



WASTEWATER ENERGY RECOVERY PILOT GRANT OFFICE HOURS, JUNE 18, JULY 14, AND AUGUST 6, 2026

**MassDEP's Official Answers to Questions
September 24, 2026**

INTRODUCTION

On August 6th, MassDEP's Clean Energy Results Program (CERP) held its third 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 third Office Hour session have been added to this document, which also includes questions received during the first and second office hour sessions on June 18th and July 14th. Questions and responses from both sessions 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.

August 6, 2026, Questions and Responses

Q19: Can a municipality that does not operate its own wastewater treatment plant still apply for Phase I of the WWER Pilot Grant?

A19: Yes. A municipality does not need to own or operate a wastewater treatment plant to be eligible for Phase I. The WWER Pilot Grant is available to eligible entities including municipal and state-owned facilities, and Phase I is intended to evaluate whether a viable wastewater energy source can be connected to a building or other energy user. The wastewater source may be located within wastewater infrastructure that is owned or operated by another entity, provided the applicant can evaluate the technical feasibility of accessing and using that source.

The applicant should describe outreach and engagement activities conducted with the wastewater treatment plant owner/operator in the project proposal, as well as any partnership discussions conducted.

Q20: What characteristics should applicants consider when identifying buildings that may be good candidates for a Phase I WWER project? For example, would a building with higher water use, such as a facility with a swimming pool, be a stronger candidate than a typical municipal office building?

A20: Applicants should consider both the available wastewater energy source and the heating and cooling needs of the potential energy user. A building is not necessarily a better WWER candidate simply because it uses more water. The more important factors include the building's heating and cooling demand, the proximity and accessibility of a suitable wastewater source, wastewater flow and temperature, the compatibility of the existing HVAC system with the proposed WWER system, and the potential for recovered thermal energy to offset existing energy use.

Facilities with significant and consistent thermal loads such as buildings with pools, domestic hot-water demand, year-round heating or cooling needs, campuses, schools, hospitals, or other large facilities may present good opportunities for evaluation. However, the Phase I assessment should determine whether the combination of the wastewater source, building energy demand, system configuration, and site conditions makes the proposed project technically and economically feasible.

Q21: Should applicants consider pump stations and nearby buildings or other large energy users when identifying potential WWER project locations?

A21: Yes. Pump stations and other wastewater sources may be evaluated together with nearby municipal buildings, schools, universities, hospitals, multifamily properties, or other facilities with significant heating or cooling demand. The Phase I assessment should evaluate whether the wastewater source and the energy user are technically and economically compatible.

As a reminder, the applicant for a WWER grant must be the owner of the building where the WWER technology will be installed. In considering neighboring buildings an applicant may take into consideration that neighboring buildings may want to install their own technology in the future and access the same wastewater source. Conducting outreach to neighbors and those in the community is helpful to inform others of this project, its benefits and perhaps future interest by others in tapping this wastewater resource.

Q22: What information should applicants use to evaluate these potential locations, and what if detailed pump station or sewer flow data are not readily available?

A22: Applicants should consider wastewater flow and temperature, available thermal capacity, building heating and cooling demand, distance between the source and energy user, and other site-specific conditions. Identifying pump stations and nearby high-energy-use buildings can be used as an initial screening approach, but applicants should work with the applicable municipality or wastewater utility to obtain the information ultimately needed to demonstrate feasibility.

Q23: If a potential WWER project would connect to MWRA-owned or other wastewater utility infrastructure, how should the applicant address access, coordination, and approval requirements?

A23: The non-municipal applicant should coordinate with the owner and/or operator of the wastewater infrastructure early in the assessment process. If the proposed WWER system would connect to or otherwise affect infrastructure owned by MWRA or another wastewater utility, the applicant will ultimately need to determine whether access is feasible and what permissions, technical requirements, or approvals would be required from that utility/utilities.

An applicant should make these connections before applying for a Phase I grant to demonstrate their initial due diligence and preparation for this pilot grant. As part of communication and outreach efforts, the non-municipal applicant should encourage the publicly-owned entity to review materials from the [Wastewater Energy Recovery Summit, register to participate](#) in the upcoming second Bidders' Information Conference on October 13, 2026 from 2 – 3:30 pm, and meet with technology providers to better understand the energy recovery process and ask questions regarding the technology. The publicly owned entity can also be encouraged to reach out to the CERP staff, independent of the applicant for more information.

Q24: Are sewer-main and wastewater-flow data protected information, and what should applicants do if they have difficulty obtaining the wastewater infrastructure information needed to identify and evaluate potential WWER locations?

A24: Some wastewater infrastructure information may be considered protected or restricted, depending on the wastewater utility or infrastructure owner. Applicants should work directly with the applicable municipality, wastewater utility, or infrastructure owner to determine what information can be made available for the Phase I assessment.

Applicants are also encouraged to coordinate with appropriate municipal departments, engineering staff, energy utilities, consultants, and WWER technology providers to help identify potential WWER locations and obtain the technical information needed to evaluate project feasibility prior to applying for a Phase I grant.

The applicant may consider coordinating with the wastewater infrastructure owner to facilitate direct engagement between potential technology providers and municipal stakeholders regarding WWER technology, its performance benefits, and its potential contribution to greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. These discussions could inform and support subsequent project phases.

Q25: If a proposed project location is not identified as a Burdened Area in MassEnviroScreen but is located within an Environmental Justice (EJ) community identified by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, will that project receive favorable consideration under the WWER Pilot Grant location-scoring criteria?

A25: If a proposed project location is not within a Burdened Area but will serve or benefit a community within a Burdened Area, the project may receive Location points. If the project location is not within a Burdened Area and will not serve or benefit a Burdened Area, then it may not be eligible for Location points. However, such a project could be allocated Location points based on other Location criteria, such as location by MassDEP region or regional distribution across the state.

Q26: For Phase I, how detailed does the work plan need to be? Is it sufficient to describe the basic steps, such as issuing an RFP, selecting a contractor, completing the feasibility assessment, and submitting required reports?

A26: The Phase I work plan may be relatively straightforward and should reflect the activities that are reasonably expected for that phase of the project. This may include procurement of a consultant or contractor, completion of the Energy Assessment or feasibility study, and preparation of required progress and final reports. If the applicant also plans stakeholder outreach, community engagement, or coordination with neighborhood or civic groups during Phase I, those activities should also be included in the work plan.

Q27: Are the scoring criteria applied the same way in every phase of the WWER Pilot Grant, or are they interpreted differently for Phase I feasibility studies?

A27: The scoring criteria will be interpreted in the context of the phase being reviewed. For Phase I, applications are evaluated based on the information that is reasonable and appropriate for a feasibility or Energy Assessment phase, rather than being expected to provide the same level of detail that would be available during later design or construction phases.

Q28: Does MassDEP have recommendations for consultants or WWER technology providers that can assist municipalities?

A28: MassDEP developed a [Wastewater Energy Recovery Technology Comparison Matrix](#) that identifies WWER technologies and potential providers and can be used as an initial resource when evaluating available options. Applicants may also work with an energy utility, consultant, WWER technology provider, or their engineering team to support the Phase I assessment.

MassDEP does not endorse or recommend a specific vendor or consultant. Applicants are responsible for selecting the technical resources and providers that best meet the needs of their proposed project.

Q29: Since Noventa Energy may no longer be available, who is currently supporting HUBER technology?

A29: HUBER is currently supporting its wastewater energy recovery technology directly. Applicants interested in HUBER technology should contact HUBER directly to confirm the appropriate technical representative and obtain current information regarding available support, system capabilities, and project coordination.

Because vendor representatives and distribution arrangements may change over time, applicants should confirm the most current contact information directly with the technology provider.

Questions and Responses for emails/calls received after August 6, 2026

The following is a clarification to a question we received via email for Q2 (above). The full question and answer are included here as Q/A 30.

Q30: For the feasibility or Energy Assessment phase, what is expected in the Total Project Cost section for Phase 1.

A30: 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.

If a contractor estimate is not yet available, applicants may use information from local utilities, technology providers, comparable studies, or other available sources to develop and support the estimated project cost based on the size and complexity of the proposed project.

The estimated total project cost may be higher than the WWER Pilot Grant amount, but with in-kind assistance provided by a tech provider and or an electric utility, the total project cost may be met. The funds required to complete the Phase 1 work may not require the full \$15,000 grant. If the \$15,000 grant amount is used as the current project estimate, it should have a reasonable basis and should not simply reflect the maximum amount available under the grant. The final project cost will ultimately need to be documented and justified.

Q31: Can applicants provide a list of confirmed team members, or is an organizational chart required?

A31: As stated in the RFR, an organizational chart is required as part of the application. The purpose of the chart is to provide a clear understanding of the project team structure and the roles and responsibilities of each participant, including contractors, subcontractors, and consultants involved in this phase of the project.

The organizational chart does not need to be complicated. A simple chart identifying the confirmed team members, their roles, and the specific project leads will be sufficient. The relevant qualifications of the identified leads may be included in the chart or provided as supporting information.

Q32: Does the Energy Assessment Phase I Grant require an ASHRAE Level II Audit?

A32: No, the Energy Assessment Phase I Grant does not require an ASHRAE Level II Audit be performed. An ASHRAE Level I Audit may be used to support the Phase I assessment, provided the submission contains all information required by the WWER Phase I scope. If

an applicant applies for the Construction Grant, an ASHRAE Level II Audit can be submitted as an additional attachment, but it is not required.

Context: American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) is a professional association seeking to advance heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration systems design and construction. ASHRAE defines best practices for energy survey and analysis and also sets guidelines for Level 1, 2, and 3 energy audits in its Standard 211-2018. An ASHRAE Level I Audit is also called a simple audit, a walk-through of the building surveying its systems and operations. It reviews building energy usage and identifies preliminary energy-saving opportunities, while an ASHRAE Level II Audit involves a more detailed building survey and engineering analysis, including a breakdown of energy use and more detailed evaluation of potential measures, costs, and savings. An ASHRAE Level 3 Audit is the most detailed and rigorous of the audits and engineering analysis and is not required for this Pilot Grant.

Q33: What does MassDEP mean by "withdrawal rate" and who does MassDEP expect to provide that information to an applicant for a Phase 1 Energy Assessment application?

A33: For purposes of the Phase I assessment, the withdrawal rate refers to the estimated wastewater flow that would be accessed or diverted through the proposed WWER system for heat recovery. Applicants should provide the best available estimate based on the wastewater source being evaluated. Wastewater-flow information should generally be obtained from the applicable wastewater utility, municipality, sewer authority, treatment facility, or other infrastructure owner/operator. The applicant's consultant, engineering team, or technology provider may use this information to estimate the flow required for the proposed WWER system. If detailed flow information is not available at the time of application, the online application system does not require a response to this item; however, applicants are encouraged to provide any available information and identify the basis for any estimate provided.

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.