

Project Overview & Objectives

Problem: Malden residents need help navigating clean energy upgrades and incentives such as building weatherization, heat pumps, solar, and electrification.

Common Barriers:

- High upfront costs

• Confusing rebate processes

• Contractor uncertainty

• Language access needs

• Renter limitations

• Multifamily housing limitations



Objective: Develop an implementation roadmap for a clean energy coaching program providing trusted, accessible guidance to build interest, understand options, prepare for contractor conversations, and connect with incentives.

Deliverable: A recommendations memo outlining a municipally coordinated coaching model for Malden to pursue.

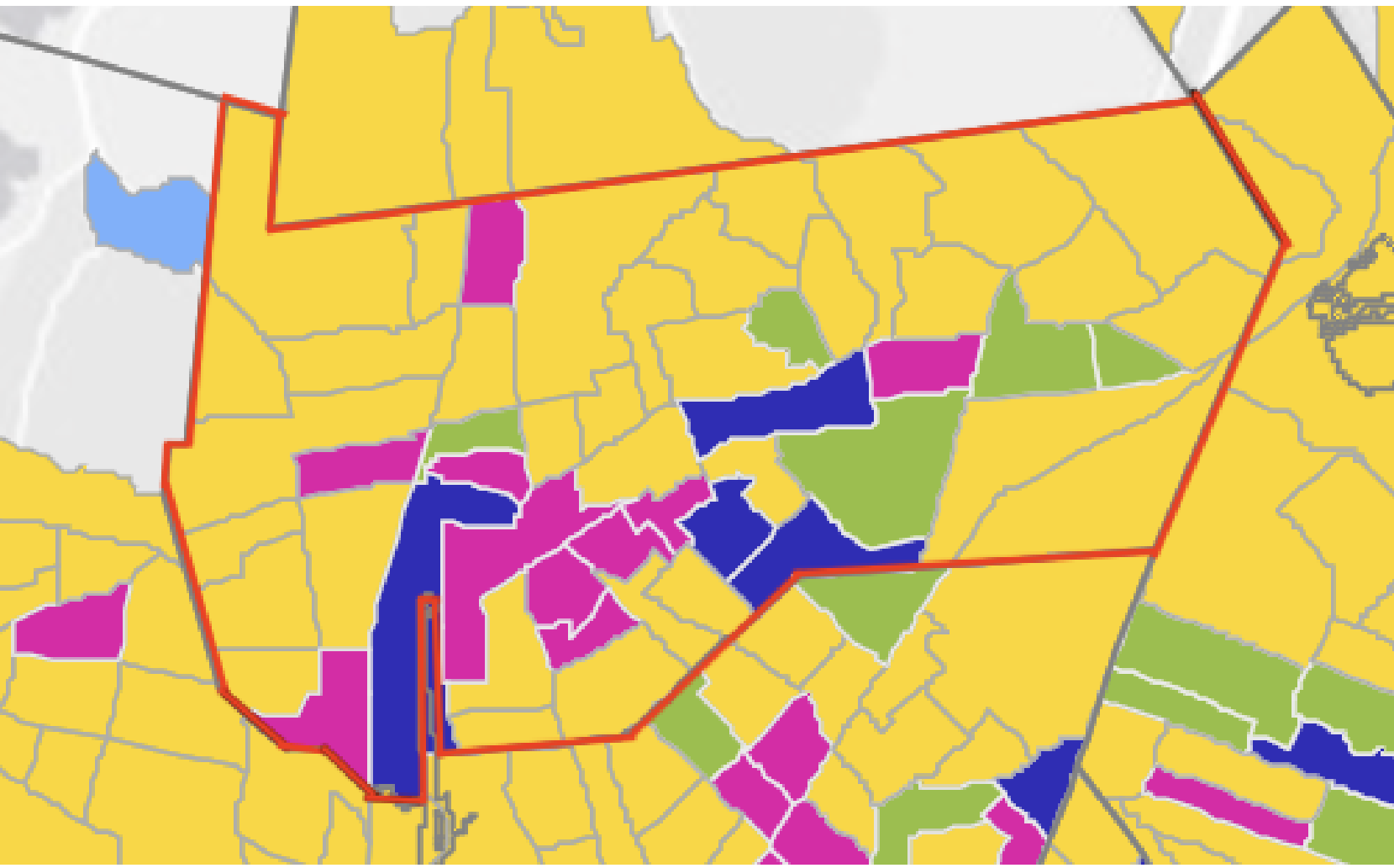
Minority: the block group minority population is >= 40%, or the block group minority population is >= 25% and the median household income of the municipality the block group is in is < 150% of the Massachusetts median household income

- Minority and Income

Minority and English isolation

Income and English isolation

Minority, Income and English isolation



Source: ArcGIS web application. *Massachusetts 2020 Environmental Justice Populations.*
<https://massoeaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1d6f63e7762a48e5930de84ed4849212>

Approach and Methods

1. Research Comparable Programs

Researched and analyzed the structure, funding, staff, advertising, and equity for 11 municipal coaching programs in Massachusetts.



2. Interview Experts

Spoke with program leaders, trainers, and clean energy stakeholders.



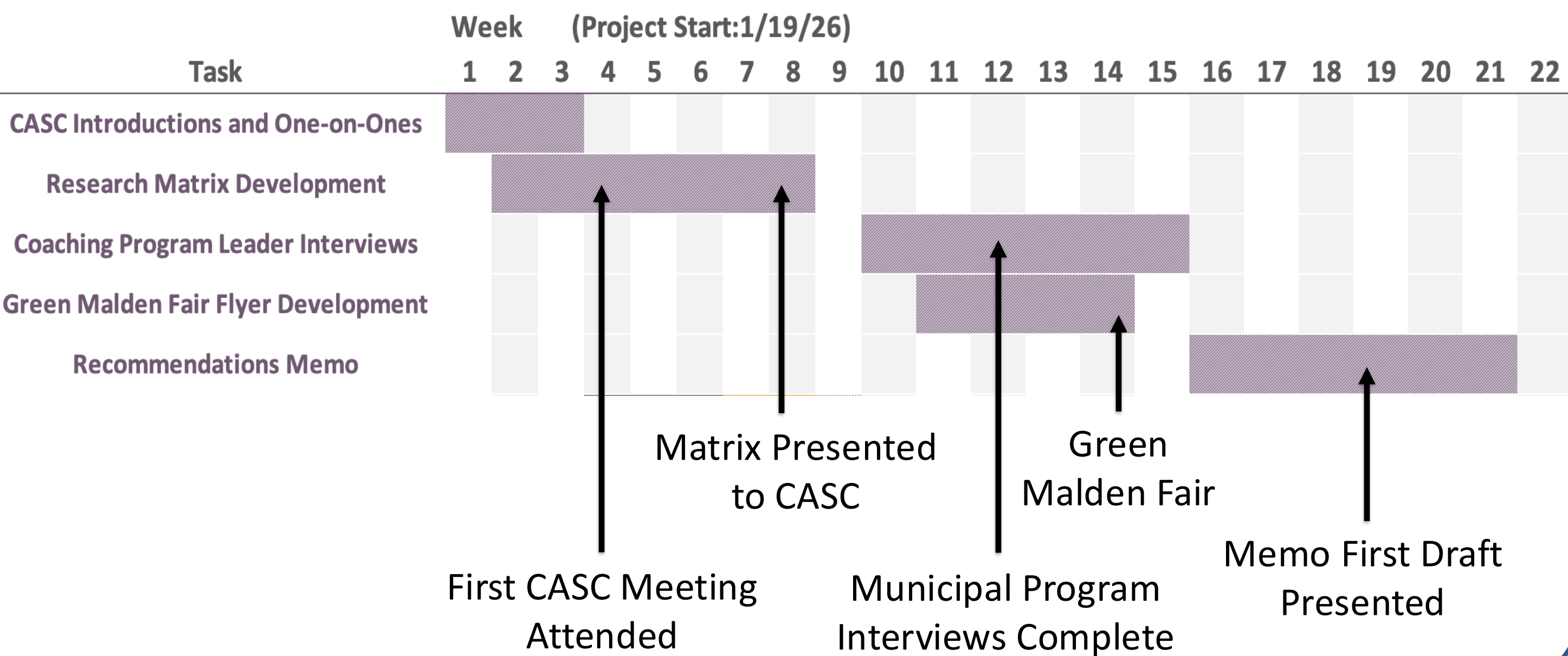
3. Review Equity Resources

Identified opportunities to embed equity in the program, prioritizing renters, multifamily homes, multilingual residents, and EJ communities.



4. Synthesize Findings

Summarized best practices and lessons learned into a practical guide for implementation by Malden's Climate Action and Sustainability Commission (CASC) in the next year.



Deliverables and Findings

Key deliverables throughout the project included:

- **Research matrix** comparing structure, technologies, funding, equity, and results of 11 municipal coaching programs.
- **Interviews** with program leads from HeatSmart Alliance, Town of Acton, NEEP, Abode, MAPC, MassEnergize, and Town of Brookline.
- **Pilot outreach materials and intake-tracking** tested at the **Green Malden Fair**.

Coming Soon... Clean Energy Coaches

Get free help from your neighbors to make clean energy upgrades.



Why Heat Pumps?

- ✓ **Lower Energy Bills**
Heat pumps can lower monthly energy costs by using less energy than fossil-fuel driven systems.
- ✓ **Environmentally Friendly**
Heat pumps reduce carbon emissions, making them a more sustainable option for home comfort.
- ✓ **All-in-One Heating & Cooling**
Heat pumps provide both heating and cooling, eliminating the need for a separate furnace or AC system.
- ✓ **Mass Save Rebates and Discounts**
Qualifying customers can receive rebates, discounts, and 0% financing loans to make energy efficient upgrades.

If Funded, Our Coaches Would...

- Answer questions and offer guidance on clean energy technologies.
- Help navigate the early stages of the heat pump adoption process (who to contact, what to ask installers).
- Help residents and businesses navigate rebates, incentives, and next steps.

Interested in Future Coaching Support?

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to join the interest list and be notified when the program launches!



<https://forms.office.com/r/EtaAKzhE3a>



- **Recommendations memo** on how to design and implement a coaching program developed for CASC and City of Malden staff. Key findings from this memo can be seen in the table below.

Key Finding	Recommendation for Malden
A program fully led by the city or a community partner may be difficult to sustain given Malden's capacity and EJ populations.	Launch a hybrid program coordinated by the city, supported by trained community coaches, and strengthened through local/statewide partnerships.
The program needs clearly defined leadership roles and accountability.	Identify a Program Lead, Outreach Coordinator, Coach Coordinator, and Legal/Conflict-of-Interest reviewer. Some roles may overlap during the pilot phase
Residents need navigation support, not technical inspection.	Frame coaches as trusted community advocates who explain options, prepare contractor questions, connect residents with incentives, and provide follow-up.
Coaches need training and clearly defined expectations and responsibilities.	Utilize established training programs such as Rewiring America (national) and HeatSmart Alliance (MA). Additionally, provide a Malden specific orientation.
Equity requires intentional recruitment and outreach.	Use multilingual outreach, renter/landlord specific materials, community partnerships, and stipended coaches to recruit EJ community experience.
Launching a coaching program requires planned startup times, funding, and documentation.	Plan for a 4–6 month startup period once \$10,000–\$20,000 in funding is secured. Work with the Malden Legal Department to review liability documentation.

Main Takeaways

1. Program modeling balances credibility and capacity.

Municipal leadership from the municipal energy advocate provides credibility, while paid volunteer coaches and a trusted community partner expand capacity. This keeps the program sustainable over time.



2. Coaches are advocates and navigators, not advisors.

Coaches help residents ask better questions, navigate difficult paperwork, understand upgrade and weatherization options, and stay engaged.



3. Equity must shape the program from the beginning.

Malden's significant EJ, renter, multifamily, and multilingual populations require an intentional structure with targeted outreach and stipended coaches to reach residents who may not seek out clean energy resources on their own.



“The program’s success should be measured not only by the number of upgrades completed, but by whether residents in our community who face the greatest barriers can access the support they need” – CASC member

Impact: Trusted coaching turns climate goals into household action

By making electrification easier to understand, afford, and access, Malden can help more residents participate in building decarbonization.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to ...

The City of Malden and the Climate Action and Sustainability Commission for allowing me to work on such a meaningful project throughout my fellowship and learn from municipal climate planning in practice.

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All **interview participants and other clean energy coaching programs** who shared their time, resources, implementation experiences, and valuable insights.

