

# Power Forward Housing: Aligning Utility Processes with the Commonwealth's Housing Needs

*"Providing timely information to municipalities and developers to make informed decisions and accelerate housing development."*

## Purpose

Power Forward is an effort between the Healey-Driscoll administration and Massachusetts' two largest utilities – Eversource and National Grid – to support alignment of Massachusetts' energy infrastructure with its urgent housing needs. Power Forward supports municipalities in evaluating electric grid capacity in areas that are primed for development, giving cities, towns, and developers a clear pathway to evaluate where new affordable, energy-efficient housing can be built quickly and cost-effectively.

Power Forward provides timely information on grid capacity and grid connection costs through advanced grid studies, called "engineering studies". All municipalities served by National Grid and Eversource are eligible for Power Forward, with funding for grid studies available to select municipalities through the Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

## Power Forward

**Who:** All municipalities in Eversource or National Grid territory are eligible.

**When:** Municipalities can apply to Power Forward starting in April 2026.

**How:** Municipalities should submit a Step Zero request or formal request for new electric service with their utility (Eversource or National Grid) for locations they would like evaluated through Power Forward. The municipality should subsequently indicate their interest in Power Forward to their utility account or project manager:

Each utility will hold a meeting with the municipality to discuss their Power Forward application and to better understand the municipality's needs. Municipalities are encouraged to include locations and potential projects that are likely to be developed to ensure that Power Forward provides the most actionable information possible.

**Study Determination:** The utility will determine if any of the sites included in the Power Forward application require an engineering study. If an engineering ***study is required***, the utility will request a deposit to conduct the study or, for eligible municipalities, seek funding from DOER. If an engineering ***study is not required***, the utility will provide a "Step 0" study that details the existing grid capacity at the identified locations.

**Study Information:** Engineering studies provide grid connection timelines and +50%/-25% cost estimates. Cost estimates include distribution service to the parcel. Detailed connection costs will be provided following the detailed design phase, which follows the engineering study, once initiated by the developer of an individual project.

The Power Forward engineering study holds the queue position for each location studied for 90 days after the release of the study. Within the 90-day window, developers need to

advance a work request and detailed design fee for 10% of the estimated project cost (not to exceed \$500k) to maintain their position in the grid connection queue. This fee is applied to the overall cost of the project and is non-refundable if the project is cancelled (note: the customer will be credited for any fee amounts collected above the utility's actual costs).

**Limitations:** Municipalities may have one Power Forward application active at a time but may submit a new Power Forward application upon completion. For calendar years 2026 and 2027, DOER will provide funding for one Power Forward engineering study per eligible municipality per year up to an annual cap of \$1.5 million. Funding will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. The annual cap will reset on January 1, 2027.

**Study Funding Eligibility:** The final list of municipalities served by National Grid and Eversource that are eligible for funding for engineering studies through Power Forward from DOER will be finalized prior to the start of Power Forward in April 2026.