



MAINE GOVERNOR'S  
Energy Office

+

**MAINE.**  
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

+

HR&A

# Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program Overview Webinar

Maine Governor's Energy Office + Maine Department of Community and Economic Development  
HR&A Advisors

March 18, 2024

# Agenda

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The background image shows an industrial facility, possibly a water treatment plant, with a large body of water in the foreground. A long, dark, segmented floating barrier runs across the water. In the background, there are several buildings, including a prominent white and blue structure with a tall chimney. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

01

# Introduction



## INTRODUCTIONS

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) have partnered with HR&A Advisors to launch the Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program (MECERP).



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**Principal  
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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

MECERP is designed to foster economic development across Maine by providing high-quality technical assistance to projects that unlock community assets for economic development.



### GROW THE ECONOMY

- Create durable, family sustaining jobs
- Grow Maine's core and emerging industries
- Bolster business growth



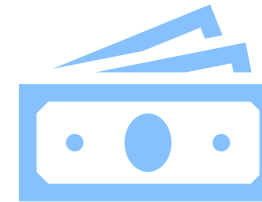
### SPARK COLLABORATION

- Convene government, non-profit, and private sectors as partners in economic growth
- Facilitate community-wide visioning and goal-setting



### LEVERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Target investment in areas where there is already grid capacity to support it



### SECURE FUNDING

- Strengthen Maine communities' competitiveness for federal economic development and infrastructure dollars



### INVEST FOR ALL

- Deliver investment and capacity to communities, with a focus on rural communities

## SCOPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

HR&A Advisors, an economic development consulting firm, has been retained by the State to serve as the program administrator. Through the program, HR&A will provide:



**Development of action plans** to increase competitiveness for grant opportunities.

- Project identification, prioritization, and community visioning
- Support and guidance on site planning, financial analysis, community engagement, and partnership building
- Definition of roles, responsibilities, and agreements between project team members

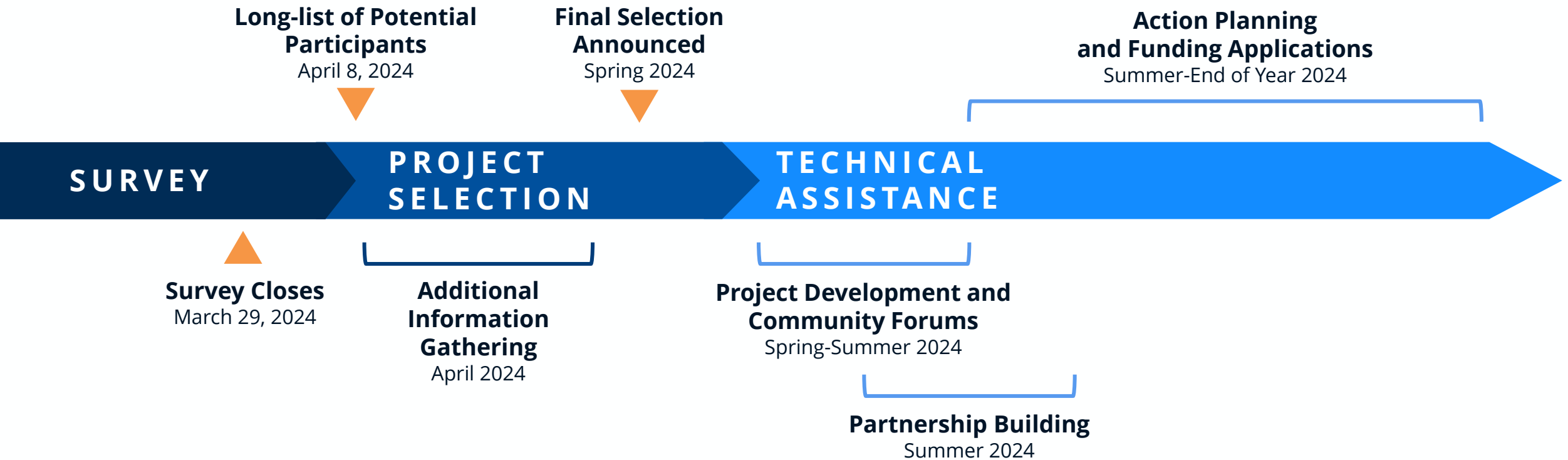


Support in identifying and applying for **state and federal funding**.

- Eligibility assessment and opportunity prioritization
- Office hours to guide funding identification and pursuit
- Grant writing support

## PROGRAM TIMELINE

The State intends to begin delivering technical assistance to 5 to 8 communities with promising projects by Summer 2024.





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# Qualifying Communities & Projects



## QUALIFYING COMMUNITIES

Who can participate?

- Local governments
- Quasi-public development organizations, such as economic development councils and regional planning organizations
- Universities
- Non-profit and community-based organizations
- For-profit entities

### **NOTE**

Note: For-profit entities are eligible to apply on their own. However, the State will give priority to nonprofit and government applicants, or to for-profit entities that partner with them. This is due to state and federal funding rules that prioritize and sometimes require the participation of nonprofit and government sectors in government-funded implementation.

## QUALIFYING PROJECTS | 1. GROW THE ECONOMY & SPARK COLLABORATION

MECERP is seeking to provide technical assistance to economic development projects that attract or grow businesses and talent. Examples include:



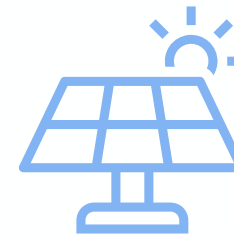
### REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Promoting the redevelopment or reuse of industrial sites, including brownfield sites, to support manufacturing and business relocation/expansion



### CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION

Planning and implementation for development projects across multiple sites that are close to each other or along a commercial corridor



### COMMUNITY-BASED RENEWABLE ENERGY

Supporting economic development projects with a renewable energy component

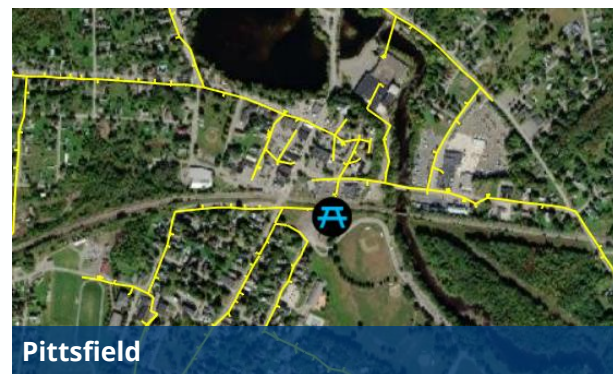
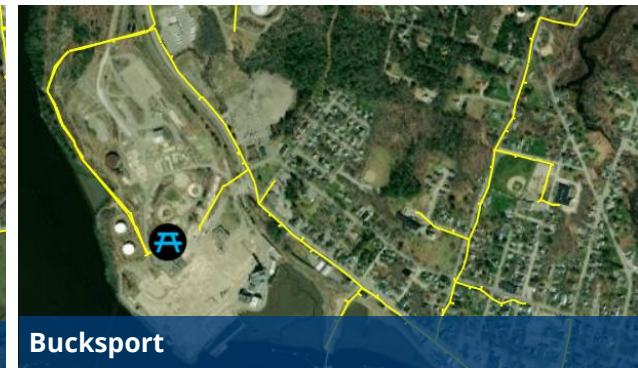
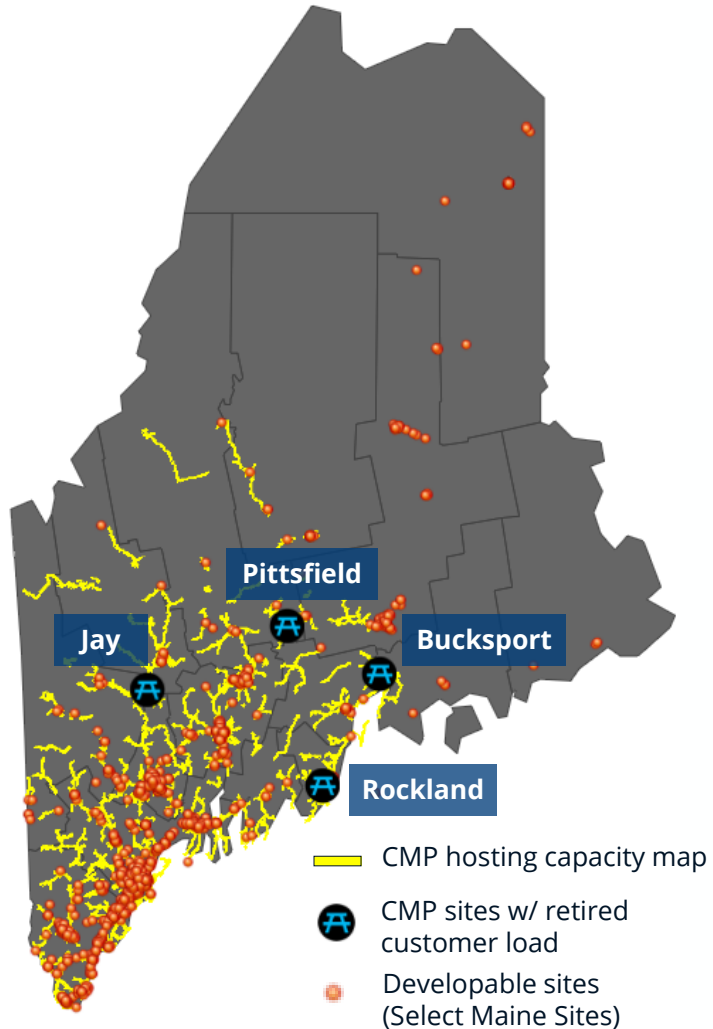
## NOTES

- These categories include examples of the types of projects that could be eligible for support, but the State welcomes other ideas that might be in service of program economic development goals.
- Each project should be able to leverage underutilized electricity infrastructure (i.e., available electrical capacity in the transmission or distribution system in the electrical grid).

## QUALIFYING PROJECTS | 2. LEVERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

MECERP supports new development where underutilized electricity infrastructure exists (i.e., available electrical capacity on transmission or distribution lines).

**The State will work on behalf of communities to confirm the grid capacity of project sites/areas in collaboration with applicable electric utilities.**



*\*\* These CMP sites are shown for illustrative purposes and do not necessarily represent site locations/conditions for the MECERP.*

## QUALIFYING PROJECTS | 3. SECURE FUNDING

The State will select projects in part based on the greatest chance to compete for state, federal, and other available funding. Funding availability may depend on a number of factors:



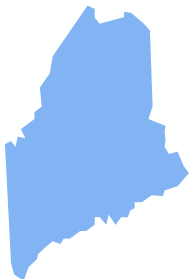
**Type of Funding:** There are several different types of federal, state, and local funding that projects may be eligible for.

- Grants
- Low-cost loans
- Tax credits



**Project Cost Categories:** Funding may be available for specific project costs.

- Capital costs (construction or retrofitting of buildings or infrastructure)
- Operations and maintenance costs
- Planning costs (e.g., plan development, feasibility assessment, marketing)
- Program management costs (e.g., supporting workforce development programs in support of an industrial development investment)



**Geography:** Specific funding may be available for projects located in areas with certain federal and state designations.

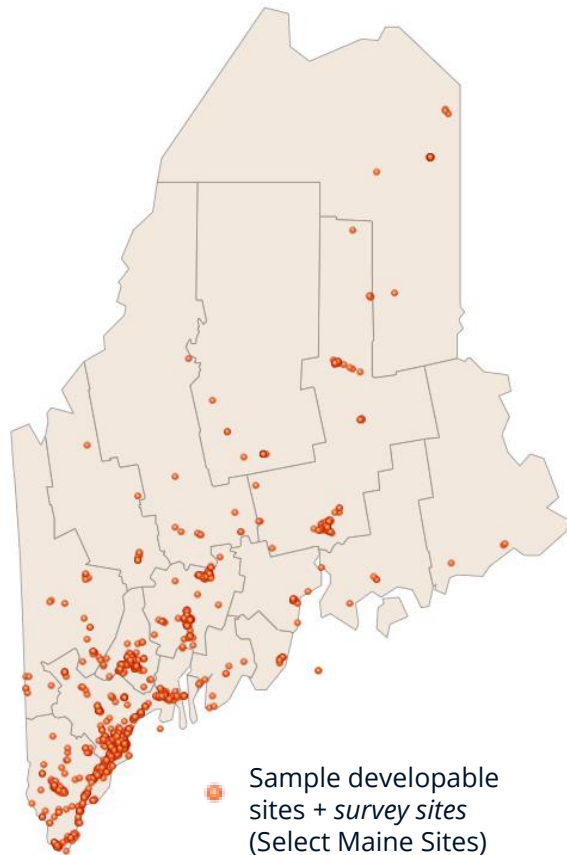
- Disadvantaged / environmental justice community (federal definition)
- Opportunity Zone (federal IRS definition)
- High Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) community (state definition)



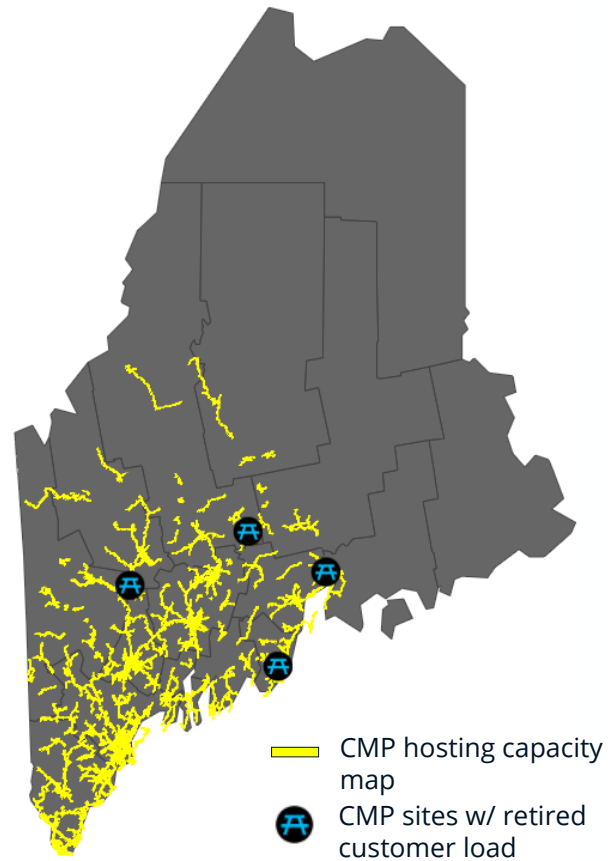
## QUALIFYING PROJECTS | 4. INVEST FOR ALL OF MAINE

The State is considering a holistic set of economic, demographic, and infrastructure variables in order to deliver technical assistance and capacity to communities that could most benefit from MECERP.

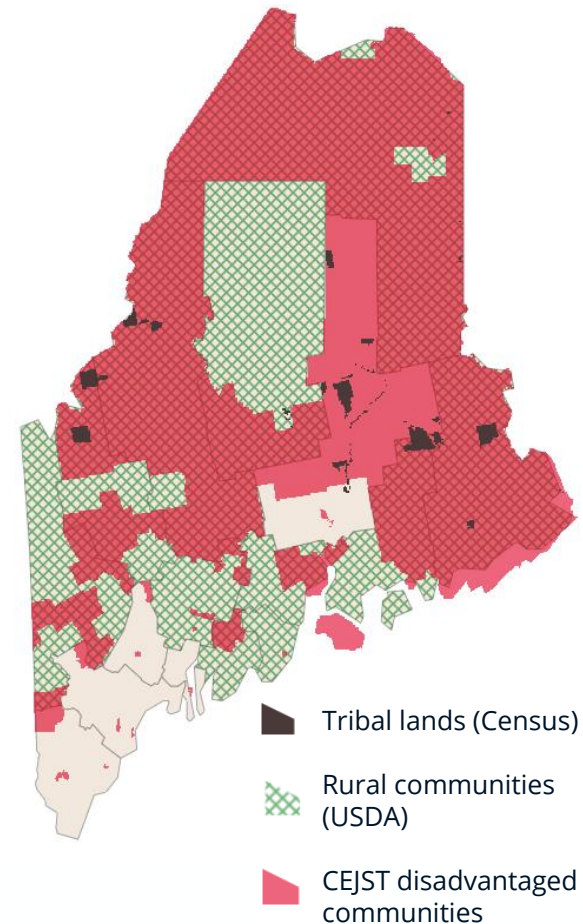
### Site Availability



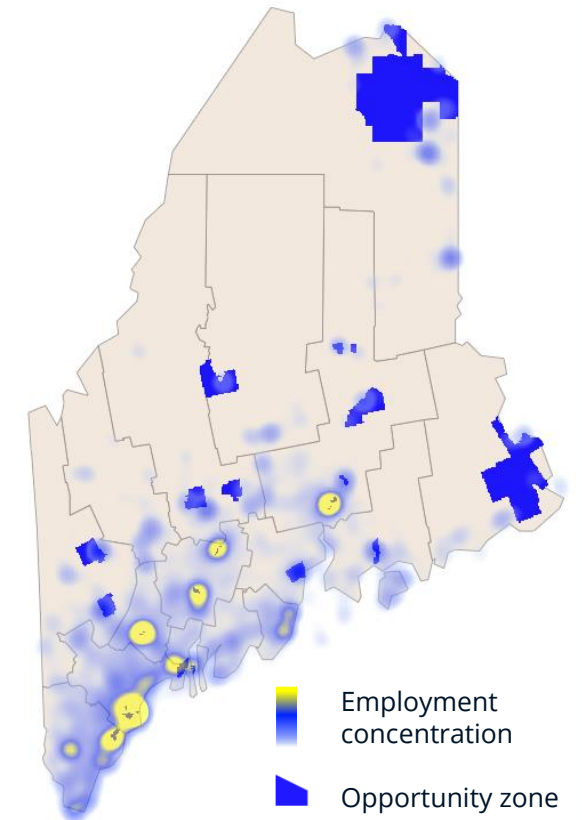
### Grid Capacity



### Federal Priorities



### Opportunity Zones



## QUALIFYING PROJECTS

We are currently learning about existing momentum and growth opportunities that MECERP can advance into community engagement, partnership-building, fundraising, and implementation.

**If your community has any of the following, please share it with us:**

1. Recently published economic and community development plans, site reuse and real estate development proposals, climate action **plans that describe potential projects** at a high level.
2. Existing **planning resources (e.g., federal or state grants, philanthropic support)** that are reserved for conducting community needs assessments that might lead to concrete project ideas.
3. Existing **collaborations** or agreements among local government, community-based institutions (e.g., local economic development organizations, community development nonprofits, universities), or landowners to invest in economic development.
4. Evolving conversations with **businesses seeking to expand within or relocate** to your community.
5. Promising sites that are currently or expected to be vacant or underutilized, where you believe there is **potential for reuse** that grows the economy.

## QUALIFYING PROJECTS

We are using a variety of strategies to cast a wide net to learn about existing economic development momentum and project pipeline statewide.



### Ongoing communications

- Website update and distribution via DECD and regional newsletters
- Recorded webinar



### Survey

- Online survey designed to capture information about projects, sites, and plans
- Survey link: <https://forms.gle/Bs1EEDK68MhFCKhF8>



### Outreach campaign

- One-on-one and focus group meetings with economic development institutions, foundations, local government organizations, and other institutions across the state.

The background image shows an industrial facility, possibly a water treatment plant, situated along a river. A prominent feature is a large, multi-story structure with blue and white horizontal bands. To the left, there are green trees and bushes. In the foreground, a long, dark, segmented floating barrier runs across the river. The sky is overcast and grey. A dark blue horizontal bar is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the number '03' in white. The title 'Survey Walkthrough' is written in white text across the middle of the image.

03

# Survey Walkthrough



# THE SURVEY

- **Purpose**
  - Ensure an inclusive process
  - Receive community input on site recommendations and project ideas
  - Encourage a collaborative selection process and referral to other programs
- **Structure**
  - Part 1: General information
  - Part 2: Site recommendations
  - Part 3: Project ideas
- **Key Dates**
  - Survey closes: [March 29, 2024](#)
  - Selection period: April 2024
  - Final decision announced: Spring 2024



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## Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program (MECERP) Interest Survey

The **Maine Community Energy Redevelopment Program (MECERP)** is designed to foster economic development across Maine by providing high-quality technical assistance for community economic development projects supporting the revitalization of underutilized or legacy electricity infrastructure. Successful projects supported through MECERP will bring together partners in the community to collaborate on implementation, help realize Maine's economic development goals, have a high likelihood of qualifying for state and federal funding, and leverage underutilized or legacy electricity infrastructure.

Funded through the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan and led by the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) and the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), this program is intended to create family-sustaining jobs while reducing carbon emissions, in line with State economic development and climate goals, including:

- [The Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan](#);
- [The Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan](#); and
- [The Maine Economic Development Strategy](#)

GEO, DECD, and their implementation advisor HR&A (together, the Project Team) are seeking input for promising development projects or development sites. The objective of this program is to support each participating community to develop a detailed action plan for projects consistent with the state's climate and clean energy goals and be well-prepared to implement these projects, with a particular focus on qualifying for new federal

## THE SURVEY | Site Recommendations

*Nominate site(s) in your community with development potential that would be a good fit for this program.*

- **Requested information**
  1. Site location (If you do not know the address, please provide your best description of its location; i.e., street intersection, adjacent building)
  2. Brief description of the site(s)
- Survey respondent **does not need to research the grid capacity** of the recommended site(s) or other project locations. This research will be conducted by the State on behalf of the community.
- Sites/projects that do not have access to underutilized grid infrastructure **could be referred to other programs.**



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### PART 2: SITE RECOMMENDATION

In this section, we ask you to nominate sites in your community with development potential. If you or your organization do not have specific sites in mind, please skip this section and proceed to Part 3 of the survey.

Potential Sites: The State is seeking locations where the new development or infrastructure deployment could be possible, such as:

- Brownfield sites (land that is underutilized or abandoned due to contamination)
- Unused or vacant industrial sites
- Already in-progress economic development projects that are in need of support.

Please provide the addresses of the sites that you would like to recommend for this program, if available, and include a brief description for each site if desired.

Your answer

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## THE SURVEY | Project Ideas

*Brainstorm economic development/climate resilience project idea(s) that can be supported by this program, even without a specific site in mind.*

- **Requested information**

1. Brief description of project idea
2. How the project idea advances Maine's statewide goals
3. Potential sponsors/partners that can help implement the project (can be yourself/your organization or another)
4. Any recently published economic development plans/studies in your region



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### PART 3: PROJECT IDEAS

Do you have a project idea you would like to share with us? If so, please provide the following for each idea:

1. A brief description of your project idea and how you see this project benefiting your community.
2. Any potential sponsors or partners in your community that could help advance this project (e.g. non-profit community-based organizations, schools and universities, workforce development and job training organizations, philanthropies, developers, banks, civic organizations, etc.). This could also be you or your organization.

Your answer

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Have there been any recently published reports/studies about your community's economy or local economic development plans? Please provide links to these documents as they are available.

Your answer

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04

# Technical Assistance Overview



## SCOPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

5-8 selected communities will receive technical assistance throughout the pre-development phase of the project with opportunities to draft an action plan and apply for funding opportunities.



## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING

Selected communities will receive support in project identification, prioritization, collective visioning, and partnership-building processes throughout the pre-development phase of the program.

### **Community Public Forum #1:** *Project visioning and partnership-building guided by GEO/DECD/HR&A*

- Program overview
- Preliminary discussion of high-level project vision.
- Begin inventory of potential anchor partners for project implementation.
- Support the community in recruiting anchor partners in preparation for Public Forum #2.

### **Community Public Forum #2:** *Project vision refinement and partnership-building led by anchor partner*

- Solicit stakeholder feedback on refined project vision and emerging partnerships.
- Recruit additional local partners to fill any capacity or knowledge gaps.

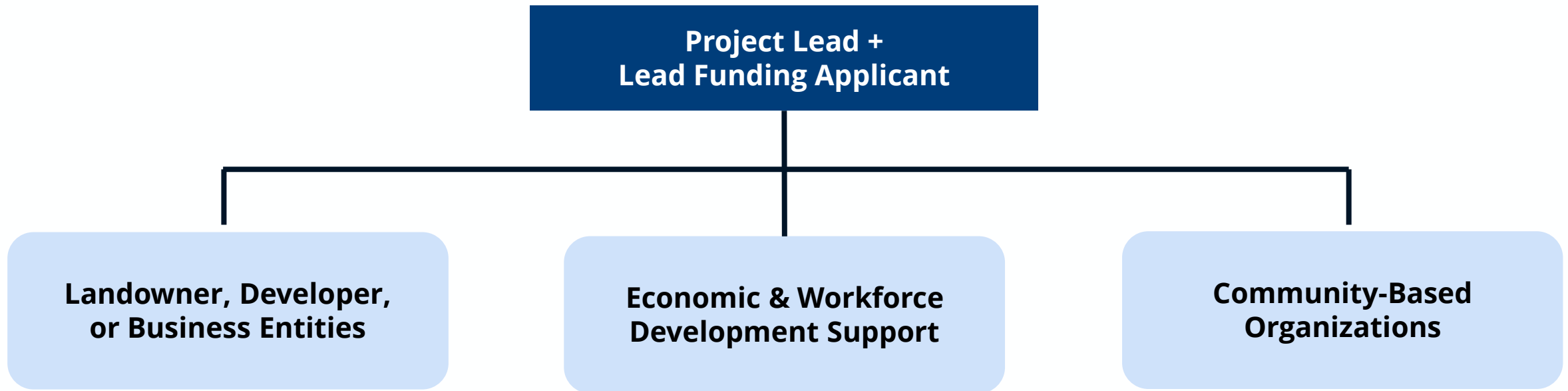
### **Memorandum of Understanding & Project Governance:**

- Support the process of drafting and signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the anchor partner and the State to define project roles and responsibilities.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING

The State will help communities build teams spanning the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to ensure a holistic approach to implementation and fundraising.

### EXAMPLE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT TEAM STRUCTURE



#### NOTE

This conceptual diagram is just an example and is not all-inclusive. All project teams look different; for instance, it is possible for a given organization to play multiple roles.

## ACTION PLANNING & SUPPORTING ANALYSIS

Each selected community will have an opportunity to draft an action plan for their project, receiving support in drafting in addition to any site analysis or feasibility study needed for the plan.

**Action Plan Drafting:** *Each action plan will include the following.*

- Project concept
- Business plan
- Funding/financing strategies
- Partner roles
- Offsite requirements
- Project implementation roadmap

**Supporting Analysis:** *Technical assistance and office hours related to economic/real estate development analyses and methodologies needed for action planning, including the following.*

- Site analysis
- Market scans
- Financial feasibility study
- Needs assessment
- Capital stacks
- Governance structure/partnerships
- Funding opportunities/applications



## STATE/FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATION SUPPORT

Selected communities will receive support in identifying and applying for state and federal grant opportunities that will help bring the project vision to implementation.

### **State/Federal Grant Application Support:**

- Identify state and federal grant opportunities that are best fit for project needs, considering project goals/attributes, geographic designation, and other criteria.
- Support drafting grant applications

The background image shows an industrial facility, possibly a water treatment plant, with several large buildings and a tall smokestack. In the foreground, there is a body of water with a floating barrier made of dark cylindrical floats. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. A large, semi-transparent dark blue horizontal bar is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the number '04' in a bright blue font. To the left of the number is a vertical blue line.

04

Q&A



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