



WASTEWATER ENERGY RECOVERY PILOT GRANT

Office Hours, June 18 and July 14, 2026

MassDEP's Official Answers to Questions

July 14, 2026

Introduction:

On July 14th, MassDEP's Clean Energy Results Program (CERP) held its second drop in Office Hours for interested applicants to the Wastewater Energy Recovery Pilot Grant to attend and ask questions about the application process. All substantive questions received during the second Office Hour session have been added to this document, which also includes questions received during the first office hours season on June 18th. Questions and responses from both seasons are summarized below.

June 18th, 2026, Questions and Responses

Q1: We would like to have a better understanding of what information is required for applying for the feasibility study because there is a lot of information requested in the project narrative, for example you need to have an engagement plan, and a communication plan.

A1: Thank you for this feedback. As Appendix A needs to apply to all of the grant phases, the response to these requirements will be evaluated based on the Phase for which the application is submitted. We will evaluate the information provided based on what information is reasonably available and necessary for each Phase. We will provide guidance on how to respond to the Narrative requirements in this Phase and the online application components (Appendix E) in an Amended WWER Policies and Procedures document currently posted on MassDEP's WWER webpage.

Q2: For the feasibility or Energy Assessment phase, what is expected in the Total Project Cost section for Phase 1.

A2: For the applicants applying for the Phase I Energy Assessment grant, you are expected to provide the estimated total cost you have been given to conduct an assessment and produce a feasibility report. If you are able to obtain assistance from your electric utility or a technology provider and can document the value of that in-kind service, you can include that information in your budget proposal. You may apply to MassDEP for up to \$15,000 to supplement the other sources of funding (including in-kind) you are able to receive.

Q3: Does the WWER Pilot grant allow an applicant to submit more than one site for consideration? We have multiple sites that met all the program requirements and appear to be a strong fit for the technology if multiple sites submissions are permitted?

A3: An applicant is allowed to submit only one application, but that application may include coverage of multiple structures, usually within close proximity to each other. An application, if funded, will receive only up to the maximum allowed for each phase of the pilot grant, regardless of the size of the project.

Q4: Can a facility that has conducted a water reclamation plant study for a new water reclamation plant that has not been constructed yet apply for an energy assessment grant?

A4: The applicant may apply for the Phase I assessment grant but should provide more information in their narrative on exactly how their project goals align with the overall purpose of the WWER Pilot grant. Their narrative should explain how they see installation of a WWER system will work in this new water reclamation plant. The applicant should provide as much information on the timeline for their whole project to show how it would align with this Pilot Grant which is expected to run for about three years.

Q5: Please explain how the scoring criteria will work for Phase I as it appears that some of the components relate to information that would be relevant after you've done an evaluation or study, not before. For example, you're being rated on project completeness. You're being rated on the impact of the energy recovery system. You're being rated on the anticipated life cycle energy and cost savings and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. And you're being rated on the amount of leverage funding the applicant's cost share. A lot of those things seem more about the future parts of the

project. Can you help us know how the feasibility study will be rated so that we can focus on that when we write our application?

A5: An application for the Energy Assessment Phase will be evaluated based on the information the applicant can provide. There will be some questions in Appendix E on the GMS that will be required, but others that will be optional or for which you may respond with N/A (not applicable). Our team will evaluate an application based on the information provided by the applicant which, at this time, will focus on the current heating and cooling source and load, costs, and building size amongst other information. As most applicants will be in a similar position, our evaluation for each criterion will be assessed in the same manner.

Q6: The procurement states an eligible project is one that plans to use or will use wastewater as its source of recoverable thermal energy that can provide supplemental space heating, hot water, or cooling of building spaces. Does the use of the word supplemental indicate a preference for supplemental heating as opposed to the technology being used for a wholesale replacement.

A6: No. Technology can be proposed as either compatible with, supplemental to another heating and cooling source such as geothermal or preferably as a wholesale replacement to another heating and cooling system.

Q7: In the cost effectiveness section of the evaluation criteria, the term “public return on investment” is used. Does this term refer to potential benefits that would go to residents in a building such as benefits to lower energy bills or improved health benefits that could be attributable to or an outcome of use of this technology?

A7: When we use the term public return on investment in this procurement, we are considering more than direct financial benefits. We would also like to see reasonable, societal/public health, economic, and environmental benefits that are generated by investment in this technology.

Q8: In Appendix E in the section that asks for system information, is this information that is knowable ahead of time or at the Phase I stage?

A8: For a Phase I application, the system information requested is for the existing structure on which you will be performing your assessment. Also, on the GMS platform, some

information will be required, and some will not. There is energy planning software that allows you to project system needs into the future. You may want to consult one of those. We understand it's an estimate, but it's to help us to understand the potential size of the systems that you will be scoping out. The size of your potential system also drives the potential wastewater technology for which you're trying to determine the feasibility. This is helpful background information for us about the existing structure. If you don't have the information at the time of applying, you will still be allowed to submit your application by entering the option of N/A for fields that are required.

Q9: When the question asks for a system heating or cooling demand at year 30, is that for the current system and how it may operate in 30 years?

A9: No. When the questions ask for a system heating or cooling demand at year 30, the goal is to obtain projections of actual change in heating/cooling loads due to the anticipated or potential for expansion of customers and space proposed by the current project. If no change is anticipated, this information can be answered to indicate it is N/A.

Q10: When the application asks for other funding sources, what are we to include if there are no other known funding sources, especially for Phase I applications?

A10: If an applicant has no other funding sources other than the grant, then they will be able to indicate that by reporting \$0 in the GMS systems, Appendix A, and the budget attachment of the applications. However, applicants should explore in-kind funding opportunities with their electric utilities and one of the technology providers.

Q11: When the application asks for project cost in the Phase 1 Assessment, it is only asking for the cost to conduct this assessment is that right?

A11: Yes, total project cost in a Phase 1 application is only for the total cost to conduct the Energy Assessment.

Q12: In terms of supporting (financial?) documents that are optional, would a written verification from the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program be the type of document we could attach.

A12: Yes, a written documentation of supporting funds for your project is helpful.

Q13: What happens if you want to know how much supplemental space heating or cooling a system can provide to the existing building spaces, like at the wastewater treatment plant? Additionally, if the temperature is taken from that treatment plant and provided through a thermal network to a variety of nearby buildings that are not part of the wastewater treatment plant, do we calculate that? Do we include how much heating or cooling it could provide for those buildings too?

A13: This question will be answered in two parts.

1. If we understand the first part of your question to mean you need to know how much supplemental space heating or cooling a system can provide for the existing wastewater building spaces, because you also expect to provide heating and cooling to external spaces, should you calculate this potential? The answer Yes. If you will be conducting an energy assessment of the potential project this information will be necessary.

2. If your project is anticipated to provide heating and cooling to additional buildings external to the wastewater facility, then you should be calculating this potential in order to know if your project is feasible.

July 14, 2026, Questions and Responses

Q14: What are the expectations for the Phase 1 study, how should it be applied, and how can an applicant assess if their wastewater plant is a good fit?

A14: The Phase I grant is being offered to produce a focused technical report. A description of what is to be produced is described in a Policies and Procedures summary document on the MassDEP's [WWER website](#). Within the document is an example of a report produced for a larger project, a "[District Master Plan](#)" that serves as a reference for the expected quality and type of information required. In general, applicants should submit a draft plan for wastewater energy recovery that includes initial cost estimates, projected energy savings, greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, and a basic site diagram. The plan should also assess space requirements for heating, cooling, and hot water, and specify whether the project involves a single building or multiple buildings. Based on the goals of the facility owner, the technical consultants you work with can provide advice as to whether this technology can address your goals.

Q15: Do the narrative questions regarding work completed to date, organizations engaged, and anticipated funding sources refer to the entire project or just the feasibility study?

A15: All questions are specific to Phase 1 (the energy assessment/feasibility study). Your responses to the application for Phase 1 funding will be based on your project's proposal at the time. You may also want to reach out to your electric utility provider or municipal wastewater facility to assist you with obtaining some of the information requested.

Q16: How should an applicant answer the question about the wastewater energy technology provider if they intend to bid the project out to multiple contractors?

A16: Applicants can select "other" in the online GMS system and provide a response indicating that they plan to bid out the work and the technology providers engaged.

Q17: Are there any investment tax credits available for wastewater energy recovery?

A17: There are currently no available tax credits for this specific technology due to limitations in the statutory language. While advocacy groups are working on this at the federal level, no progress has been reported yet.

Q18: Is there a timeline for when adjustments will be made to Appendix E to clarify which application questions are required?

A18: MassDEP is working to update its Policies and Procedures document for Phase 1 to clearly distinguish between required and non-required questions. When the document is updated, the new information will be indicated in red so that changes are clearly visible to applicants.

For questions received outside of the WWER Office Hour sessions, please submit your questions to CERP@mass.gov and the WWER Grant Review Team will respond to them in the next written response to Office Hour questions.