

Green Communities 2023 Annual Report

Designation Awards

The Green Communities Division, established under M.G.L. c. 25A, § 10, assists the Commonwealth’s municipalities and other local governmental bodies to: reduce energy consumption and costs; reduce pollution; facilitate the development of renewable energy and alternative energy resources; and create local jobs related to the building of renewable and alternative energy facilities as well as the installation of energy-efficient equipment.

In 2023, the Green Communities Division awarded \$11,873,943 in direct grants to 111 municipalities, and \$987,350 to regional planning agencies to support municipal clean energy initiatives and capacity building. Each of these grant programs are summarized below.

Under the Green Communities Act, cities and towns must meet five criteria to be designated a Green Community and receive funding. Initial Designation awards are formula-based grants awarded to newly minted Green Communities for clean energy projects at municipal and school facilities, as well as vehicular fuel reduction projects. Grant awards are based on a \$125,000 base for each designated Green Community, plus additional amounts tied to per capita income and population.

There are now 291 designated Green Communities, representing 89% of the Commonwealth’s population. Since the inaugural designation in 2010, DOER has awarded over \$177 million in grants to cities and towns to upgrade municipal and school facilities. These grant-supported projects leveraged \$41 million in Mass Save® incentives and cut annual energy costs by an estimated \$28 million.

Three municipalities applied, met the requirements and were designated in 2023. This newest group of three towns committed to reduce their energy consumption by 23,188 MMBTUs in five years, energy use equivalent to heating and powering 179 homes, and greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction of 1,635 tons equivalent to taking 344 cars off the roads.

Municipality	Grant Award
East Longmeadow	\$160,170
Hadley	\$139,250
Southwick	\$146,220

Competitive Grant Awards

Once designated as a Green Community, cities and towns are eligible for competitive grants. These grants provide financial support for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that further the designated communities’ clean energy goals. In 2023, existing Green Communities that have successfully invested their initial designation grants and previous competitive grant awards participated in the twelfth annual round of DOER Green Communities competitive grants. Grants are capped at \$200,000 per municipality, with the exception of multi-year building decarbonization grants, which were capped at \$500,000. In 2023, grants were solicited in the spring and fall.

Twenty-seven (27) out of twenty-eight (28) municipalities that applied for **Block 1 Competitive Grants** were approved by DOER to receive \$3,351,301 in funding for at least some of their requested project(s). Representing an estimated energy cost savings of over \$256,139 annually and leveraging \$856,827 in utility incentives, the proposed projects are altogether estimated to yield energy savings of 9,701 MMBtus, which translates to the amount of energy consumed by 285 Massachusetts households. In greenhouse gas emissions terms, the projects are estimated to reduce emissions by 586 metric tons annually – roughly equal to taking over 130 internal combustion engine (ICE) cars off the road for one year.

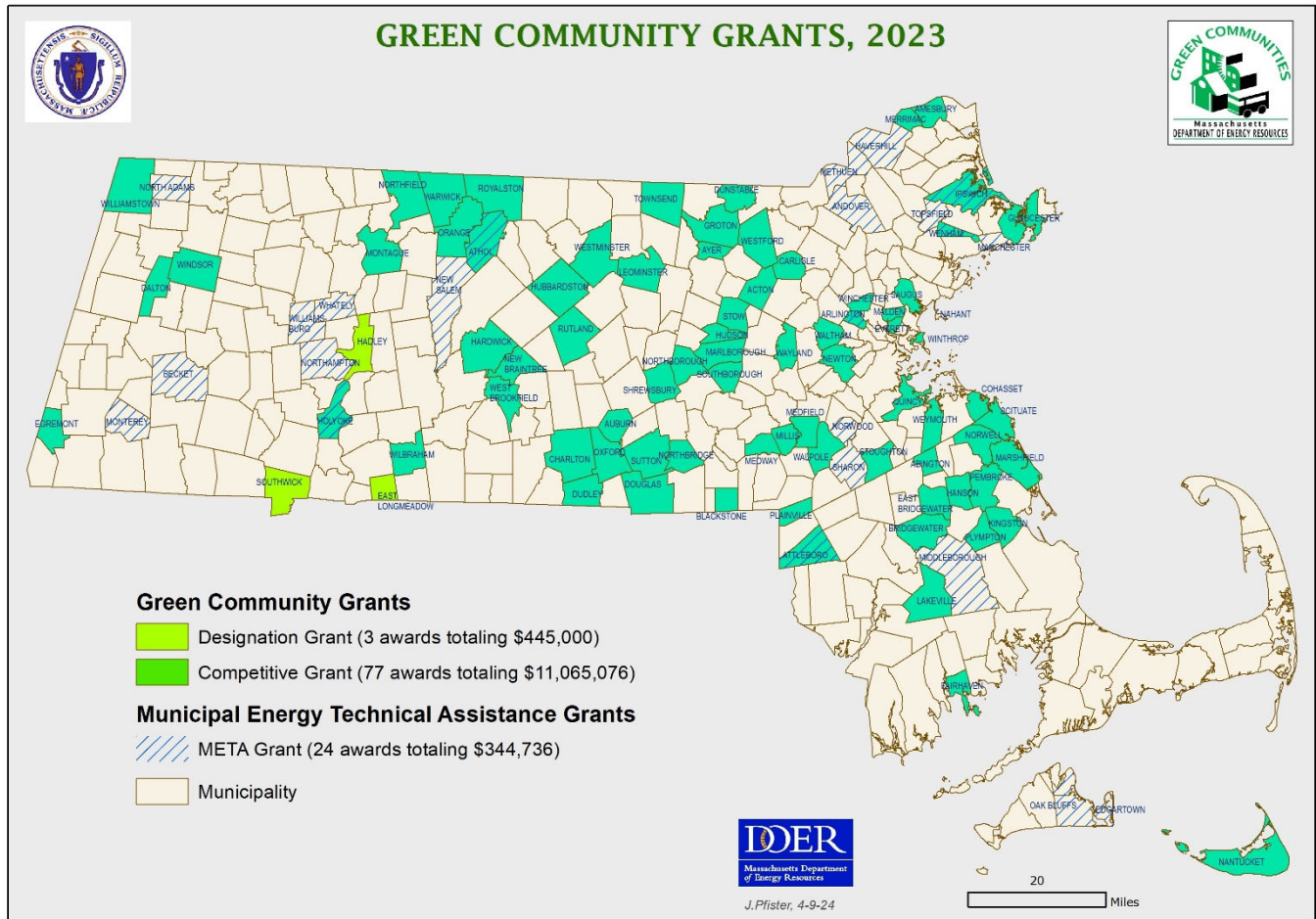
Abington	\$200,000	Marlborough	\$175,734	Scituate	\$99,409
Amesbury	\$135,577	Marshfield	\$67,450	Shrewsbury	\$185,000
Arlington	\$100,000	Medfield	\$200,000	Southborough	\$57,042
Attleboro	\$110,050	Montague	\$71,400	Stoughton	\$200,000
Bridgewater	\$113,815	Northborough	\$127,194	Townsend	\$199,950
Carlisle	\$72,260	Norwell	\$173,887	Waltham	\$198,000
Dalton	\$17,815	Orange	\$144,168	Warwick	\$78,299
Douglas	\$35,684	Oxford	\$200,000	Westminster	\$199,999
Lakeville	\$110,855	Plympton	\$39,133	Windsor	\$38,580

Fifty (50) out of fifty-four (54) municipalities that applied for Block 2 Competitive Grants were approved by DOER to receive \$7,732,266 in funding for at least some of their requested project(s). Representing an estimate energy cost savings of over \$594,957 annually and leveraging \$2,611, 527 in utility incentives, the proposed projects are altogether estimated to yield energy savings of 31,168 MMBtus, which translates to the amount of energy consumed by 241 Massachusetts households. In greenhouse gas emissions terms, the projects are estimated to reduce emissions by 1,897 metric tons annually – roughly equal to taking over 383 ICE cars off the road for one year.

Acton	\$100,000	Gloucester	\$144,311	Millis	\$5,450	Sutton	\$190,172
Athol	\$39,989	Groton	\$31,668	Nantucket	\$177,160	Walpole	\$199,988
Auburn	\$155,244	Hanson	\$173,654	New Braintree	\$180,013	Wayland	\$92,813
Ayer	\$151,530	Hardwick	\$200,000	Newton	\$500,000	Wenham	\$50,000
Blackstone	\$200,000	Holyoke	\$197,404	Northbridge	\$191,386	West Brookfield	\$180,526
Charlton	\$94,422	Hubbardston	\$188,000	Northfield	\$178,910	Westford	\$97,530
Cohasset	\$196,006	Hudson	\$44,170	Pembroke	\$200,000	Weymouth	\$100,000
Dudley	\$80,394	Ipswich	\$167,500	Plainville	\$199,984	Wilbraham	\$54,358
Dunstable	\$5,000	Kingston	\$66,488	Quincy	\$199,685	Williamstown	\$196,300
East Bridgewater	\$200,000	Leominster	\$123,997	Royalston	\$168,689	Winchester	\$99,999
Egremont	\$199,913	Malden	\$193,022	Rutland	\$200,000	Winthrop	\$191,133
Everett	\$200,000	Medway	\$84,828	Saugus	\$200,000		
Fairhaven	\$125, 810	Merrimac	\$14,800	Stow	\$500,000		

DOER staff works with communities to ensure energy projects are well thought-out and defined. Projects that were not awarded funds either had little to no energy or emissions savings or needed additional scoping and/or analysis.

For a complete list of grant awards and projects by Green Community, see our [website](#).



Regional Energy Planning Assistance Awards

Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) grants are offered by the Green Communities Division of the Department of Energy Resources to augment municipal capacity necessary to: 1) participate in the Green Communities Designation and Grant Program; and 2) advance clean energy projects in under-resourced municipalities. The statutory authority is found under M.G.L. c. 25A, § 10, which established the DOER Green Communities Division to assist the Commonwealth’s municipalities and other local governmental bodies to: reduce energy consumption and costs, reduce pollution, facilitate the development of renewable energy and alternative energy resources, and create local jobs related to the building of renewable energy and alternative energy facilities and the installation of energy-efficient equipment.

All technical assistance agencies (regional planning authorities, councils of governments, extension services and joint power entities) that provide clean energy assistance to municipalities were invited to apply. The Program Opportunity Notice was posted on CommBuys (the public procurement platform administered by the Operational Service Division) on May 1, 2023, and applications were due on June 23, 2023. Grants fund technical assistance and expertise needed to complete energy projects in cities and towns with the aim of reducing energy costs and strengthening local economies. A total of \$987,350 was awarded for 11 agencies, out of \$1,461,500 requested. The grant period is two years and will provide direct assistance to 159 municipalities, as well as fund capacity building activities and regional projects to benefit all communities within their respective regions. It is important to note that several of the regional planning agencies are developing regional climate action plans through the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). REPA will be used to bolster stakeholder engagement, particularly among EJ communities.

DOER established grant eligibility criteria for the following technical assistance activities: Green Communities designation assistance, Green Communities support services, regional clean energy support and net-zero planning.

Awards are limited to \$150,000 per applicant. As total requests exceed program budget of \$1 million, DOER prioritized funding decisions in accordance with the Program Opportunity Notice. In addition, funding requests were denied because applicants sought funds for unspecified projects or were not applicable to some communities (e.g., funding assistance for project management of undefined clean energy projects or for annual reports for municipalities that are not yet designated Green Communities). Finally, as this is a grant program for under-resourced communities, those with energy managers cannot receive technical assistance for Green Communities related tasks.

See chart on the next page for award information

Technical Assistance Agency	GC Designation	Green Communities Support	Net Zero Planning	Regional Clean energy Planning and Project Support	TOTAL
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	\$3,350	\$53,500	\$5,000	\$4,500	\$66,350
Cape Light Compact	\$6,500	\$103,000	\$0	\$0	\$109,500
Central Mass Regional Planning Commission	\$0	\$96,500	\$0	\$25,000	\$121,500
Franklin Regional Council of Governments	\$0	\$75,250	\$0	\$12,000	\$87,250
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	\$37,500	\$1,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$88,500
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission	\$0	\$79,500	\$0	\$30,000	\$109,500
Merrimac Valley Planning Commission	\$0	\$22,500	\$0	\$41,000	\$63,500
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments	\$0	\$19,750	\$0	\$50,000	\$69,750
Old Colony Planning Commission	\$0	\$54,000	\$0	\$25,000	\$79,000
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission	\$15,000	\$59,250	\$25,000	\$0	\$99,250
Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District	\$0	\$73,250	\$0	\$20,000	\$93,250
TOTAL	\$62,350	\$637,500	\$30,000	\$257,500	\$987,350

Municipal Energy Technical Assistance Grants

Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grants are offered once a year by the Green Communities Division of the Department of Energy Resources.

All municipalities, regional school districts, and water/wastewater districts were invited to apply for META via a Program Opportunity Notice (PON) that was posted on CommBuys (the public procurement platform administered by the Operational Services Division) on September 19, 2022; applications were due November 18, 2022. Municipalities were not required to be a designated Green Community to apply. Eligible applicants can apply for up to \$15,000 to fund technical assistance and expertise needed to complete energy projects in cities and towns with the aim of reducing energy costs, reducing ghg emissions, and decarbonizing local buildings and fleets. A total of \$344,736 was awarded to 24 municipalities.

Grantee	META Category	Grant amount
Andover	Energy Resiliency	\$15,000
Arlington	Fleet Assessment	\$10,000
Athol	ASHRAE audit/Water efficiency	\$14,790
Attleboro	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Becket	Energy Storage	\$9,361
Edgartown	Energy Resiliency	\$10,585
Haverhill	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Holyoke	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Ipswich	OA for ESPC	\$15,000
Manchester	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Methuen	Energy Resiliency	\$15,000
Middleborough	ASHRAE Audit	\$15,000
Monterey	Community Shared Solar	\$15,000
Nahant	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
New Salem	Energy Resiliency	\$15,000
North Adams	Retro-Commissioning	\$15,000
Northampton	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Norwood	Fleet Assessment	\$15,000
Oak Bluffs	Energy Resiliency	\$15,000
Sharon	Fleet Assessment	\$15,000
Topsfield	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Wenham	Renewable Thermal Studies	\$15,000
Whately	Fleet Assessment	\$15,000
Williamsburg	Retro-Commissioning	\$15,000