

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG) Program

Public Stakeholder Session Agenda
Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams – NO PHYSICAL, IN-PERSON MEETING

Any written comments should be sent in advance to Griffin Roberge at griffin.j.roberge@energy.nh.gov. Any written comments provided will be considered public documents.

1. Welcome and introductions
2. EECBG Program Overview
 - a. EECBG Program guidance
3. NHDOE staff overview of Municipal Solar Program
4. Discussion of “Straw Proposal” circulated prior to meeting
5. Discussion Topic Questions:
 - a. Grant distribution:
 - i. Should competitive grants be offered with a match requirement? Should the grant be offered as NHDOE’s C&I rebate is offered – a percentage or a dollar amount, whichever is less? Should NHDOE consider a higher grant for “disadvantaged” communities?
 - ii. What is the typical cost range for solar projects that are at or below 60 kW in size?
 - iii. To what extent might [Build America, Buy America | Department of Energy](#) and [the National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)/Historic Preservation](#) be an issue in deploying EECBG funds effectively and efficiently? How much will they impact cost estimates for projects?
 - b. Project eligibility:
 - i. Should rooftop and ground mounted solar arrays be eligible? Just ground mounted? Just rooftop solar?
 - ii. Should NHDOE show preference to projects installed on or near certain municipal buildings over others (i.e., a rooftop project that is easily visible on a community center score higher than a rooftop installation on a fire station?)
 - iii. Is it burdensome for applicants to demonstrate a competitive process for proposals before applying to our program?
 - c. Project selection process and scoring criteria:
 - i. For municipalities: will disincentivizing/excluding power purchase agreements or third-party ownership create a significant barrier in completing projects?
 - ii. Are there other metrics NHDOE should consider to identify “disadvantaged communities?”
6. Any other relevant discussion topics brought forward by stakeholders.
7. Next steps for next stakeholder session

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Straw Proposal – Competitive Grant Funding for Municipal Solar Projects
NOTE: This straw proposal is for discussion purposes only and is subject to change

Given the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, NH is to receive \$1.6 million in formula grant funding through the [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program \(EECBG Program\)](#). The US Department of Energy (USDOE) is responsible for allocating EECBG Program funding to eligible states and units of local government. These eligible entities are responsible for using EECBG Program funding in accordance with EECBG Program guidance to reduce fossil fuel emissions, reduce total energy use, improve energy efficiency, and prioritize disadvantaged communities.

The NH Department of Energy (NHDOE) is preparing to apply for its EECBG Program allocation by July 31, 2023, and is inviting stakeholder participation as it develops a program proposal for application.

The NHDOE proposes to use EECBG Program funding to create the Municipal Solar Program. Through this program, NHDOE would select subrecipients for this funding in New Hampshire by issuing a request for proposals (RFP) seeking municipal solar projects (less than 60 kW in size) that would decrease the energy burdens felt by municipal governments. Department staff would draft the RFP in accordance with EECBG Program guidance and federal and state rules and regulations.

The Department staff invites interested stakeholders to offer feedback on NHDOE's proposed competitive grant program, discuss potential barriers and to offer solutions and suggestions.

Total Allocation Made to State: \$1,641,260

- Amount of funding available for solar program - \$1,477,134.

Broad Program Description:

- Competitive grant opportunity open to all municipal governments for ground-mounted or rooftop solar arrays that are less than 60 kW DC. Excluded entities include units of local government that qualified for EECBG Program formula funding.
- Utilize a grant distribution method similar to that used by NHDOE's [Commercial & Industrial Solar Incentive Program](#) (example of grant distribution: Grants are limited to 25% of total project cost or \$40,000, whichever is less.) No match required by applicant.
- Grant funding will be made on a cost-reimbursement basis. Costs incurred prior to final grant agreement approval by the Governor and Executive Council are not eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement may be contingent on the occurrence of specified milestone events and the satisfaction of other conditions set forth in the program and approved grant agreement.

Proposed Schedule:

- RFP released no later than March 2024.
- April-May 2024 – selection and contracting.
- June 2024 – Governor and Council for contract approval.
- July 2024 and beyond – project development and construction.
- NOTE: Projects must be operational no later than 24 months after grant agreement approval by Governor and Executive Council.

Basic Project Eligibility Requirements:

- Proposers must propose a new municipally owned solar system that is < 60 kW DC and ground-mounted, parking canopy-mounted, or rooftop-mounted.
- Proposers must be units of local government (municipalities) that are NOT eligible for an EECBG formula grant.
- Grantees must also commit to seeking REC eligibility in New Hampshire for their projects, including but not limited to submitting a complete application for REC eligibility to NHDOE.
- Projects must be physically located in New Hampshire and within the geographic boundaries of the unit of local government; any point of grid interconnection must also be in New Hampshire.

- Proposers must confirm that control of any site(s) on which their project(s) will be constructed has been secured, through ownership, long-term lease, including options for renewal that meet or exceed the life expectancy of the project, or binding options to acquire or lease such site(s).
- Demonstration that the proposal was subject to a competitive process.
- Proof of active SAM registration and compliance with certain federal requirements, including but not limited to the following:
 - Proposers will be required to comply with [Davis-Bacon and Related Acts](#), meaning all employees engaging in construction-related activities must be paid prevailing wages.
 - Proposers will be required to provide proof of compliance with [Build America, Buy America](#). Applicants may need to seek a waiver from the USDOE from this requirement.
 - Proposers will be required to comply with [the National Environmental Policy Act](#) and New Hampshire’s [Historic Preservation Programmatic Agreement](#). Applicants may need to undergo USDOE environmental reviews and/or State Historic Preservation Office reviews by the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Project Selection Process and Scoring Criteria:

- Proposals will undergo a review that considers criteria similar to those found in NHDOE’s [Low-Moderate Income Solar Grant Program](#) and [Commercial & Industrial Solar Incentive Program](#).
- A technical project proposal - an overview of project site location, system size and generating facility equipment, Solar Site Survey, Solar PV system schematic, project timeline, etc.
- A project development cost and financing overview – total project cost estimate with itemized costs, amount of grant requested, description of financing plan, description of other funding sources used, etc.
- A description of ongoing project management costs and financing – description of financial resources to cover any project administration costs, etc.
- Qualification and experience of the proposer’s solar developer – summary of qualifications and list of other similar projects that the developer has undertaken, etc.
- An evaluation of the project’s proposed kWh/CO2 savings.
- Additional points awarded to a “Disadvantaged” applicant – whether the proposer is located in a “disadvantaged community” based on any one of three criteria to demonstrate NHDOE’s efforts to satisfy the [Justice40 Initiative](#):
 - [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#).
 - [USDOE's Energy Justice Mapping Tool](#).
 - The municipality’s MHI is at or below a certain percentage of the [statewide MHI](#).
- Whether the project is wholly owned by the municipality. Third-party ownership may be discouraged.
- Identification of any conflicts of interest.