

MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES



Green Communities

Overview of FY26-27 Competitive Grant Program

September 2025





Agenda

Survey and Listening Session Summary

Overview of FY 26-27 Competitive Grant PON

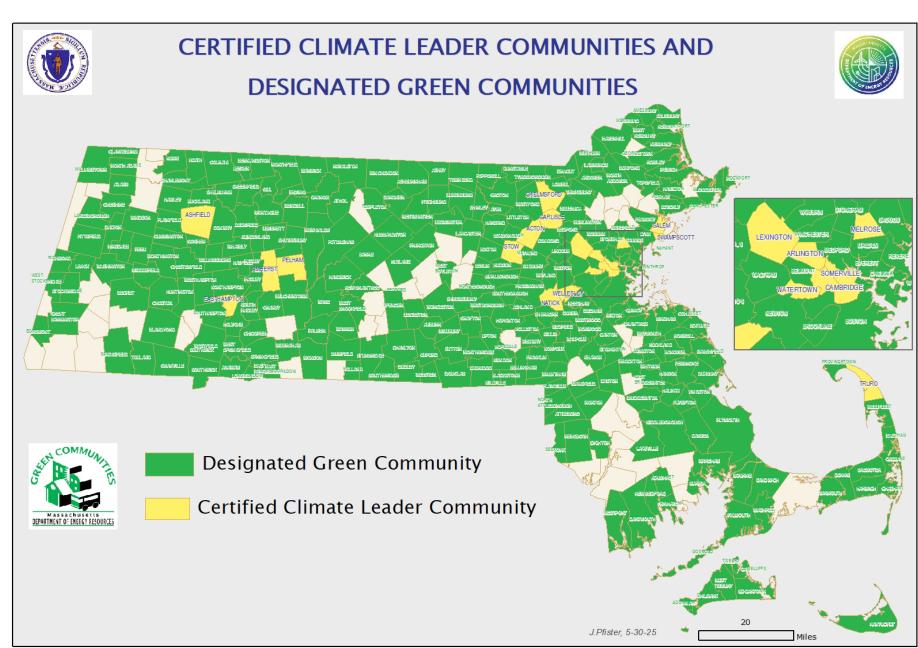
Focus on What's New and Different

Application Forms

Other Important Information

Green Communities Progress

- **298 of 351** Cities/Towns are Green Communities
- 19 Climate Leader
 Communities
- 91% of the population lives in a Green Community
- \$198M+ grants awarded since 2010
- \$47M+ Leveraged in MassSave Incentives
- \$29M+ Annual Energy Cost Savings
- 63K+ tons GHG reduced
- 65 Cities/Towns met20% energy reductiongoal



2025-2026 Calendar (subject to change)

Opportunity	2025	2026
Green Communities Competitive Grant	Oct. 22	April 10
Regional School District Decarbonization Grant	Sept 5	March 6
Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap Assistance	Nov. 28	March 27
Green Communities Summit	Nov. 18	Fall - TBD
Climate Leader Communities Technical Support	Nov. 28	May 29
Designation Deadlines (Green Communities & Climate Leader Communities)	Dec. 31	June 30
Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization Accelerator	Aug.1	Feb. 6
Annual Reports Due	Nov. 7	N/A

Green Communities Grant Feedback

Summary of Issues and Barriers

Results from spring listening sessions and survey





Suggestions for Application & Reporting Improvements

Streamline application process; remove redundant steps

Provide clear templates and instructions for narratives and grant tables

Faster response time from application to award

Clarify grant
compatibility (e.g., GC
vs. Climate Leader
grants)

Need more guidance on grant closeout and inspections

Appreciation for high grant acceptance rate (80-85%)



Funding & Project Eligibility



Feedback on Application Process



Publish clear eligibility guidelines for project types



Provide tutorial resources to support new administrators



Listing specific documents to be included in submission



Support and Communication

Improve Coordination

• Improve Mass Save and utility coordination; set vendor response expectations

Practical Project Evaluations

• Call for more practical, reality-based project evaluations from vendors

Proactive Support

• Continue and expand proactive GC staff support

Outreach Materials

• Develop community outreach materials (e.g., stretch code benefits).

Braid Funding Sources

• Coordinate with other funding opportunities for complex projects



Program Impact and Appreciation



MassEnergyInsight improvements have been valuable over time



DOER staff praised for understanding and support



The program has built a collaborative sustainability community



Overview of FY26-27 Grants



FY 26-27 Competitive Grant PON Calendar at a Glance

Block	1	2	3	4		
Application Deadline	October 22, 2025	April 10, 2026	October 9, 2026	April 9, 2027		
Date previous grant awards spent down and projects complete	August 29, 2025	February 13, 2026	August 28, 2026	February 12, 2027		
Final Grant Report Due Date	August 29, 2025	February 13, 2026	August 28, 2026	February 12, 2027		
Final Grant Report Approved	September 26, 2025	March 27, 2026	September 25, 2026	March 26, 2027		
Annual Report Completion	FY24 Report submitted and approved	FY 25 Report submitted by November 7, 2025, and approved by March 27, 2026	FY 25 Report submitted and approved	FY 26 Report Submitted by November 6, 2026, and approved by March 26, 2027		
Questions due to CommBuys	September 26, 2025	March 20, 2026	September 25, 2026	March 19, 2027		



General max for most projects: \$250,000

Award Limits & Conditions



Decarbonization Projects: max \$500,000

\$

High cumulative award communities: max \$125,000

Received >\$1million in competitive and climate leader grants





Limited support for windows



Limited support for LED lighting for all buildings





Limited support for solar PV on electrified buildings



Enhanced funding benefitting vulnerable populations



Rules for Climate Leader Communities



Application Worksheet replaces project narrative



Project Categories

PON, p. 8

 Section 2 Prescriptive Measures - streamlined application requirements and evaluation

PON, p. 13

 Section 3 Traditional Energy Efficiency Projects - building envelope improvements, HVAC, controls, retrocommissioning, etc.

PON, p. 17

 Section 4 Building Decarbonization Projects - support for larger, more complicated projects

PON, p. 18

Section 5 Special Funding Levels and Projects - expanded offerings

Prescriptive Projects

PON, pp. 8-12

Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs)

Walk-in Refrigeration Controls

Door and Window Weather-Stripping

Workforce Development

Light-duty Hybrid (HEVs) or Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles (PHEVs)

Light-duty Battery
Electric Vehicles
(BEVs)

Medium- or Heavyduty BEVs

Now RX

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Battery-powered
Lawn Care &
Landscaping
Equipment

New!

Window replacements

LED Lighting – including streetlights



Traditional Energy Efficiency Projects

- A. Building Envelope Improvements
- B. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Equipment
- C. Water Heaters
- D. Building Controls Systems
- E. Retro-commissioning
- F. Pumps, Motors, and Drives
- G. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)
- H. Repairs to Existing Renewable Energy Systems
- I. Commercial Refrigeration

Repairs added last year

Building Decarbonization Projects

Comprehensive building decarbonization projects that extend beyond the typical grant in implementation time and cost and are ready for immediate implementation

\$500,000 limit

At least 25% local match, 10% for applications directly benefitting EJ

Must demonstrate GHG emission reductions

Must be completed within three (3) years of grant contract execution

Cannot apply for other projects in PON

Cannot apply for competitive grants for 2 years after award





Details on new project types and changes

Window Replacements

LED Lighting Retrofit Funding

Special Funding Levels and Projects

Environmental Justice and other Vulnerable Communities



Window Replacements

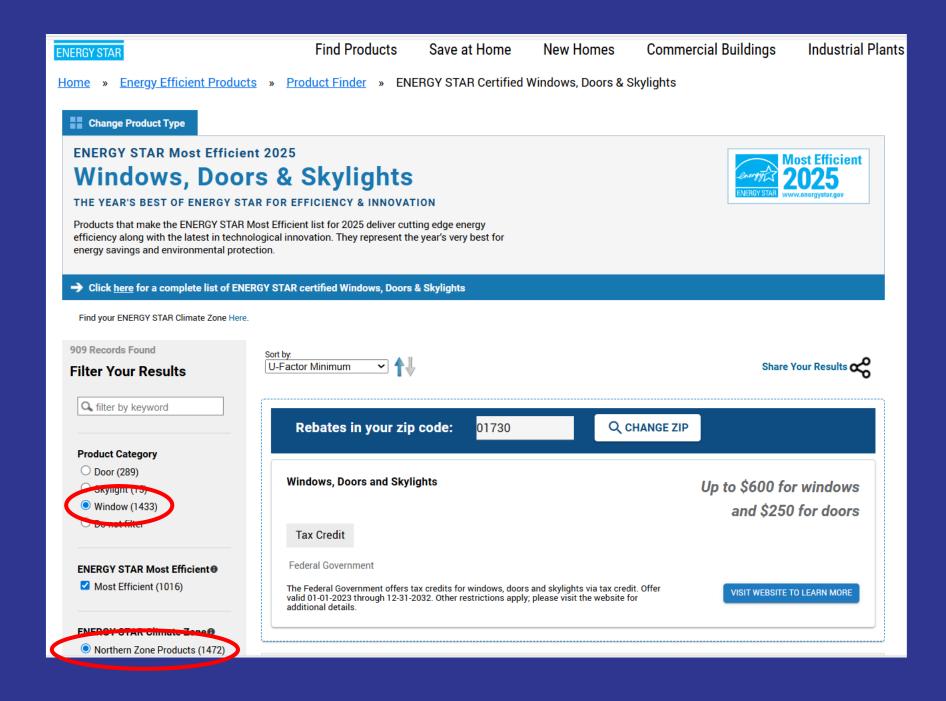
Funding Details

- \$75/sq. ft. for window replacement
- \$100/sq. ft. for municipal facilities benefiting:
 - EJ Communities, & Vulnerable Populations
- Max award per application: \$50,000 (\$75,000 EJ)

Performance Requirements

- U-value maximums:
 - 0.25 for fixed windows
 - 0.30 for operable windows
- Priority funding for:
- Energy Star® Most Efficient certified windows for Northern Climate Zone





LED Lighting Retrofit Funding

Revised Offering:

- \$1.00/kWh annual savings
- \$1.20/kWh for qualifying municipal/EJ facilities
- All buildings eligible

What's Changed?

- Removed \$100K cap
- Not just schools
- No longer covering full cost minus incentives

MassSave support for municipal/school LED lighting sunsets fall 2026



Specially-eligible and Climate Leaders

Specially-Eligible

- Green Community for six (6) or more years, and
- achieved and maintained a minimum of 15% energy reduction for 3+ years within the past 6 years
- No violations of GC Criteria the past year

Climate Leader

 An officially certified Climate Leader Community

Community outreach programs

- Promote programs like:
 - MassSave, Solarize, HeatSmart, MassEnergize etc.
- Extend efforts in:
 - Mass Save Community First Partnerships
 - MassCEC's EmPower program
- Requirements:
 - Tangible goals
 - At least 1 community partner
 - Strategy to address EJ & vulnerable population

Double award amounts for vehicles and battery powered landscaping equipment

Solar PV for already electrified buildings

Eligible for Enhanced Funding and Projects

Specially-eligible

Acton	Lexington	Saugus
Ashburnham	Lowell	Shelburne
Athol	Malden	Stockbridge
Becket	Manchester-by-the-Sea	Stow
Belchertown	Maynard	Sudbury
Belmont	Medford	Sunderland
Berlin	Melrose	Sutton
Beverly	Mendon	Tyngsborough
Blackstone	Millbury	Upton
Brockton	Montague	Waltham
Cambridge	Natick	Warwick
Chesterfield	New Salem	Wellfleet
Gill	Newburyport	Wendell
Granby	Newton	Williamsburg
Greenfield	Northfield	Williamstown
Halifax	Palmer	Winchester
Harvard	Provincetown	Windsor
Lakeville	Quincy	Woburn

Climate Leader Communities

Acton	Melrose
Amherst	Natick
Arlington	Pelham
Ashfield	Salem
Cambridge	Somerville
Carlisle	Stow
Chelmsford	Swampscott
Easthampton	Truro
Lexington	Watertown
	Wellesley



Onsite Solar PV

- Onsite solar PV systems providing electricity to a municipal facility heated with coldclimate heat pumps
- Can be a PPA or municipally-owned



Only for fully electrified buildings



Solar PV Funding Rates

Ownership and Metering	Rooftop Solar, per Watt	EJ facility
Muni-owned, behind the meter	\$1.00	\$1.25
Third party- owned, behind the meter	\$0.75	\$1.00

- Solar panels & equipment (e.g., inverters, wiring)
- Structural systems (e.g., steel)
- Interconnection & permitting
- Construction commencement & installation

Average cost per watt for roof-mounted public entity systems = \$3.03/watt



\$1 Million Club

Grant awards limited to \$125,000*

Acton

Acushnet

Amesbury

Andover

Arlington

Auburn

Beverly

Chelmsford

Gloucester

Hamilton

Hanover

Kingston

Lexington

Littleton

Lowell

Malden

Maynard

Medford Medway

Melrose

Milton

Natick

Newburyport

Newton

Northampton

Northbridge

Pembroke

Quincy

Rockland

Salem

Scituate

Southborough

Stoneham

Stoughton

Sutton

Swampscott

Tewksbury

Wenham

Westford

Westwood

Weymouth

Winchester

Woburn

Climate Leader Community Rules

If a CLC-certified at time of grant award...

CLCs not yet closed out Decarb Accelerator grant:

- ✓ Max \$125,000 (no overlap in scope)
- ✓ Must demonstrate capacity to manage multiple grants
- ✓ CLCs can apply for Decarb Projects only if Accelerator grants are closed

Environmental Justice (EJ) **Communities and Other Vulnerable Populations**

Enhanced funding opportunities



50% more for window replacements



100% more for vehicles



20% more LED lighting



50% more for battery-powered landscaping equipment



Reduced match for \$500K decarb grant



25-33% more for solar PV (for specially-eligible or Climate **Leader Communities**)





Application Forms





Project Worksheets

- Ensures all pertinent info is included
- The goal is to reduce/eliminate follow up questions

Enter the	name of the Gre	en Comm	unity in the box								
Please ch	eck all that apply	<i>r</i> :									
	 My community is a certified Climate Leader Community or has applied for Climate Leader Community certification (PON, pg. 4) 										
	Some or all the Vulnerable Pop	_		Environmental Jus	stice (EJ) Commu	nities or Other					
□ We have met, teleconferenced, or had an email exchange with our utility representatives regarding the availability of utility incentives for <u>all</u> the projects proposed in this application. (PON, pg. 6)											
Grant Con	stante										
	ntacts Na	me	Title	Address	Phone	email					
t ole I Applicati	Nation Preparer	me	Title	Address	Phone	email					
ole 1 Applicati 1 Follow-u	Name of the Preparer p Questions	me	Title	Address	Phone	email					
	Name of the Preparer p Questions	me	Title	Address	Phone	email					
Role Applicati Follow-u Award no	Name of the Preparer p Questions	me	Title	Address	Phone	email					

Worksheets

- Worksheets include a place for brief project narrative
- Only fill out the one(s) applicable to projects
- Delete unused Worksheets

II. Prescriptive Projects (PON, pg. 8-13)

- A. Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) Installation of VFDs for 3 phase 10hp or less motors (PON, pg. 8).
 Funding details
 - Two thousand four hundred dollars (\$2,400) for up to 1HP and then an additional \$200/HP above 1HP up to 10HP
 - Maximum of four thousand four hundred dollars (\$4,400) for 10HP or not to exceed total project cost, including incentives
 - Building Name(s) Click or tap here to enter text.
 - 2. Address(es) Click or tap here to enter text.
 - 3. Municipal Personnel Responsible for Project Oversight

Name	Title	Phone	Email

4. VFDs Summary Table

Facility Name	Quantity	Horsepower	Application	Funding Request

 Short Project Narrative (describe current building conditions, timeline, procurement, future placs for building)

Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Cost/Budget

Grant Request	
Utility Incentive	
Community Funds	
Other (describe in narrative)	

Total Project Cost

- Are there any permits required for this project? (Yes/No, please describe)
 Click or tap here to enter text.
- 8. Attachments:
 - Energy audit or study recommending project.
 - □ Specification sheets

Grant Table = No Change

Green Communities Grant Table - PON-ENE-2026-001

Applicant Information	
Municipality Name:	
Contact Name:	
Contact Title:	
Contact E-mail:	
Contact Phone:	
Date of Application :	
Date of update (if an update to an existing	
application):	n/a

					Project Annual Energy Savings						Proje	ect Cost Inforr	mation			Reference and Supporting Information				
Building Name and/or Location (as noted in MEI)		Project Name (description for Projects) [1]	Estimated Projected Completion (month/year) [2]	Electricity (kWh) ^[3]	Natural Gas (therms) ^[3]	Oil (gallons) ^[3]	Gasoline (gallons) ^[3]	Diesel (gallons) ^[3]	Propane (gallons)[3]	Total Project Cost (\$)	GC Grant Funding (\$) [4]	Utility Incentives (\$)	Other Grants (\$) (please list source in column N)		Funding Source(s) for Other Grants	Source of Community Contribution (if applicable)	Audit or Study Reference	Audit or Study Page Reference(s) ^[5]	Other Support Document(s) and References	
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Green Community:				0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	
M-4																				

Other Important Information

Refer to PON for details

Applicants will not be awarded more than one (1) competitive grant per year

Program administrative cost requests must include a justification statement and cannot exceed 10% or \$10,000 of the total awarded funds, whichever is less

Application completeness. DOER reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject incomplete applications

The Competitive Grant application should include estimated or confirmed utility incentives

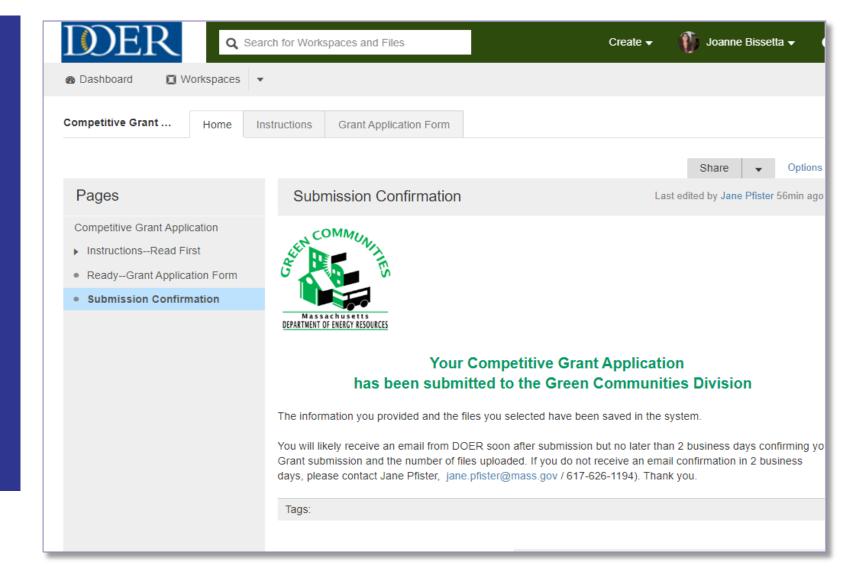
To receive grant awards, municipalities must comply with MBTA Communities Act, as applicable

Application Logistics

- ✓ Use CommBuys Q&A function for grant-related questions
- Must use DOER's online application portal (iMeet Central)
 Do not submit applications to CommBuys
- ✓ Follow instructions reach out to RCs for clarification

Confirmation of Submittal

Make sure you receive a confirmation of submittal PLUS an email from DOER confirming submittal and number of files uploaded



Green Communities Contacts

Regional Coordinators act as direct liaisons with cities and towns on energy activities

Northeastern MA:
Dillan Patel

Dillan.Patel@mass.gov

857-283-1264 - cell





Western MA: Chris Mason Christopher.Mason2@mass.gov 857-753-2159 - cell

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Thank You!