

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 3

RFP #2024-006
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Municipal Solar Grant Program

	Questions	Answers
10.	<p>In RFP section IV, B: Municipal Energy Cost Savings: The annual generation of the proposer’s project covers 100-125% of the 2023 calendar year electrical load of the participating municipal buildings. The proposer also provides a detailed summary of expected kWh and energy cost savings using reasonable assumptions and methodologies.</p> <p>What is meant by the "covers 100-125%"? This seems to require participating buildings that uses less than what [sic] a 60-kW system can generate? If buildings use more, can one still apply for the grant (where 100% cannot be reached with a 60-kW system)?</p>	<p>Per the RFP, proposed solar electricity/photovoltaic systems shall not exceed 60 kW DC in total installed capacity and shall serve no more than 125% of the electrical load of all participating municipally owned buildings based on 2023 calendar year data.</p> <p>Whereas the Municipal Energy Cost Savings scoring is based on whether or not the annual generation of the proposer’s project covers 100-125% of the 2023 calendar year electrical load of the participating municipal buildings; proposals with a lesser percentage will result in a lower score.</p>
11.	<p>The RFP mentions buildings, but can "participating" include non-building, such as the street lighting accounts (the kWh used by them - these are often separate NHEC accounts that the town is invoiced for) or other electricity uses? This of course is predicated on what is meant by "participating."</p>	<p>"Participating" refers to the members of the municipal group who are off takers of the generation from the municipal (solar system) host for building related electricity use.</p> <p>Non-building kWh usage should not be included as part of the proposal.</p>
12.	<p>The Application Form, Section III, Blocks 11 and 12 refer to RFP Section II – Part E. Should these references be to RFP Section II – Part F?</p>	<p>Yes, this has been corrected.</p>
13.	<p>Can a town propose the installation of solar panels on more than one building and with more than one net meter as part of a single project proposal, if the combined capacity of the panels in the project remains within the 60kW DC limit?</p>	<p>No, the Department would consider each building and metering system as an individual project and the Municipality should submit separate proposals. However, it is worth noting that there is no guarantee that separate proposals for any one Municipality will be chosen collectively for funding, as selection is based on the consensus scoring and ranked among all proposals received.</p>

14.	<p>The town plans to install solar panels on a building with good solar exposure but very little electric load. The town then plans to group net meter with municipal buildings with greater load. We wish to confirm this is acceptable under the RFP and that the loads of all the group net metered buildings can be combined to determine the generation to load percentage rating factor (100-125%) under RFP Section IV, Part B.</p>	<p>Yes, this is acceptable. However, per the RFP, proposed solar electricity/photovoltaic systems shall not exceed 60 kW DC in total installed capacity and shall serve no more than 125% of the electrical load of all participating municipally owned buildings based on 2023 calendar year data.</p>
15.	<p>The evaluation criteria of RFP Section IV, Part B provide for up to 20 points based on covering 100-125% of the load of participating municipal buildings.</p> <p>Will a town receive the full 20 points for any generation/load value between 100-125%? If a town proposes meeting less than 100% or more than 125% of the load of the participating buildings, will the proposal receive any points in this category?</p> <p>If so, can the Department elaborate on how many points such proposals would be eligible to receive (e.g., if the proposal provided for meeting 90% of the load of the participating buildings)?</p>	<p>Per the RFP, proposed solar electricity/photovoltaic systems shall not exceed 60 kW DC in total installed capacity and shall serve no more than 125% of the electrical load of all participating municipally owned buildings based on 2023 calendar year data.</p> <p>Whereas the Municipal Energy Cost Savings scoring is based on whether or not the annual generation of the proposer's project covers 100-125% of the 2023 calendar year electrical load of the participating municipal buildings; proposals with a lesser percentage will result in a lower score.</p>
16.	<p>Do the terms of Municipal Solar Grant Program prohibit or limit a Tier II municipality from using the "direct pay" solar investment tax credit (under 26 USC section 6417) as a source of funding for portion of project costs that are not reimbursed under the Program?</p>	<p>There is no prohibition on combining this grant with the solar investment tax credit made available through the IRA, also known as "direct pay."</p>
17.	<p>The RFP requires the project to have a Solar Site Survey completed showing a minimum of 80% insolation. Our solar installer informs us a single "percentage insolation" value is not a standard term in their industry.</p> <p>The town wants to be sure it calculates this value properly and qualifies before undertaking preparation of a full proposal. Can the department elaborate on how it will determine compliance with the 80% requirement? What conditions equate to 100% insolation? Should a town include or exclude the following factors in calculating the 80% requirement: roof pitch, roof orientation relative to south, monthly sun variation, weather/cloudiness effects, potential panel soiling and snow cover? Any additional information that would ensure this calculation can be made on a consistent and comparable basis would be helpful.</p>	<p>A solar site survey gathers all essential data needed for the design, engineering, and execution of a solar project. This includes measurements, sunlight exposure, shading, roof orientation, structural integrity, panel soiling and snow cover and electrical infrastructure (often documented with photos). The survey guarantees the creation of durable solar installations that maximize energy generation by determining the best panel placement based on solar access values obtained from advanced analysis, resulting in a specific percentage. Therefore, acceptable proposals must include a completed Solar Site Survey demonstrating (at least) 80% insolation.</p>

18.	Can a town apply a fixed percentage increase to contractor costs to account for the costs of municipal oversight of contractor efforts? Would such be considered an allowable and reimbursable cost?	<p>An administrative or project mark-up for oversight would not be a reimbursable expense. The Department will be retaining the services of a technical monitor to oversee project progress for the duration of the proposed project using funding separate from the grantee's award from the Municipal Solar Grant Program.</p> <p>Upon acceptance of award, the selected grantee is consenting to the use of a technical monitor for the duration of the proposed project.</p> <p>Reasonable access must be provided to the technical monitor to all administrators, vendors, facilities, work sites, employees and subcontractors of the grantee, financial or other records, and assistance to ensure the safety and convenience for the performance of site visits and project evaluations.</p>
19.	If the town hires a contractor to monitor and evaluate satisfactory progress on and completion of the project, would those contractor costs be an allowable and reimbursable expense?	<p>The expense would not be reimbursable.</p> <p>The Department will be retaining the services of a technical monitor to oversee project progress for the duration of the proposed project using funding separate from the grantee's award from the Municipal Solar Grant Program.</p> <p>Upon acceptance of award, the selected grantee is consenting to the use of a technical monitor for the duration of the proposed project.</p> <p>Reasonable access must be provided to the technical monitor to all administrators, vendors, facilities, work sites, employees and subcontractors of the grantee, financial or other records, and assistance to ensure the safety and convenience for the performance of site visits and project evaluations.</p>
20.	We are currently seeking funds to purchase the solar array that was previously installed on the roof of our Department of Public Works facility and was financed via a PPA. Next year the Town will have the option to own it. Could this grant be used to help us purchase that system and release the town from the PPA agreement?	<p>Proposals that seek funding for expansions or replacements of existing solar electricity/photovoltaic systems or for installed or operational facilities are ineligible for the Municipal Solar Grant Program.</p>

21.	<p>We already have a solar electric installation on the town hall which generates more than we need. The one we are looking at would just be that much more excess. Note we were (are) planning to increase the solar electric production so that we can then install heat pumps for at least the town hall and still have a bit excess.</p> <p>Here the problem is: do we install more solar to generate more electricity and then install the equipment to use the power or do we do it in the reverse order.</p> <p>Can you clarify whether the grant would allow us to install solar for future electric demand?</p>	<p>The program is designed to assist municipalities in properly sizing their systems by providing a 100-125% electrical load capacity requirement. To be eligible for the current funding round, any equipment using the electrical load must be installed before applying and relevant energy usage data from the previous year must be supplied with no changes in equipment that would render the annual energy data metrics inconclusive.</p> <p>If you wish to increase solar production, it must be done as a separate system and a new project. Proposals that seek funding for expansions or replacements of existing solar electricity/photovoltaic systems or for installed or operational facilities are ineligible for the Municipal Solar Grant Program.</p>
22.	<p>Can a municipal water district apply? The facilities are owned by the municipal water district as opposed to the municipality.</p>	<p>A municipal water district would not be eligible to apply.</p>
23.	<p>The municipal owned water treatment facility currently has solar that offsets 60-70% of the electricity used by that facility. Can this grant be used to build additional solar to offset 100% at that facility and net meter to other accounts?</p>	<p>Proposals that seek funding for expansions or replacements of existing solar electricity/photovoltaic systems or for installed or operational facilities are ineligible for the Municipal Solar Grant Program.</p>
24.	<p>The Public Safety Building (PSB) has a roof that can support a 52.8 kW system but the 2023 load was 123,000 kWh, so the system we could build is not even close to 100%. The criteria for Municipal Energy Cost Savings is worth 20/105 points.</p> <p>Would under sizing the array because of roof constraints be a significant issue for our competitiveness?</p> <p>The high estimated cost of the PSB system is \$166,000. A 30% IRA direct pay of \$49,800 plus a grant of \$116,200 could cover the entire cost.</p>	<p>Per the RFP, proposed solar electricity/photovoltaic systems shall not exceed 60 kW DC in total installed capacity and shall serve no more than 125% of the electrical load of all participating municipally owned buildings based on 2023 calendar year data.</p> <p>Whereas the Municipal Energy Cost Savings scoring is based on whether or not the annual generation of the proposer's project covers 100-125% of the 2023 calendar year electrical load of the participating municipal buildings; proposals with a lesser percentage will result in a lower score.</p>
25.	<p>They have a quote and are planning to do 80kW, which is 90% of their demand, but the town has net metering rules that prevent 100% for the time being. There is roof space to expand later. They COULD scale the project down to be within 60kW. Would such a project be eligible/competitive in this program?</p>	<p>Per the RFP, proposed solar electricity/photovoltaic systems shall not exceed 60 kW DC in total installed capacity and shall serve no more than 125% of the electrical load of all participating municipally owned buildings based on 2023 calendar year data.</p> <p>Whereas the Municipal Energy Cost Savings scoring is based on whether or not the annual generation of the proposer's project covers 100-125% of the 2023 calendar year electrical load of the participating municipal buildings; proposals with a lesser percentage will result in a lower score.</p>

26.	Can this grant cover 100% of project cost with no matching funds?	<p>Yes. This program does not require matching funds. Recipients of this program will receive payment based on a reimbursement of costs submitted with proper invoicing.</p> <p>It is necessary for the proposer to be prepared to cover the costs upfront. The reimbursement process normally takes up to 30 days to complete. Reimbursements may also be contingent on specific milestone events and other conditions as outlined in the approved grant agreement.</p> <p>Additionally, the Department will withhold 10% of the grant amount until the project is fully completed, interconnected, and a final inspection report is submitted by the technical monitor.</p> <p>It is important to note that expenses incurred before the grant agreement is approved by the Governor and Executive Council will not be eligible for reimbursement.</p>
27.	Can the state C&I incentive be used in combination with this grant?	In combination, yes. However, Proposers seeking to replace or supplant existing funding sources for their projects will be deemed ineligible.
28.	Can this grant be used if we are receiving funding through congressionally designated spending?	In combination, yes. However, Proposers seeking to replace or supplant existing funding sources for their projects will be deemed ineligible.
29.	If a town is applying for the max amount (\$200K for tier 1; \$120k for tier 2), would NHDOE fund a lesser amount if they approve the town's application or do they reject the application outright because it's too much \$ requested?	<p>Proposals requesting the maximum grant amounts will neither be "rejected" nor offered a lesser award based only on the amount requested. The Department is fully supportive of the maximum limitations and anticipates that some grant requests will be for those amounts.</p> <p>The objective is to efficiently award proposals as they are submitted, within the program's capabilities and tiers.</p>
30.	Do other funds to cover the gap between the NHDOE grant and the system cost (i.e., other grants or town spending/budget) need to be approved <i>prior</i> to submitting this NHDOE Muni Solar Grant application? Can pending or prospective funding sources be listed?	The proposal should provide a detailed financing plan that clearly identifies the source and financial value of any other leveraged funds to complete the project. Pending or prospective unsecured funding sources may be listed. See Answers 31.B and 35.B&C.

<p>31.</p>	<p>Related to this clause in the RFP: <i>"Proposers seeking to replace or supplant existing funding sources for their projects"</i> are ineligible for this program.</p> <p>A. Does this mean that a town that votes to raise and appropriate funds for a municipal solar project <i>prior</i> to receiving approval of its grant application is ineligible to receive grant funds through this program?</p> <p>B. Does this mean a town must wait to raise and appropriate funds for a municipal solar project <i>AFTER</i> winning a grant allocation?</p> <p>C. Are funds placed in an energy-related capital reserve considered "existing funding sources" if they are not designated for any specific municipal energy project?</p> <p>D. Can a loan be used to finance the municipal solar project cost instead of capital raised and appropriated by the town?</p> <p>E. Can existing fund sources appropriated for a municipal solar array be reallocated to a related project, such as adding battery storage to the solar array?</p> <p>F. Does the town have any latitude to re-purpose use of existing funding sources for a municipal solar array, or is it simply ineligible to receive funding through this program?</p>	<p>Related to this clause in the RFP: <i>"Proposers seeking to replace or supplant existing funding sources for their projects"</i> are ineligible for this program.</p> <p>A. Municipal funding in existence prior to receiving grant approval cannot be replaced or supplanted by this grant program but may be used in conjunction with this grant program if the amount of existing funding does not cover the total cost of the project. A proposed grant request could be for any amount that the municipality itself cannot afford to fund, otherwise known as "gap funding."</p> <p>B. See answers 31.A and 35.B&C. A municipality may secure funding after notification of receiving a program grant. However, inclusion of pending or prospective unsecured funding sources may result in a lower score. Any funds to be appropriated by town meeting votes will be a stipulation of the awarded grant agreement.</p> <p>C. No.</p> <p>D. Yes.</p> <p>E. No. Any prior appropriated grant funding cannot be replaced or supplanted with this program funding. This would be impermissible and would disqualify the Municipality's proposal from the program. (Battery storage is not an allowable request or expense under the current program.)</p> <p>F. See answer 31.A. The Municipality's proposal would be disqualified if awarded grant funding replaces or supplants existing solar funding, as stated in the program's RFP.</p>
<p>32.</p>	<p>Re: Reimbursement.</p> <p>Must a town vote to raise and appropriate the entire project cost and expend these funds in order to be eligible for the full reimbursement amount?</p> <p>Can a town vote to raise a lesser amount (e.g., deducting DirectPay reimbursement and/or NH DOE reimbursement) in anticipation of project costs to be reimbursed at a later date?</p> <p>Put another way, can project invoices be paid directly through reimbursement or must the town pay invoices only out of funds it has appropriated and then seek reimbursement?</p>	<p>Recipients of this program will receive payment based on a reimbursement of costs submitted with proper invoicing. It is necessary for the proposer to be prepared to cover the costs upfront. The reimbursement process normally takes up to 30 days to complete. Reimbursements may also be contingent on specific milestone events and other conditions as outlined in the approved grant agreement.</p> <p>Additionally, the Department will withhold 10% of the grant amount until the project is fully completed, interconnected, and a final inspection report is submitted by the technical monitor.</p> <p>It is important to note that expenses incurred before the grant agreement is approved by the Governor and Executive Council will not be eligible for reimbursement.</p>

<p>33.</p>	<p>Please provide details on how the grant funds will be distributed to municipalities:</p> <p>a. When (at what stage of the project) can the municipality request reimbursement?</p> <p>b. How will the municipality request reimbursement?</p> <p>c. What requirements must be met in order to request reimbursement?</p> <p>d. What documentation will NH DOE require to request reimbursement?</p> <p>e. Can you provide further clarification to this previous Q&A response: <i>"Reimbursements may also be contingent on specific milestone events and other conditions as outlined in the approved grant agreement."</i> What milestones and conditions might this refer to?</p>	<p>To initiate a reimbursement request, the grantee must provide the Department with an invoice(s) as the form of request together with paid contractor invoices as supporting evidence in order for the Department to release payment.</p> <p>The commencement of reimbursement will differ depending on individual project timelines and will usually be carried out on a monthly submission basis.</p> <p>The reimbursement process normally takes up to 30 days to complete.</p> <p>Expenses incurred before the grant agreement is approved by the New Hampshire Governor and Executive Council will not be eligible for reimbursement.</p> <p>Reimbursements may also be contingent on specific milestone events and other conditions as outlined in the approved grant agreement – <i>such as receipt of a third-party Technical Monitoring report.</i> Noting that the Department will withhold 10% of the grant amount until the project is fully completed, interconnected, and a final inspection report is submitted by the technical monitor.</p>
<p>34.</p>	<p>Please clarify how "2 CFR 200.305(b)" referenced in the RFP may allow payment of grant funds up front to the town if the town does not have the funds in advance and cannot wait for reimbursement, as stated in section V(P.) - 5P - of the RFP.</p>	<p>Payment to grantees under this program is on a cost-reimbursable basis, unless otherwise approved.</p> <p>Recipients of this program will receive payment based on a reimbursement of costs submitted with proper invoicing. It is necessary for the proposer to be prepared to cover the costs upfront.</p> <p>The reimbursement process normally takes up to 30 days to complete. Those disbursements/reimbursements shall be made in accordance with the procedures established by the State and 2 CFR 200.305(b).</p>

35.	<p>NHDOE states that <i>"The Department's goal is to distribute \$888,000 by the deadline of November 3, 2024. The remaining 40% of the funding (\$592,000) does not have the same time constraint."</i></p> <p>A. Should a town seek to complete its project by Oct. 3, 2024, in order to be eligible to receive funds from the reimbursement pool subject a Nov. 3 distribution deadline?</p> <p>B. If a town waits for its 2025 annual meeting to raise and appropriate funds, will it be limited to reimbursement funds remaining after the Nov. 3, 2024, distribution deadline (i.e., \$592,000 after Nov 3, 2024)?</p> <p>C. Can a city council vote to appropriate funds this summer in order to begin a project this fall, <i>ahead of the Nov. 3 NH DOE payout deadline</i>, or must this city vote come AFTER the grant application is approved in October 2024?</p>	<p>A. No. This is not a retroactive program.</p> <p>B & C. The Department hopes to allocate 100% of the funding prior to November 3. The usual standard for allocating federal funds is a final contract, which in New Hampshire is a grant agreement that has been approved by the Governor and Executive Council.</p> <p>It is up to each municipality to decide when to appropriate funds, for what purpose, and in which amounts; however, the municipality would have to demonstrate at the time of contracting that its governing body has the authority to accept the grant funding and to proceed with the project, and that the governing body's signatory has the authority to bind the municipality to the grant agreement. See Answer 31.B re: prospective, unsecured funding sources. Payments under the grant agreements will be contingent upon municipalities securing sufficient funding to complete their projects and project milestones. The Department is currently in conversations to determine whether allocation of funding can be based upon something other than a final contract.</p> <p>A proposed grant request could be for any amount of funding that the municipality itself cannot afford to appropriate, otherwise known as "gap funding." The Municipality's proposal would be disqualified if awarded grant funding replaces or supplants existing appropriated solar funding, as stated in the program's RFP.</p>
36.	Will municipalities that plan to utilize Elective Pay score better than those who do not intend to utilize Elective Pay?	No. Elective Pay is not related to proposal requirements, nor does it contribute to the scoring criteria.
37.	Will municipalities who are able to list matching funds score better than those who request more of the project cost be covered by this grant? E.g. a town that has already set aside \$25,000 in a reserve fund.	No. The proposal will be scored on its detailed outline of project development costs and financing portfolio as a whole. Ideally, the proposal should provide a detailed and secure financing plan that clearly identifies the source and financial value of any other leveraged funds to complete the project.
38.	Scoring does not appear to give priority to projects that are most cost effective. This means that a town can do an expensive ground mount project with an expensive installer and have as much chance of getting the grant as a roof mount project that is done at a good price. The dollars spent per kWh generated may vary significantly. Is there any consideration given to cost effectiveness?	<p>The integrity and purpose of the program itself speaks to cost effectiveness.</p> <p>The RFP provides a "Recommended Project Design" that ensures minimal ground disturbance, although municipalities without alternatives may be permitted to carry out ground disturbance.</p>
39.	Does the 125% limit on electrical loads for all participating municipal buildings allow for group net metering (i.e., buildings not co-located at the project interconnection site)?	Group Host Net Metering is allowed. The application asks, if applicable, describe any group net metering arrangements including how project benefits will be provided to any different municipal accounts/buildings.

40.	Will the grant use 2023 CDFA Core Index as indicated in the RFP or will they use the more current 2024 index?	All application metrics, including the CDFA Core Index, are expected to be based on 2023 data.
41.	<p>Is a competitive RFP required?</p> <p>A. Can municipalities submit a grant application if they have only received one quote?</p> <p>B. What happens if a town does a competitive RFP after receiving confirmation of grant funding and receives a quote for a lower cost project of the same size?</p>	<p>See the Federal Procurement Standards</p> <p>A. Yes</p> <p>B. Contracts are written with a "Grant Limitation". Spending less than what was awarded is allowable with Department approval.</p>
42.	Is the town committed to working with the developer that prepared the quote that was used to apply for the grant funds?	Yes. Any changes the Scope of Work or Scope of Services requires the Department's approval.
43.	What will the municipality be required to provide to confirm that the array has been placed in service?	The Permission to Operate (PTO) permit signifies the ultimate authorization granted by a utility company for a solar power system to be lawfully interconnected to the electrical grid. Following the utility's assessment and meter installation, provided that all requirements are satisfied, the utility grants the PTO. This permit formally authorizes the solar system to function and interconnect to the grid in compliance with the law.
44.	Are applicants required to submit evidence of SAM registration for the contractor as well as for the town?	<p>Proposers must obtain a UEI from SAM and provide proof of active SAM registration and a valid UEI number throughout the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>All contractors and subcontractors involved in a proposer's project must also obtain a UEI from SAM and provide the UEI to the proposer during contract negotiation. Proposers, contractors, and subcontractors must not be debarred from working on projects with Federal funds.</p>
45.	Does NHDOE anticipate future rounds of funding for municipal solar projects and when might they be issued?	Any future round is contingent on the availability of funds. If all funds made available in this RFP are awarded, it is unlikely that a second round will occur.
46.	When RFP refers to ground disturbance, we are assuming that means major ground disturbance and not excavating for piers if there is ground mount in the proposal. Could you elaborate on ground disturbance?	Per the Department's Historic Preservation Agreement (PA), excavating for piers would trigger a review.

47.	<p>On Site selection section - where RFP refers to no tree removal or trimming. Does that mean none allowed at the site or the cost can't be covered by the Grant or something else?</p>	<p>No tree removal or trimming is allowed without a project environmental review. If the proposer's project causes any ground disturbance or is not in conformance with Appendix B, 4f of the New Hampshire executed Historic Preservation Programmatic Agreement, provide a Request for Project Review Form that has been reviewed and signed by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and submitted along with the proposal.</p> <p>See RFP Section II, Part E or Sections VI and VII for more information. NEPA and/or SHPO Review(s) - should be submitted once the project scope and boundaries of the entire disturbed areas are adequately defined.</p>
48.	<p><i>Aerial and panoramic photos of the proposed project site.</i></p> <p>The proposed site is a roof mount solar array on our town's Safety Building. As it was newly constructed and completed four years ago, Google Maps has not updated the aerial views of [certain towns and mountains]. We do however have drone images and a video of the site by a town employee. Will this suffice?</p>	<p>Drone images would suffice.</p>
49.	<p>Resumes of key personnel from the project team, including of the solar developer and, if applicable, solar installation company, contractors, and subcontractors, such as electrician(s), et al.</p> <p>Would you please clarify - would this include members of a Town's Energy Commission along with those involved with the design and installation of the array?</p> <p>We do have a solar developer's proposal that includes the statement: "... [we] propose to furnish all labor and materials necessary for a complete turnkey design/build installation of a grid-connected photovoltaic energy system."</p> <p>Our sense is a rooftop installation will include only the developer and electrical contractor. Will the resumes of these two parties satisfy the requirement stated above?</p>	<p>Resumes of key individuals directly involved in the project should be included, as many or as few as needed. Each team leader's/contractor lead's/sub-contractor lead's resume should be included, but the resumes of individual workers are not required. Resumes of the Town Energy committee members are not required.</p>

50.	<p>Build America, Buy America provision, page 18, B. (2) - May I conclude that more than 55% of the total project materials must be manufactured in America and the remainder can be the balance? We are currently seeking additional information from the solar installer as to the makeup of the proposed equipment.</p>	<p>Yes. That is correct.</p> <p>The New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership's (NHMEP) Supplier Scouting and Matching Program connects businesses with sources that manufacture or distribute products across the country to meet demand.</p> <p>The Department encourages grantees that may have difficulty finding iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials that satisfy the Buy America Requirement to use NHMEP's Supplier Scouting and Matching Program. This is a free referral program and there is no cost to manufacturers or participants.</p> <p>More information on the NHMEP's Supplier Scouting and Matching Program can be found here: https://www.nhmep.org/supplierscouting/.</p>
51.	<p>On the grant application form, question #9 asked "Does the project have at least 80% insulation." This is a non sequitur. Insulation is a material that inhibits energy transfer, and the percentage threshold doesn't make any sense in this context. Should we assume that the DOE is referring to "insolation" – as in, shading on the array location will not reduce the annual aggregate sunlight energy expected there by no more than 80% of what would be expected without any shading</p>	<p>This has been corrected in the application.</p>
52.	<p>On pages #6 and #7 of the grant RFP, there are a list of conditions that have to be met for the proposed site not to trigger NEPA and NHPA reviews. At the end of condition #5 (on page #7), it states: "Inverters and disconnect switches will be mounted on the side or back of the outside of the building, or inside the building."</p> <p>How does this apply to micro-inverter systems, which are necessarily installed on the roof? Would a micro-inverter installation need to undergo the NEPA and NHPA reviews?</p>	<p>Noting Appendix B of the NHPA, 4.f. states "Solar-energy systems will be exempt from SHPO review if they are flush-mounted to the roof, have at least six inches between the edge of the panel and the edge of the roof, and are parallel with the roof line. Inverters and disconnect switches will be mounted on the side or back of the outside of the building, or inside the building." Micro-inverters installed on the roof will be exempt from SHPO review as long as they meet those same requirements.</p>

53.	<p>Town is interested in siting the PV system on a building operated by the City's Waterworks organization. The Waterworks organization has an independent governance board and its own financial infrastructure; however, the Waterworks organization is not allowed to take on its own debt. The property itself, including the building where the PV system will be sited, is owned by the City, not the Waterworks organization, while the electrical account is in the name of the Waterworks organization. Condition #4 on page #5 of the grant RFP indicates that some independent government bodies may not qualify for this grant; the applicability of this stipulation to the Waterworks building is not entirely clear.</p> <p>Will this Waterworks building qualify for the grant? If there are additional qualifying or disqualifying conditions for such situations, can the DOE spell them out in more detail?</p> <p>If Town's Waterworks building does qualify, should Town submit audit materials for the City only, or from the Waterworks organization only, or from both the City and the Waterworks organization?</p>	See answer to Question 22.
54.	<p>We've been planning on cutting down trees on our property. We were originally planning on building a library on the site but have since needed to give more room to our highway department, which would also give us room to install a small solar field for our municipal buildings. If the land is cleared before the grant is awarded, would we need to do the NEPA?</p>	The Department declines to provide legal advice. This question should be asked of an environmental specialist or attorney competent with regard to NEPA requirements.
55.	<p>Most federally funded grants have an RFP threshold of \$250K. We have asked two companies for quotes to begin writing the grant. Your grant requires the name of the vendor we will use.</p> <p>Does this mean that if the proposal is more than \$250K, we are not required to get an RFP?</p>	<p>If it is strictly solicitation for quote for determination project cost, then no. If solicitation to select a contractor, then yes, an RFP process would be required at that time.</p> <p>(See the Federal Procurement Standards.)</p>
56.	<p>Question 11 in RFP Section III. 11 says "Provide a statement as to whether or not the project conforms to the Recommended Project Design outlined in RFP Section II - Part E."</p> <p>Part E does not outline Recommended Project Design, but Part F does. Should Question 11 refer to Part F?</p>	This has been corrected in the application.

57.	<p>If the grant awarded is less than the total project cost, can the municipality submit the project to the US Treasury Inflation Reduction Act to receive direct payment for the difference owed?</p>	<p>The municipality must be capable of funding any remaining out-of-pocket expenses or "difference" at the time of proposal. The Department cannot assist in, nor speak to, the process of securing additional funding or pursuing any reimbursement for the "difference."</p>
58.	<p>We have two small existing municipally owned ground-mounted solar arrays located on separate town-owned lots serving only a small portion of the load on a few of our several town buildings.</p> <p>Are we allowed to site a new system (either ground-mounted, parking canopy, or rooftop solar) near or far from the existing systems on town land?</p> <p>It is not an expansion as it will be serving the needs of other town buildings and subject to other restrictions. We are considering 125% of total town building loads from 2023 in our sizing.</p> <p>We understand there are restrictions on expansion to a system, but this would be a totally separate system , including panels, structure, equipment, and metering.</p>	<p>Yes, an additional solar project connected by its own meter would be treated as an individual system and would be eligible for this program.</p>
59.	<p>Would a canopy over a parking lot on town land be considered, even if the design would have panels with slight non-optimal mounting for aesthetic reasons?</p>	<p>Yes. Proposals may be in the form of a new ground-mounted, parking canopy-mounted, or rooftop solar electricity/photovoltaic system that exclusively serves the electrical load of municipally owned buildings within the same city or town.</p>
60.	<p>Would a floating array over a pond be considered a canopy or other allowed siting?</p>	<p>No, the USDOE blueprint specifically states parking lot canopies only.</p>