

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 applicant submit applications for more than one building/site?

Yes, an eligible applicant 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 an installer 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 applicants 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 application question: *"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 the Project Budget section; 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 2024, 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?

Yes. Projects that include expansion of a current system are eligible to apply. However, please note that PSE will give preference to new solar projects at locations where a solar project did not or does not currently exist.

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, 2024?

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: 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.

Q20: How would someone sell [Renewable Energy Certificates \(RECs\)](#) to PSE?

Currently, for the grants, PSE requires that the owner of the system retains the RECs so if you were awarded the grant, you would not be able to sell them to a third party entity. Selling the RECs precludes the solar project owner from making any claims regarding the environmental benefits of the system since those benefits would be conveyed to the party that purchases the RECs.

In some cases, PSE may purchase RECs through a Renewable Energy Certificate Purchase Agreement. This agreement can be anywhere from 5-10 years and represents only the value of the environmental attributes of each kWh generated by the project. The energy benefits are still conveyed to the project owner through the net metering agreement.

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Q21: Who owns the installed system? Does the recipient own it or PSE?

The installed solar energy system will be owned by the recipient of the grant and/or owner of the land or building on which it is installed. PSE does not take ownership of arrays installed as a result of Green Power Solar Grant funding.

Q22: Are new meters eligible expenses for grant funding?

Yes. If a new production meter is required to support the installation, that is an eligible cost. Please include relevant details in the 'Other solar installation costs' line item of the budget table in Section D of the application.

Q23: If the building we are placing solar on is new construction, must it be occupied by the time the system is commissioned?

Not necessarily, but please note that PSE would like to see as little of a gap between the system install and benefits realization for low-income and/or BIPOC community members as possible. A larger gap between system commissioning and building occupancy or benefits realization may factor into our evaluation of your application.

Q24: Are we eligible to receive grant funding even if we will be purchasing and installing the solar array before we know if we have been awarded and the grant funds will act as a reimbursement?

The situation you outlined does not disqualify you from applying/receiving a Green Power Solar Grant. However, please be aware of two points:

- 1) There is a question in the application about whether PSE's funding is necessary for the project to proceed. You may score lower on this question if the project is already near completion and/or funded.
- 2) The grants are competitive and we will still need to assess your project against all the other projects we receive. Please ensure you are able to cover the cost of the solar panels without PSE funding, as it is not guaranteed.

Q25: We are considering requesting the maximum award amount of \$100,000. Are award amounts 'all or nothing' or does PSE sometimes offer a partial award?

In particularly competitive rounds, PSE has offered applicants a partial award as opposed to denying their application entirely.

Q26: Can the Green Power Solar Grant funds be used for batteries?

No, the Green Power Solar Grants are only for solar. However, applicants are welcome to stack funding sources. For example, if you did receive [Department of Commerce funding](#) for a battery or battery and additional solar, those funds can be paired with Green Power Solar Grant funds to expand your project. If you go this route, please share in the Budget section of the application how all funding sources stack, including any tax credits, and show that all the different funding sources total no more than 100% of the total project costs.

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Q27: Is there a limitation to the system size funded by this grant?

No, but please note the following:

- 1) Systems greater than or equal to 100 kW AC will not qualify for net metered billing (See Electric Schedule 150) and there may be additional interconnection costs to consider in your project budget.
- 2) Systems greater than or equal to 100 kW AC will need to enter into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) (See Electric Schedule 91) in order to receive financial compensation for the exported energy.
- 3) Systems smaller than 100 kW AC that offset more than 100% of your building's annual energy consumption will forfeit any excess credits on March 30 of each year per state law.

Additional questions can be submitted on or before September 7, 2023 to psegreenpower@pse.com with "Green Power Solar Grant" in the subject line. Answers will be posted biweekly at pse.com/applygpsg.