

Green Power Solar Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Can we download the application to enter our grant application information?

Yes, we prefer you download the application and type answers in the area provided. **Please send the completed application form in Microsoft Word (.docx or .doc) file format.** Supplemental documents may be submitted as Word, PDF, Excel, or other common file formats as appropriate.

Q2: Can one agency submit applications for more than one building/site?

Yes, an agency may submit applications for more than one site. However, PSE will prioritize awarding funds to multiple, geographically diverse agencies before awarding funds to two sites.

Q3: If our organization was awarded a Green Power Solar Grant last year, does that disqualify us from this round of funding?

Being a past grant recipient does not disqualify an applicant. However, since PSE often receives a large number of applications, consideration of past award status is an evaluation factor.

Q4: Are we allowed to pick a bid before completing the application?

Yes! In fact, PSE strongly encourages you to select a solar installer after receiving multiple bids, before completing the application. The selected installer can help complete several parts of the grant application.

Q5: Are agencies required to enter into a contract with an installer prior to submitting a grant application?

PSE prefers projects that have a contract in place that extends to the award notification date. Contracts may be contingent on award of funding. However, if contracting prior to application is not possible due to public bidding requirements or other circumstances, please explain these circumstances in your application and include a firm bid from your preferred installer.

Q6: What type of building does the array need to be installed on? Does there need to be a direct savings to low-income and/or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) customers?

The array can be installed on any part of the property owned or leased by the applicant, as long as there is a direct benefit to the people the organization serves. Examples of benefits include direct savings for residents; or a reduction in the organization's operational expenses that allows the organization to put more money to serving their clients.

Q7: What is Total Solar Resource Fraction?

Total Solar Resource Fraction is a measure of the shading present on the site. An installer who completed a site assessment can provide this number, which is expressed as a percentage.

Q8: How should we include (or where should we describe) leveraged in-kind donations?

Any in-kind donations should be described in the narrative question 15: *"Describe efforts to ensure that the proposed budget represents the maximum value for the cost of the project."*

Please describe any commitments or expectations of applicant to recognize in-kind donors. Do not include the value of in-kind contributions in section C. Project Budget; this section should only include actual costs to the applicant.

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Q9: Can an applicant get information on the grid capacity to accommodate solar in the area of a proposed site prior to submitting the application?

Your selected installer can check with our Customer Connected Solar team about the transformer capacity prior to bidding a project. The team will do their best to provide them information in a timely manner. However, it is not a requirement to submit a bid. PSE will evaluate the feasibility during the grant selection process and may raise that as an issue to discuss during negotiations on the grant award. PSE may work with the applicant and their installer to address any potential grid/transformer capacity issues; including possible solutions such as a different project size.

Q10: Will this be a prevailing wage project?

Prevailing wage is not a requirement except where the applicant is otherwise required to pay prevailing wages.

Q11: Our organization has individual meters for each apartment but we also have a centralized meter for the building that the agency covers. Would this building be eligible? Or do the individual meters disqualify it?

The metering set-up, outlined in your question, would not be cause for disqualification from this grant opportunity. Metering configuration will be an important topic to discuss with solar contractors when obtaining bids and discussing feasibility and system sizing/design. We suggest applicants, and their solar contractor, look at the amount of energy use billed to applicable metered accounts. Keep in mind that a solar array will only reduce the electric bill of the metered load that it is connected to the solar project (and, optionally, one other meter on the property that bills to the same customer).

Possible solutions may include:

1. An applicant may propose multiple systems, each interconnected separately and sized to offset the individual loads with the cost and ownership of the arrays being grouped together for one grant. The organization would need to decide if they want to put electric billing for the units served by solar in their name or if they're ok with the grant being used to lower individual tenants' bills.
2. An applicant may propose a single interconnected system to offset "house load" or common areas, which would reduce organizational operating costs.
3. Funding *may* be considered to rewire the building so that all units are served by one or two PSE meters and a single solar array could then be used to offset full building usage. However, this option may hinder project cost competitiveness and timeline. Also, for this option to be feasible the property owner/manager would need to be willing to put all electric service into their name indefinitely, rather than having individual tenants pay their electric bills.

We recommend discussing these options with a solar contractor(s) to better understand the implications of each.

Q12: We are currently in the process of applying for a Green Power Solar Grant. If we apply for a PSE Foundation community grant, will that disqualify us from potentially being a recipient of the Green Power Solar Grant?

An applicant will not be disqualified from Green Power Solar Grant consideration for applying to or receiving a PSE Foundation community grant.

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Q13: Will these grants be offered again?

Yes, PSE's Green Power and Solar Choice programs will run another Green Power Solar Grant Program in 2023, the focus of which has not been determined.

Q14: Are schools eligible for the Green Power Solar Grant?

Eligible applicants are non-profits (501(c)(3)), public housing authorities, or tribal entities serving low-income or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community members. If the school does not fit in one of those three categories, then unfortunately they are ineligible.

Q15: What if someone other than the applicant pays the electric bill at the project site?

While this does not disqualify the project, the applicant will need to demonstrate how utility bill savings resulting from the installation of the solar project will flow to the applicant and then on to low-income and/or BIPOC community members.

Q16: Can we apply for a Green Power Solar Grant for an expansion of a current system?

Unfortunately, the requirement "The proposed system must be a new, grid-connected solar photovoltaic system" makes an expansion of a current system ineligible for these grant funds. However, PSE may consider opening funding to system expansion in future years.

Q17: What happens, assuming funding approval, if a project timeline is effected by unforeseen circumstances (such as supply chain or contractor availability issues) that delays system installation past September 30, 2023?

If there are unforeseen issues impacting project schedule, grant recipients may apply for a change order to their Funding Agreement that could extend the construction deadline.

Q18: Does the grant recipient have to be the same legal entity as the end electric customer?

No, the grant recipient does not need to be the same legal entity as the end electric customer as long as both the recipient and the end electric customer/entity receiving the reduced utility bill are eligible recipients.

Q19: Is there a limitation to the system size funded by this grant?

Yes, there are two limitation to consider. 1) PSE cannot fund projects that are larger than 100 kW AC, the limit for net metering. 2) PSE cannot fund projects that produce more energy annually than the project site's annual consumption.

Q20: Does PSE consider ground mount or carport systems eligible for grant funding?

PSE would consider both the ground mount and carport options as eligible under this grant. When making your decision between the two, please note that cost per kWh is considered in our evaluation process.

Additional questions can be submitted on or before August 31, 2022 to psegreenpower@pse.com with "Green Power Solar Grant" in the subject line. Answers will be posted biweekly at pse.com/applygpsg.