

Becoming a Green Community

Does your community want to make a commitment to being better on energy efficiency and clean energy? Do you want state support to figure out how to be a cleaner, greener town, and state grants for projects to become more sustainable?



What is the Green Communities Program?

The Green Communities Program strives to help all Massachusetts cities/towns find clean energy solutions, reduce energy costs, and strengthen local economies. The program provides technical assistance and financial support for municipal initiatives aimed to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy in public buildings, facilities, and schools. Overall, the Green Communities Program helps clean up your community's environment and encourages cutting-edge green development.

What is the Green Communities Designation?

The Green Communities Designation demonstrates a municipality's commitment to "green" efforts at the local level and lets the city or town get help for energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives from the state. Green Communities aim to decrease their energy use by 20% over the course of 5 years and receive assistance in improving the energy efficiency of their public buildings, facilities, and schools.

What are the steps for becoming a Green Community?

1. Review the Criteria to be Designated a Green Community:
 - Provide as-of-right siting in designated locations for renewable energy
 - Simplify and expedite permitting for new clean energy facilities
 - Develop a plan to reduce energy use by 20% within 5 years
 - Purchase fuel-efficient vehicles for municipality departments
 - Minimize life-cycle energy costs for new construction (e.g. "Stretch Code")
2. Submit application to DOER's Green Communities Division
3. Green Communities Division review
4. If accepted, submit proposal for energy reduction plans Overall, becoming a green community can take more than a year, but it is a great way to learn where your community currently stands, bring your neighbors up to speed on the issues, and then get expert help on taking your next steps.

What are resources to help with the process of becoming a Green Community?

Green Communities Program Guidance is available through the MA DOER, and Regional Coordinators serve as go-to contacts to answer questions, give advice, and assist with energy initiatives. Read more

1. [Program Guidance](#)
2. [Contact your GC Coordinator](#)



Technical Assistance

Communities can often find technical assistance through their local planning agencies. For example, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council provides help to 101 communities in Greater Boston (<http://www.mapc.org/green-communitiesta>).

Central Region: Kelly Brown (Kelly.brown@state.ma.us)

Northeast Region: Joanne Bissetta (Joanne.bissetta@state.ma.us)

Southeast Region: Seth Pickering (Seth.pickering@state.ma.us)

Western Region: Jim Barry (Jim.barry@state.ma.us)

Success Stories

Arlington

Arlington was one of the first municipalities to be designated as a Green Community in the spring of 2010. Since then, they have successfully reduced their energy consumption by an estimated 21% and is saving about \$350,000 in annual energy costs. Their latest grant award from the DOER in 2017 was \$179,698.

“Being a Green Community has not only given us access to state grants and helped us reduce energy costs, but has also helped change the way town staff think. Energy efficiency is not an afterthought anymore. Now it is part of the day-to-day town operations and has paved the way for new clean energy projects.” - Ryan Katofsky

Arlington was also the winner of the DOER's Leading by Example Award in 2013. The Highland Fire Station in Arlington was recently renovated and designated a LEED Silver Building. Just one example of many sustainable projects going on in town!

Dedham

Dedham became a designated Green Community in 2011 and has enjoyed both the economic and the environmental benefits associated with this designation. Dedham successfully launched its Sustainable Dedham Initiative to educate its residents about energy conservation and sustainability. Additionally, the town has installed solar arrays on the high school and Town Hall, partnered with Next Step Living and Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts, and has had countless other successful initiatives!