



New England Heat Pump Accelerator (CPRG) Grant: Innovation Pilots

Board Innovation Working Group

October 22, 2025

Background: New England Heat Pump Accelerator

- Maine is part of a coalition of five states (with CT (lead), RI, MA, and NH) that was a successful applicant to the EPA for Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) funds
 - The coalition was awarded \$450M last summer
 - The application was for “heat pump acceleration” across New England, focusing on midstream market interventions
- The Accelerator combines three program pillars:
 - Market Hub
 - Innovation Hub
 - Resource Hub



Innovation Hub

Innovation Hub Details

State-Level Initiatives

- Administered by EMT
- One or more multiyear pilots
- Address specific state priorities and pilot / demonstrate scalable solutions for home electrification of space & water heating with heat pump technology.
- Focus on technology solutions, new applications/configurations of technology and new models for financing/compensating HP users
- Implemented in LMI homes and/or Disadvantaged Communities

Community-Level Initiatives

- Administered by the Accelerator's contracted "Regional Implementer"
- Input on RFP priorities and final project selection by Advisory Board of the Coalition states.
- "Bottom-up" annual grants for smaller-scale, community-based pilots.
- Focus on information, education, training, outreach targeting needs of harder-to-reach customers
- Simple, accessible application process to invite creative ideas that expand access to heat pumps for LMI households and/or DACs.

Innovation Hub Timeline

- 10/14/25: RFI Posted
 - Soliciting feedback on what to pilot (technologies, applications, target communities or populations) and how to implement the pilots
- 10/22/25: Solicit feedback from EMT Innovation Advisory Committee
- 10/23/25: Stakeholder Meeting
- 11/14/25: RFI Closes
- 11/15/25 – 12/31/25: Digest feedback with DOER and GOPIF
 - Craft and share Maine-specific goals with coalition
 - Design priorities and approach for state-level pilot(s)
- Early 2026: Launch RFP to solicit project management/delivery support for administration of state-level pilot(s)
 - Consult with potential applicants on community-level grants

Request for Information

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Maine's Heat Pump Accelerator Innovation Priorities

Efficiency Maine Trust, with the Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), seek comments on what priorities and designs should be considered for a suite of pilot programs to be funded in Maine through the New England Heat Pump Accelerator (Accelerator) over the next several years.

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks input and suggestions about innovative applications of heat pump equipment and/or HVAC system designs that could help market transformation for, and widespread adoption of, heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in Maine.

- Project and approach ideas suggested by commenters through this RFI process will be shared with the Accelerator coalition.
- They may also be used by the Trust, DOER, and GOPIF to support potential Community-Level Grant applicants from Maine.
- Funding from the Innovation Hub will be limited to pilot projects that are installed in residential properties that house low- to moderate- income households or are located in low-income communities.

Information Requested for State-Level Initiative:

1. Specific technical barriers or challenges to “whole-home” heat pump systems.
2. Reusing a home’s existing heating/cooling distribution system (i.e., radiators, ductwork, etc.) to reduce costs of switching to heat pumps.
3. Configuring heat pump systems with controls and/or storage to maximize value to the homeowner and ratepayers by taking advantage of low-cost, off-peak electricity.
4. Heat pump water heater technology.
5. Other Technologies or Solutions:
 - what other technologies (or models), controls, auxiliary features, or system designs should we be aware of that might help address the barriers or challenges of using heat pumps to displace legacy/traditional heating & cooling systems in homes and apartments?
6. Supply Chain

Information Requested for Community-Level Initiative:

1. **Barriers.** What specific information barriers or service barriers should we be considering with regard to specific customer classes or communities?
2. **Energy Navigators.** Recent legislation directed our organizations to explore the concept of energy coaches or navigators in communities to accelerate the adoption of energy efficiency. How might an energy navigator work to overcome specific, identified barriers to adoption of heat pumps or heat pump water heaters?
3. **Remote Communities.** How might Community-Level pilots be used to overcome barriers to heat pump adoption in remote communities?
4. **Solutions to be piloted.** What suggestions do you have for a pilot project that could address specific barriers in your response to question 1 in this section? To the extent you are able, please share any thoughts or reference material regarding how much it would cost to deliver a pilot project consistent with your suggestion. Please share any views or analysis that speak to how suitable a pilot consistent with your suggestion would be for replicating and scaling up across Maine and how such an initiative could be sustained over time.
5. **Suggestions on seeking additional stakeholder input.** How should the program seek input and feedback from stakeholders on the program design and participation? What existing state- or community-level groups should the program coordinate with? Please provide any contact information.

Priorities/Approach to State-Level Pilot Project for Maine

- TBD, pending feedback from stakeholders
- Working concept “straw proposal” :
 - Comprehensive, umbrella, multi-year initiative awarding a suite of targeted demonstration projects
 - Objective: test/demonstrate/report out scalable solutions to address barriers to heat pumps serving as the primary source of space & water heating in residential dwellings, such as (but not limited to):
 - Air-to-water heat pump to hydronic distribution, with storage
 - Heat pump water heating systems in mobile or multifamily properties
 - Leveraging time-of-use rates
 - Options for heat pumps in small apartments
 - Options to more effectively use ducted distribution systems
 - Innovative project financing or equipment lease options, including those that might address split incentives for renters

Discussion