



**Request for Expressions of Interest:  
MassCEC Community Clean Energy and Resiliency Program Participants  
(EOI FY2020-CLEAR-01)**

October 26, 2020

## 1. SUMMARY

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (“MassCEC”) is soliciting a second round of Expressions of Interest (“EOIs”) from groups interested in participating in an energy resiliency needs analysis and system design study (“Study”) for their community under the Clean Energy and Resiliency Program (“CLEAR”, or the “Program”). This Request for EOIs will help MassCEC and other stakeholders identify energy resiliency needs and design strategies which are attractive to the relevant local authorities and electric and/or gas utilities, and have a strong likelihood of success. MassCEC seeks to support community resiliency efforts that reduce GHG emissions, enable the integration of renewable energy sources, and provide energy resilience for critical facilities during electrical grid outages. In addition, feasibility studies awarded under CLEAR will ideally support energy resiliency projects which empower community leaders, foster public-private partnerships, protect vulnerable populations, complement planned or existing district thermal systems, and integrate Massachusetts based technology.

Community applicants (the “Applicant” or “Applicants”) are encouraged to apply under one (1) of two (2) categories: (1) municipalities, who must have participated in the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (EEA) Municipal Vulnerable Preparedness (MVP) program; or (2) non-municipal communities, who must designate a lead organization, such as a business or non-profit, and whose facilities proposed for study must be located within a municipality that participated in the EEA MVP program. Each community applicant must have at least one facility which they own, operate, or maintain and can involve in the Study. Selected community teams (“Communities”) will work with MassCEC’s approved (pre-selected) technical consultants (each a “Consultant” and collectively, the “Consultants”).

This solicitation for EOIs represents the second step of a multi-phase process. MassCEC anticipates selecting three (3) Communities to participate in energy resiliency needs analyses and system design studies valued at approximately Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) per Study. Each Community will be matched with a Consultant by MassCEC. **Funding will be allocated exclusively to the Consultant responsible for performing the analysis.** Consultants have been selected by MassCEC under the CLEAR RFP for Technical Consultants, which accepted applications during the Fall of 2019. MassCEC initially awarded the first round of energy resiliency analyses and system design studies in Q3 of FY 2020 and anticipates awarding the second round of analyses and studies in Q3 of FY 2021.

Projects that produce a favorable Study may then be eligible for additional technical assistance or grants for later stages of project development depending on availability of resources.

## 2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CLEAR is a successor program to MassCEC’s Community Microgrids Program. The Community Microgrids Program funded fourteen (14) feasibility studies around the Commonwealth, seeking to identify scalable, broadly-replicable microgrid business and ownership models to increase microgrid deployment and attract investment. Common challenges identified across the studies included determining critical needs and critical loads, accessing and analyzing relevant utility data for critical loads analysis, and developing a cost-effective system design to reduce outage time.

MassCEC seeks to empower the Commonwealth’s ratepayers to take the first steps towards evaluating their own loads, resiliency needs, and potential resources – thereby reducing the soft costs associated with the expert technical analysis required to arrive at a final system design.

The Program is structured to aid communities or other stakeholders in identifying and pursuing specific investment plans that will enable critical loads to “ride through” interruptions in grid service. Funding through the Program will advance first-stage system designs and develop a framework for communities and facilities to determine if they are “resilient.” Ideally, funding will also enable communities to take the first steps towards evaluating future resiliency investments without the need to retain a technical consultant at the early stages of project conceptualization. CLEAR Program funding will be allocated exclusively to the Consultant responsible for performing the analysis, as determined in the separate and previously administered CLEAR RFP for Technical Consultants.

## 3. WHO SHOULD RESPOND?

MassCEC is seeking Expressions of Interest (“EOIs”) from communities applying under one (1) of two (2) categories: (i) municipalities, who must have participated in the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (EEA) Municipal Vulnerable Preparedness (MVP) program; or (ii) non-municipal communities, who must designate a lead organization, such as a business or non-profit, and who must be located within a municipality that participated in the EEA MVP program. Respondents must indicate a lead organization and clearly identify relevant Applicant team sub-participants with whom to jointly respond to this EOI and their respective roles. Respondents which have applied for or been granted project funding through other state and federal programs (such as the Department of Energy Resources’ Community Clean Energy Resilience Initiative, or “CCERI”) are eligible to apply. Municipalities that participated in MassCEC’s Community Microgrids Program are also eligible to apply, provided the proposed site is different.

### ELIGIBILITY

Applicants may include municipalities or offices and departments thereof as well as private entities including community groups, nonprofits, and/or private businesses. MassCEC encourages the formation of teams to represent the interests of a community rather than a single entity. A Project narrative (the “Project Narrative”) should describe the nature of the community represented by the Applicant.

Applicants may include entities that would seek to develop a project given a favorable Study result. In this case, Applicants should clearly demonstrate customer interest as well as justify why a MassCEC-funded Study is necessary for the proposed project.

Applicants must propose a specific site for analysis in the Study. The proposed Site must be:

1. located in Massachusetts; and
2. in a municipality that has participated in EEA's MVP program.

Successful Applicants will be required to execute a Letter of Commitment with MassCEC outlining the Community's obligations for participation in the Program.

## PROJECT GUIDELINES

The following attributes are not requirements, but should be taken into consideration by Applicants as qualities of a successful community resiliency design Study:

- One (1) or more buildings serves a critical function in the community or can provide emergency services in the event of a hazard;
- Serves one or more vulnerable populations;
- Has a strategic vision of improving the vulnerabilities in community owned or community operated energy infrastructure; and
- Has the potential to leverage local government support or initiatives for energy resiliency. Support or initiatives may be indicated in a number of ways (both financial and non-financial), including, but not limited to: designating staff to support the project, providing city-owned space for resiliency assets, or developing policies that enable deployment of resiliency technologies or infrastructure.

A list of relevant resources is available as Appendix 1 to this Request for EOIs.

## PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Interested Applicants should be prepared to fully engage as project proponents in the CLEAR Program. Applicants should be able to provide as part of their application if they will have access to relevant load data for all buildings included in the proposed system design, if the load data is interval data, and what the age of the data is. It is acceptable for Applicants to not have access to data at the time of application, but it is important that Applicants indicate what the knowns and unknowns of their proposed system configuration are in the application.

Additional factors for interested applicants to consider and indicate in their EOI submission include:

- Post-Study, how would the Applicant acquire financing for the project?
- Do financing options exist or are there interested or committed investors already?
- What entity or entities would bid on the project?

## 4. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS

### Step 1: Respond to Request for Expressions of Interest

MassCEC will accept EOIs through December 16, 2020. A recording of the CLEAR webinar can be found [here](#) and answers to questions submitted during the first round of applications can be found [here](#). MassCEC will be holding office hours on November 13, 2020 for any additional questions that arise.

### Step 2: EOI Review and Preliminary Selection

MassCEC and a team of external reviewers will review the EOIs based on the criteria indicated in Section 5 and identify selected respondents to participate in the next evaluation step.

### Step 3: Notification of Projects Selected for Energy Resiliency Needs Analysis and System Design

Projects that meet the review criteria and have the active and engaged support of both the local community and utility will be selected to receive free Studies through the Program valued at up to Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) or will be awarded funding to conduct a Study in line with MassCEC's specifications.

Timeline:

Release Request for EOIs	October 26, 2020
MassCEC Office Hours	November 13, 2020 12-1pm EST
Expressions of Interest due to MassCEC	December 16, 2020
Notification of Selected Projects	Late January 2021

## 5. REQUIRED RESPONSE COMPONENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

To respond to this Request for EOIs, please submit a completed Expression of Interest Form (Attachment A) and Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment B), anchored by a completed Application Form (Attachment C) with a Project Narrative of up to five (5) single-spaced pages, letters of support from relevant stakeholders, and a copy of the municipality's MVP Planning Report. Letters of support must be included from the owners and/or occupants of every facility proposed for inclusion in the Study.

### PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Project Narrative should describe the proposed community energy resiliency project and include the following: (1) the goals of the project including, but not limited to, resilience, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, energy cost reductions; (2) a characterization of the critical infrastructure that the Applicant wants to be resilient, including approximate size, purpose, and energy usage if known; (3) a description of existing financial resources or financing vehicles that could lead to project development post-Study; and (4) an explanation of if and how the project will benefit low-income, environmental justice, or otherwise vulnerable populations.

The Project Narrative should be based on the community's previous involvement with resiliency planning – such as through the MVP program – or intended resiliency objectives and should include a description of any critical facilities proposed for inclusion in the Study, their role(s) in an outage scenario, and the loads that will be powered when the main utility distribution network is offline. If

multiple facilities are included, please describe the unique needs of each facility and articulate why improved resilience is important for the facilities identified. To the extent relevant, please also describe other investments in resilience at the selected host sites or within the community (e.g. updated operational plans responsive to extreme weather events or other hazards, physical infrastructure investments, community-wide climate change and resilience strategies) and how those investments may impact the needs analysis and system design.

The following information should be included with the Application Form and will not count toward the five-page Project Narrative limit:

- A copy of any maps or other documentation that well-defines the geographical area and scale of the project including: descriptions of customers and properties, locations of existing or proposed electric generation options, critical infrastructure, and general load profiles of critical and non-critical infrastructure (if available).
- A copy of the map and lot number(s) of the site as identified by the Tax Assessor's Office for the municipality in which the site is located. Identify the substation(s) serving the site, as well as any known natural gas infrastructure. Provide a flood map for the site, if applicable.
- Service quality data. Service quality data may include: Evidence demonstrating electric service disruption related to severe weather, particularly for critical facilities, including the Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI) and the System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) for the region where applicable.
- Evidence demonstrating historic power quality and/or reliability issues that are not storm-related that the project could address.

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Applicants should include letters of support from all relevant stakeholders, which could include:

- A town, city or other local government official;
- Community centers or other entities which serve as hazard or emergency shelters; and
- Community organizations or stakeholders.

Applicants must include a letter of support from the owner and/or occupant of each facility proposed for inclusion in the Study.

Letters of support should provide evidence from these stakeholders signifying their participation in project implementation and their commitment to providing any resources necessary to successfully participate in a Study. At this stage, commitments may not be financial, but letters should signify active support for conducting a Study.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Expressions of Interest will be competitively evaluated against the following criteria:

Criterion	Definition
<b>Minimum Threshold</b>	MassCEC reserves the right to only consider applications that, in its sole judgment, meet the minimum threshold criteria including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Applicant is eligible for selection.</li> <li>2. The Expression of Interest is complete and responsive to the requirements within the posted deadline(s).</li> <li>3. The Applicant has demonstrated sufficient time resources and flexibility to participate in a feasibility assessment and design study.</li> <li>4. The Applicant is in good standing with any other awards received through MassCEC and other state or federal entities.</li> </ol>
<b>Project Projected Benefits</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do proposed project outcomes include the ability to provide resilience to one or more critical facilities?</li> <li>2. Do the proposed investments have the capability to enable critical loads to “ride through” prolonged outage events?</li> <li>3. Can the proposed investments demonstrate a replicable and scalable model for providing resiliency to sites of interest?</li> <li>4. Does the proposed investment in energy resiliency serve a low-income area, environmental justice, or otherwise vulnerable population?</li> </ol>
<b>Proposed Project Design</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the project integrate storage?</li> <li>2. Does the project encompass a diverse mix of public and private stakeholders with a variety of functions and responsibilities within the community?</li> </ol>
<b>Project Team</b>	<p>Top Priority Criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the proposed project have the active and engaged support of the local government, the listed critical facility/facilities and any proposed anchor loads?</li> <li>2. Has the project team engaged the local utility?</li> <li>3. What is the Applicant’s experience and capacity to implement a project long-term?</li> </ol> <p>Secondary Criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have any stakeholders (local government, local utility, building owners, etc.) expressed willingness to provide financial support for the project?</li> </ol>
<b>Quality of EOI</b>	Completeness, quality, and level of detail of Expression of Interest.

In addition to the criteria outlined above, MassCEC will seek to meet the following criteria across the pool of awarded projects:

- Geographic diversity within Massachusetts; and
- Diversity in function of critical facilities supported and population segments of the communities served.

## 6. HOW TO RESPOND

Expressions of Interest must be submitted to MassCEC by **11:59 PM EDT on December 16, 2020**. The submission must be in electronic form, including a scanned *Signature and Acceptance Form* (Attachment B), submitted via email to [microgrids@masscec.com](mailto:microgrids@masscec.com). "CLEAR Program - EOI" must appear in the email subject line.

Only complete, timely responses will be considered. MassCEC, at its sole discretion, may determine whether an application is complete. Expressions of Interest will be reviewed and ranked by MassCEC staff against the evaluation criteria indicated above.

## 7. GENERAL 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 ("Public Records Law"). Applicant acknowledges and agrees that any documentary material, data, or other information submitted to MassCEC is presumed to be public records. An exemption to the Public Records Law may apply to certain records, including materials that fall under certain categories under a statutory or common law exemption, including the limited exemption at Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 23J, Section 2(k) regarding certain types of confidential information submitted to MassCEC by an applicant for any form of assistance. Applicant acknowledges and agrees that MassCEC, in its sole discretion, shall determine whether any particular document, material, data or other information is exempt from or subject to public disclosure. Thus, MassCEC urges applicant to carefully consider what documents, materials, data and other information is submitted to MassCEC in connection with 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 its 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 Letter of Commitment which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.

## APPENDIX I: RESOURCE LIST

### Related Programs in Massachusetts:

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program: <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program>

The Clean Community Resilience Initiative: <https://www.mass.gov/community-clean-energy-resiliency-initiative>

The forthcoming Clean Peak Standard: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/clean-peak-energy-standard>

MassCEC's Community Microgrid Program:  
<https://files.masscec.com/Community%20Microgrid%20Awardee%20Summary.pdf>

### Related Regional Programs:

Maryland Resiliency Hub Grant Program: <https://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/Resiliency-Hub.aspx>

NYSERDA's REVitalize Grant Program: <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/REVitalize>

NYSERDA's NY Prize Program: <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All%20Programs/Programs/NY%20Prize>

CA CEC Microgrid Roadmap: <https://ww2.energy.ca.gov/research/microgrid/>