

News from the Green Communities Division



Green Communities 2023 Competitive Grants

The Green Communities team is currently revising the 2023 Competitive Grant application and anticipates it will be posted on CommBuys in the next few weeks. To be eligible for the spring block, Green Communities must have:

- Expended all prior Green Communities designation and competitive grant funds and submitted final grant reports by **February 3, 2023**
- Submitted the FY 2022 Green Communities Annual Report by **November 4, 2022**
- Satisfied all outstanding questions related to final grant reports and Annual Reports by **March 17, 2023**

A list of key dates and deadlines is posted on our [website](#), to help with project planning. Please note that this will be updated periodically and will be subject to change.

Please contact your [regional coordinator](#) with any questions.

Changes to Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy **Put on Hold**

Since the inception of the Green Communities program, police cruisers have been exempt from complying with the MPG requirements of the Fuel-Efficiency Vehicle Policy. Criterion Four of the Green Communities Program states that communities must “**purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.**” Criterion 4 guidelines also note that municipalities must “commit to purchasing fuel-efficient cruisers when they become commercially available.”

While there are three pursuit-rated police vehicles available on the Massachusetts Statewide Contract for the Purchase of Vehicles (VEH110) that meet the Criterion 4 MPG standards, market availability of the hybrid Ford Interceptor continues to be challenging. Therefore, DOER will postpone by one year the lift of exemption status for police cruisers that was previously announced. Starting in **Fiscal Year 2025 police cruisers will no longer be exempt from the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy**. Green Communities acquiring police cruisers acquired after June 30, 2024, having a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of less than 8,500 pounds, will need to comply with the most recent MPG criteria published in the Criterion Four Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy Guidelines.

DOER Seeks Public Comment on Draft Fossil-Fuel-Free Regulations

DOER released draft regulations on the **Municipal Fossil Fuel Free Building Construction and Renovation Demonstration Project**, and a proposed model rule for public comment at a virtual public hearing on **February 8 at 2:00 pm**. The draft regulations, the model rule, and additional information may be found on DOER's website.

DOER encourages written public comments on both the draft regulations and model rule which will be accepted until **February 10 at 5:00 pm ET**. Please submit comments to green.communities@mass.gov with the subject COMMENT ON TEN COMMUNITIES DEMONSTRATION COMMENTS.

MAPC Launches Codes for Climate Webinars

Webinar #1: Stretch and Specialized Energy Code Updates and Municipal Adoption

Join MAPC and the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) for a webinar to learn more about the updated Stretch Energy Code and the Opt-in Specialized Energy Code and how your municipality can adopt the specialized code:

- When: **Tuesday, February 14 from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm ET**
- Where: Zoom link provided upon registration

- [Register here.](#)

This virtual session will feature DOER and cover information about the newly updated Stretch Energy Code and the new Opt-in Specialized Energy Code and pathways and best practices for municipal adoption. This webinar is **intended for municipal planning and inspectional services staff, boards and committees**, and those interested and involved in building and energy codes.

Webinar #2: Mass Save Electrification Incentives

Join MAPC, Eversource, and National Grid for a webinar to learn more about Mass Save incentives that support the Commonwealth's building and vehicle electrification goals:

- When: **Wednesday, March 1 from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm ET**
- Where: Zoom link provided upon registration
- [Register here.](#)

This virtual webinar will include speakers from Eversource, National Grid, and several MAPC communities. It will review **Mass Save incentives for commercial, multifamily, and single-family new construction, as well as incentives for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.** These programs can help municipalities meet their climate goals and also support the new stretch energy and specialized codes. There will be time for a Q&A with the speakers during the session.

Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant

The U.S Department of Energy (DOE) released application materials for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL) funded Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program for states, local governments, and Tribes.

Municipalities with a population over 35,000 will receive a direct grant from DOE. Smaller communities can apply for sub-grants that will be administered through DOER later this year. EECBG funds can be used for **implementing strategies to reduce energy use, to reduce fossil fuel emissions, and to improve energy efficiency.**

For more information, visit the [Application Hub](#).

Clean Energy to Communities Offers Assistance

Clean Energy to Communities (C2C) is a U.S. Department of Energy-funded program that aims to significantly **accelerate the speed and scale of commitments, plans, and actions** to increase clean energy, resiliency, and environmental justice by providing direct support to local communities to achieve their own goals. C2C aims to address cross-cutting energy challenges with a community-centered focus.

The program offers three types of support through:

- In-depth partnerships
- Peer-learning cohorts
- Expert match technical assistance

More information can be found at the Clean Energy to Communities Program [webpage](#) and from [DOE's recent webinar](#) on C2C.

Updated Guidebook: '*Solar Power in Your Community*'

The Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) and the **National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)** recently released an updated version of the [Solar Power in Your Community](#) guidebook. The guidebook will assist local government officials and stakeholders in boosting solar deployment and overcoming common barriers in today's market through new case studies about innovative, field-tested approaches in cities and counties around the country. The guidebook highlights the most current technologies and strategies to maximize the benefits of solar to all communities.

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