are not in the best interest of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or this bid.

All answers are final when posted. Any subsequent revisions to previously provided answers will be dated. It is the responsibility of the Bidder and awarded Contractor to maintain an active registration in COMMBUYS and to keep current the email address of the Bidder's contact person and contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the Purchasing Department, including requests for clarification. The Purchasing Department and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts assume no responsibility if a Bidder's/prospective Contractor designates an email address that is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the Bidder's/prospective Contractor's computer, network, or internet service provider cause email communications sent to/from the Bidder/prospective Contractor and the Purchasing Department to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

2. Locating the Bid Q&A

Log into COMMBUYS, locate the bid, acknowledge receipt of the bid, and scroll down to the bottom of the bid header page. The "Bid Q&A" button allows Bidders access to the Bid Q&A page.

3. Amendment Deadline

The SST reserves the right to make amendments to the bid after initial publication. It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda, or modifications to this bid, and any Bid Q&A records related to this bid. The SST and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a quote based on an out-of-date bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

All questions must be submitted to DOER through COMMBUYS. All questions and answers will be posted periodically on COMMBUYS. The Bidder's conference information will be posted on the same webpage.

C. No Guarantee of Resulting Contract

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts makes no assurance that any contract will result from this PON.

D. Contact Information

Responses to this PON will be received by:

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|---|---|
| **Grant Contact:** | Green Communities Grants<br>Department of Energy Resources<br>100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor<br>Boston, MA 02114 |
| **E-mail:** | GC-Grants@mass.gov |
| **PON Name:** | Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Technical Support |
| **PON File Number:** | PON-ENE-2025-014 |